



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



Εθνική Αρχή
Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης
Hellenic Authority
for Higher Education

Αριστείδου 1 & Ευριπίδου 2 • 10559 Αθήνα | 1 Aristidou str. & 2 Evripidou str. • 10559 Athens, Greece
T. +30 210 9220 944 • F. +30 210 9220 143 • E. secretariat@ethaae.gr • www.ethaae.gr

Accreditation Report for the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation (Integrated Master) of:

Fisheries and Aquaculture

Department: Fisheries and Aquaculture

Institution: University of Patras

Date: 16/06/2026



Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση
της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



Πρόγραμμα
Ανθρώπινο Δυναμικό και
Κοινωνική Συνοχή



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of
the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation (Integrated
Master) of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the University of Patras for the
purposes of granting accreditation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part A: Background and Context of the Review	4
I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel	4
II. Review Procedure and Documentation	5
III. New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile	7
Part B: Compliance with the Principles.....	9
Principle 1: Strategic Planning, Feasibility and Sustainability of the Academic Unit.....	9
Principle 2: Quality Assurance Policy of the Institution and the Academic Unit.....	20
Principle 3: Design, Approval and Monitoring of the Quality of the New Undergraduate Programmes.....	25
Principle 4: Student-centred Approach in Learning, Teaching and Assessment of Students.....	31
Principle 5: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Academic Qualifications and Award of Degrees and Certificates of Competence of the New Study Programmes	35
Principle 6: Ensuring the Competence and High Quality of the Teaching Staff of the New Undergraduate Study Programmes	39
Principle 7: Learning Resources and Student Support of the New Undergraduate Programmes.....	43
Principle 8: Collection, Analysis and Use of Information for the Organisation and Operation of New Undergraduate Programmes	48
Principle 9: Public Information Concerning the New Undergraduate Programmes	52
Principle 10: Periodic Internal Review of the New Study Programmes	54
Principle 11: Regular External Evaluation and Accreditation of the New Undergraduate Programmes.....	58
Principle 12: Monitoring the Transition from Previous Undergraduate Study Programmes to the New Ones.....	61
Part C: Conclusions	63
I. Features of Good Practice	63
II. Areas of Weakness.....	63
III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions.....	64
IV. Summary & Overall Assessment	65

PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the new undergraduate study programme in operation (Integrated Master) of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the **University of Patras** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. PAVLOSTATHIS SPYROS (Chair)
(Title, Name, Surname)
School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology
(Institution of origin)
2. Apostolou Ioanna
(Title, Name, Surname)
Veterinary Laboratory of Ioannina-Ministry of Rural Development and food
(Institution of origin)
3. Soultanas Panagiotis
(Title, Name, Surname)
School of Chemistry, University of Nottingham
(Institution of origin)
4. TSIAMI AMALIA
(Title, Name, Surname)
University of West London, UK
(Institution of origin)
5. Δασκαλάκης Μάριος
(Title, Name, Surname)
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
(Institution of origin)

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

Please refer briefly to the Panel preparation for the new undergraduate study programme in operation review, as well as to the documentation provided and considered by the Panel. State the dates of the site visit and describe the visit schedule and the meetings held. Feel free to mention any additional information regarding the procedure, as appropriate.

In preparation for the review and assessment of the undergraduate study programme (USP) Fisheries and Aquaculture of the University of Patras, the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) reviewed a multitude of materials provided by the Hellenic Authority of Higher Education (HAHE), which included background information and guidance on the review and accreditation process, as well as detailed material and data related to the programme under evaluation, such as the programme accreditation proposal and associated appendices provided by the University of Patras through the HAHE. The programme evaluation material was submitted to HAHE by the University of Patras in 2024. At the request of the EEAP, several elements of the programme accreditation proposal and associated appendices were updated by the University of Patras and provided to the EEAP.

The programme review was conducted in person, while the accreditation draft report was completed remotely by the EEAP. The schedule and agenda of the programme review were as stated below.

Sunday 17/05/2026

Preliminary private meeting of the EEAP. Discussion of documentation received for the USP Fisheries and Aquaculture under review; assignment of writing sections of the draft accreditation report to the EEAP members.

Monday 18/05/2026

a) Welcome meeting with the Vice-Rector and President of the University Quality Assurance Unit (QAU/MODIP) Prof. I. Venetis and the Head of the Department Prof. J. Theodorou.

b) Meeting with the Head of the Department Prof. J. Theodorou, the Department Internal Evaluation Group (IEG/OMEA) members Profs. D. Moutopoulos and G. Katselis, the Head of MODIP Mrs. F. Papadatou, and MODIP Staff Mrs. A. Papadopoulou: Presentation by the OMEA member Prof. G. Katselis of the Department history, academic profile, structure, scope, strengths and areas of concern, other futures, as well as discussion of quality standards and goals with the EEAP members.

c) Meeting with Department teaching staff members: Profs. K. Vidalis, Ch. Gnardellis, D. Loukovitis, C. Poulos, N. Vlahos, and Special Technical Laboratory Staff Drs. X. Douvi and A. Samara: Discussion of teaching involvement, learning resources and other features of the programme, faculty professional development, mobility, research activities, link between teaching and research, as well as employment potential of graduates.

d) Meeting with Department administrative staff members: Mrs. Ch. Koutsopoulou, Mr. E. Katsaros, Mr. N. Siasos, Mrs. D. Avramidou, and Mr. P. Ilaridis: Discussion of Department administrative matters and facilities, such Secretariat, Library, as well as staff responsibilities and professional development.

e) Meeting with ten (10) current programme students: Discussion of study experience, satisfaction, facilities, student life, possible input in the programme's development and quality assurance.

Tuesday 19/05/2026

a) Tour of USP facilities, such as classrooms and laboratories, with teaching and technical laboratory staff members of the Department. Discussion of infrastructure, instruments and equipment used for teaching and research.

b) Meeting with four (4) programme graduates: Mrs. V. Filinta, PhilosoFish employee; Mrs. Ch. Maligani, SAO

employee; Mr. N. Fousekis, Epidavros Farms employee; and Mrs. A. Plati: Discussion of current employment, study experience, satisfaction, possible input in the programme's development and quality assurance, and career path.

c) Meeting and discussion with employers and social partners of the Department: Mrs. A. Nika, AquaHolding, Director; Mr. N. Tzourmanas, Fish_Care Ltd, Director; Mrs. I. Bogdanou, Fish from Greece, Director; Mr. A. Panagiotopoulos, Messologgi by Locals, President; Mrs. A. Charitou, iSea NGO, President; and Mr. Ch. Pappas, Avramar, Director.

d) Private debriefing meeting (EEAP members only): Discussion of the outcomes and findings of the USP visit; preparation of oral report.

e) Closure meeting with the President of MODIP, the Department Head, two OMEA members, the Head of MODIP and one MODIP staff member: Informal, oral presentation of the EEAP USP key findings, discussion, and clarifications.

Wednesday 20/05/2026 to Saturday 23/05/2026

Draft report writing. Review and finalization of the draft accreditation report.

Throughout the review and evaluation process, the EEAP was in close communication with the University and Department administration, who provided additional information requested by the EEAP. The EEAP found that the University and Department administration, faculty, technical and administrative staff, students, graduates, and stakeholders interviewed were eager and helpful in our discussions and provided valuable additional information.

III. New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile

Please provide a brief overview of the new undergraduate study programme in operation with reference to the following: history, academic remit, duration of studies, qualification awarded, employment opportunities, orientation challenges or any other key background information. Also, you may provide a short description of the home Department and Institution, with reference to student population, campus or any other facts, as deemed appropriate.

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the University of Patras, located in the town of Messologgi, is a continuation of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the former Technological Educational Institution (TEI) of Messologgi, founded in 1981. Subsequently, because of public law 4610/2019 (Government Gazette 70/7.5.2019, vol. A), operation continued as Department of Animal Production, Fisheries and Aquaculture, incorporated into the School of Agricultural Sciences of the University of Patras. According to article 2, paragraph 1 of Presidential Decree 52/2022 (Government Gazette 131/A/7-7-2022) on the Establishment, Abolition, Merger, Renaming and Change of Headquarters of Departments at the University of Patras, it was renamed as the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture. The newly reformed department has been in operation from the academic year 2022-2023 implementing two parallel study programmes. A study programme that supports the students of the former TEI until their graduation and the reformed study programme of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

The aim of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture is to provide comprehensive and innovative scientific knowledge, directly related to the qualitative and quantitative improvement of aquatic production through the application of modern and innovative scientific methods and technologies, the utilization of accumulated knowledge in the field, good international practices, as well as the need for a holistic approach to the planning and development of the production of aquatic organisms. The specific Department objectives are as follows: basic and applied research in aquatic production sciences; contribution to the economic and social development of primary production in Greece; three cycles of education (undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral); and links with the mariculture industry and hatcheries in Greece.

Teaching in the USP is carried out by 11 faculty members. Plans are underway to increase the number of faculty members to 17 by the academic year 2027-2028. Specialized laboratory teaching and technical staff, as well as administrative staff assist the USP. Teaching is amplified with guest speakers from academia or the industry.

The Programme has set the feasible number of admitted students at 190 per academic year. In the academic years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 the mean number of admitted students was 124. However, as a result of the minimum entry base in the National examination procedure, this number was reduced to 20, 10, 11, and 9 in the academic years 2021-2022 through 2024-2025, and then increased to 81 in the academic year 2025-2026. It should be noted that not all admitted students register in the USP Fisheries and Aquaculture. In the academic year 2025-2026 the total enrolled students were 126 of the former 4-year TEI and 295 of the reformed, 5-year Department. The small number of enrolled students is of concern relative to the long-term viability of the Department. The University and Department administration are aware of this issue and serious efforts are being made to increase the number of admitted and registered students.

The PSP is a five-year (ten-semester) study resulting in a USP diploma, level 7 of the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. To obtain the diploma, the student must have successfully

completed 300 ECTS (265 coursework, 5 practical training, 30 diploma thesis). The Department offers 61 courses, of which 9 are electives. Attendance in laboratories is mandatory. The students have the opportunity to develop research skills, participate in research projects, and are appropriately prepared for participation in postgraduate study programmes. Graduates are prepared for careers in both the private and public sectors of the economy. There are strong links to society, which is a key priority of the Department and the Institution.

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture has offered the postgraduate study programme Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, which is expected to be re-established in 2026-2027. It also participates in the Joint Master's Degree programme Marine Policy, Seafood Business Management & Marketing in collaboration with State University of New York at Oswego and the University of Alaska-Southeast, USA. The Department also supports doctoral studies.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Strategic Planning, Feasibility and Sustainability of the Academic Unit

Institutions must have developed an appropriate strategy for the establishment and operation of new academic units and the provision of new undergraduate study programmes. This strategy should be documented by specific feasibility and sustainability studies.

By decision of the institutional Senate, the Institutions should address in their strategy issues related to their academic structure in academic units and study programmes, which support the profile, the vision, the mission, and the strategic goal setting of the Institution, within a specific time frame. The strategy of the Institution should articulate the potential benefits, weaknesses, opportunities or risks from the operation of new academic units and study programmes, and plan all the necessary actions towards the achievement of their goals.

The strategy of their academic structure should be documented by specific feasibility and sustainability studies, especially for new academic units and new study programmes.

More specifically, the feasibility study of the new undergraduate study programmes should be accompanied by a four-year business plan to meet specific needs in infrastructure, services, human resources, procedures, financial resources, and management systems.

During the evaluation of the Institutions and their individual academic units in terms of meeting the criteria for the organisation of undergraduate study programmes, particular attention must be place upon:

a. The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit

The profile and mission of the department should be specified. The scientific field of the department should be included in the internationally established scientific fields of Higher Education, as they are designated by the international categorisation of scientific fields in education, by UNESCO (ISCED 2013).

b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development

The academic development strategy for the operation of the department and the new study programme should be set out. This strategy should result from the investigation of the factors that influence the studies and the research in the scientific field, the investigation of the institutional, economic, developmental, and social parameters that apply in the external environment of the Institution, as well as the possibilities and capabilities that exist within the internal environment (as reflected in a SWOT Analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). This specific analysis should demonstrate the reason for selecting the scientific field of the new department.

c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme

The feasibility of the operation of the new department should be justified based on:

- *the needs of the national and regional economy (economic sectors, employment, supply-demand, expected academic and professional qualifications)*
- *comparison with other national and international study programmes of the same scientific field*
- *the state-of-the-art developments*
- *the existing academic map; the differentiation of the proposed department from the already existing ones needs to be analysed, in addition to the implications of the current image of the academic map in the specific scientific field.*

d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department

Mention must be made to the infrastructure, human resources, funding perspective, services, and all other available resources in terms of:

- educational and research facilities (buildings, rooms, laboratories, equipment, etc.)
- staff (existing and new, by category, specialty, rank and laboratory). A distinct five-year plan is required, documenting the commitment of the School and of the Institution for filling in the necessary faculty positions to cover at least the entire pre-defined core curriculum
- funding (funding possibility from public or non-public sources)
- services (central, departmental / student support, digital, administrative, etc.)

e. The structure of studies

The structure of the studies should be briefly presented, namely:

- **The organisation of studies:** The courses and the categories to which they belong; the distribution of the courses into semesters; the alignment of the courses with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).
- **Learning process:** Documentation must be provided as to how the student-centered approach is ensured (modes of teaching and evaluation of students beyond the traditional methods).
- **Learning outcomes:** Knowledge, skills and competences acquired by graduates, as well as the professional rights awarded must be mentioned.

f. The number of admitted students

- The proposed number of admitted students over a five-year period should be specified.
- Any similar departments in other HEIs with the possibility of student transfers from / to the proposed department should be mentioned.

g. Postgraduate studies and research

- It is necessary to indicate research priorities in the scientific field, the opportunities for interdisciplinary research, the challenges towards new knowledge, possible research collaborations, etc.
- In addition, the postgraduate and doctoral programmes offered by the academic unit, the research projects performed, and the research performance of the faculty members should be mentioned.

Relevant documentation

- Introductory Report by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) addressing the above points with the necessary documentation
- Updated Strategic Plan of the Institution that will include its proposed academic reconstruction, in view of the planned operation of new department(s) (incl. updated SWOT analysis at institutional level)
- Feasibility and sustainability studies for the establishment and operation of the new academic unit and the new study programme
- Four-year business plan

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture at the University of Patras has a clearly defined academic identity and mission. It is the continuation of the first higher education department in Fisheries Science in Greece and has operated as a university department since the 2019–2020 academic year. The Department belongs to the School of Agricultural Sciences and offers a five-year undergraduate programme. The scientific field of the Department is explicitly aligned with the UNESCO ISCED 2013 classification, under Field 08 “Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary,” Subfield 083 “Fisheries,” and Detailed Field 0831 “Fisheries.” The mission of the Department is to provide comprehensive and innovative education in fisheries and aquaculture, combining scientific knowledge, practical training, and research skills to support sustainable aquatic production and environmental stewardship.

The strategic academic development of the University of Patras provides a clear and well-documented rationale for the operation of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and its revised study programme. The strategy is based on the Department’s unique national role as the only university unit in Greece dedicated exclusively to Fisheries and Aquaculture, as well as on the importance of the sector for food production, environmental protection, and regional development. The University has assessed both external and internal factors affecting the Department. Externally, the fisheries and aquaculture sector remains a strategic component of the Greek economy, while increasing international emphasis on sustainability, marine policy, biotechnology, and digital technologies creates strong demand for specialized graduates. Internally, the Department benefits from a long academic tradition, experienced faculty, research participation, and collaboration opportunities with related departments in biology, chemistry, geology, and oceanography. A SWOT-oriented approach is evident. Key strengths include the Department’s unique disciplinary identity, its historical contribution to the sector, and its integration within a research-intensive University. Weaknesses include limited student selectivity and declining applicant interest. Opportunities include curriculum expansion into emerging areas such as algae biotechnology, recycling technologies, and information systems, as well as international partnerships. Threats include demographic pressures and competition for student enrolment.

The establishment and operation of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture at the University of Patras is strongly justified on four interrelated grounds: economic needs, comparison with existing academic programmes, scientific developments, and the structure of the current academic map in Greece. From an economic perspective, the fisheries and aquaculture sector represents a strategically important component of both the national and regional economy. It supports significant employment—particularly in coastal, island, and remote mainland areas—and contributes to food production, exports, and regional cohesion. The sector is also heavily supported by European and national funding mechanisms aimed at sustainable fisheries management and aquaculture development, reinforcing the demand for highly skilled graduates with advanced academic and professional competencies. In terms of the national academic landscape, the programme is comparable to those offered by the University of Thessaly and the University of the Aegean. However, analysis of curriculum structure indicates both high similarity in disciplinary coverage and meaningful differences in orientation. The Department under evaluation shows a strong focus on applied aquatic production systems and primary-sector integration, distinguishing it from programmes that emphasize broader marine science or more theoretical environmental components. Scientifically, the programme is aligned with contemporary developments in fisheries science and aquaculture, including sustainability science, climate change adaptation, ecosystem-based resource

management, and technological innovation in production systems. These areas represent the current state-of-the-art in the discipline and require interdisciplinary training combining biology, technology, environmental science, and data-informed management. Within the broader Greek academic map, the Department occupies a unique position. Following national restructuring of higher education institutions, Fisheries and Aquaculture studies are concentrated in a limited number of departments, with this programme serving as a comprehensive unit that integrates biological, technological, environmental, and production-oriented dimensions of the field. This structure differentiates it from other programmes that either focus more narrowly on marine sciences or emphasize general agricultural or oceanographic studies.

The sustainability of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture at the University of Patras is supported by four key pillars: (a) educational and research infrastructure, (b) human resources, (c) funding capacity, and (d) institutional services and support mechanisms.

Educational and research infrastructure

The Department benefits from a fully developed infrastructure located in Messolonghi, a region with strong fisheries tradition and direct access to major aquatic ecosystems. These include the Messologgi–Aetoliko Lagoon, the Acheloos River system, the Echinades aquaculture zone, and nearby coastal production areas (Corinthian and Argolic Gulfs). These environments function as natural laboratories that directly support teaching, fieldwork, and applied research. The institutional infrastructure consists of 5 buildings, 7 classrooms, 11 teaching laboratories, 10 research laboratories, and 25 offices and auxiliary spaces. The laboratories are equipped with modern scientific and digital technologies that ensure the delivery of up-to-date education and research activities. The facilities also include student support infrastructure such as housing, dining, and recreational services within the main campus, ensuring integrated academic life.

Human resources

The Department employs a structured academic workforce consisting of 11 members of Teaching and Research Staff, including Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, and Lecturers. This is complemented by technical laboratory staff and administrative personnel, ensuring operational continuity across teaching, laboratory instruction, and research activities. A strategic staffing plan is in place for the further strengthening of the Department. Over a five-year horizon, the School and the Institution are committed to the gradual allocation and filling of additional academic positions, ensuring full coverage of the core curriculum and reinforcement of emerging scientific fields. This planned development ensures the long-term adequacy of teaching capacity and research expertise.

Financial resources

The Department is financed through the regular budget allocation of the University of Patras, supplemented by competitive funding sources such as national research programmes and European structural funds (e.g., ESPA). Over the past five years, the Department has participated in more than ten research projects with a total funding volume exceeding €2 million. These projects cover key thematic areas including fisheries management, aquaculture production systems, biodiversity conservation, environmental protection, protected area management, and risk analysis. Research funding also contributes directly to the maintenance of laboratory infrastructure and the continuous upgrade of scientific equipment.

Institutional services and support

The Department is supported by a comprehensive system of institutional services, including central University administration, departmental administrative units, and student support structures. These include housing services, dining facilities, sports infrastructure, and academic welfare provisions. In addition, digital services and e-governance systems support teaching, learning, and administrative

processes, ensuring efficient academic operation. Laboratory and research activities are further supported through centralized procurement, financial management systems, and technical maintenance services. However, the campus at Messologgi houses only two departments and many buildings in the campus remain empty and underused.

The USP of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture at the University of Patras is a five-year integrated degree structured over 10 academic semesters, requiring the successful completion of 300 ECTS credits for graduation. Students are offered a total of 61 courses, including 40 compulsory courses, 2 compulsory foreign language courses, and 9 elective courses offered from the 8th semester onwards. The programme also includes a mandatory diploma thesis equivalent to 30 ECTS credits. The curriculum is organised into six main categories: Agricultural Sciences courses (26 courses, 42.87% of ECTS), Aquaculture courses (10 courses, 12.87%), Fisheries courses (6 courses, 7.36%), Fisheries–Aquaculture integration courses (6 courses, 6.95%), General Education courses (8 courses, 13.67%), and Information Technology-related courses (5 courses, 6.29%). This structure ensures balanced coverage of biological, environmental, technological, and applied production disciplines. The learning process adopts a student-centred approach that goes beyond traditional lecturing. It includes group projects, student presentations, laboratory and field exercises, peer-assisted teaching involving postgraduate students and doctoral candidates, skills development sessions for first-year students, project-based learning, and research-oriented thesis work. Modern digital tools and technologies are systematically integrated into teaching and learning activities. The programme's learning outcomes are structured around four core thematic axes: Fisheries, Aquatic Animal and Plant Production, Aquatic Environment Management, and Environmental Protection. Graduates acquire the ability to analyse aquatic ecosystems, apply resource management tools, evaluate environmental policies, and develop critical thinking and research skills. The programme also leads to professionally recognised qualifications, including eligibility for registration with the relevant professional body (Geotechnical Chamber of Greece) and the right to practise as a certified fisheries scientist, in accordance with national legislation.

The USP of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture at the University of Patras has experienced significant variation in student admissions during its recent years of operation. Available data indicate that the number of new entrants was approximately 119 in 2019–2020, increased to 128 in 2020–2021, and then declined sharply to around 20 students in 2021–2022 and then increased to 81 in the academic year 2025–2026. This reduction coincides with the introduction of the Minimum Admission Threshold, which substantially affected the inflow of new students. The programme has an official capacity of approximately 190 admission places per year, many of which remain unfilled in recent cohorts. In terms of total enrolment, the Department maintained approximately 237–250 active students across all academic years in the most recent cycles, reflecting the cumulative effect of earlier admissions despite reduced intake in later years. A five-year projection indicates that, under the current national admission framework, the number of incoming students is expected to remain below the nominal capacity unless targeted policy or recruitment interventions are implemented. Without corrective measures, intake is likely to stabilise at a lower level than the designed capacity, potentially in the range of 20–60 new students annually, depending on applicant interest and examination performance thresholds. Regarding academic mobility, the Department does not currently have directly corresponding programmes in other Greek Higher Education Institutions that allow structured transfer to or from similar departments. This is due to the absence of fully equivalent Fisheries and Aquaculture programmes within the national system, which limit formal student mobility pathways.

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture at the University of Patras develops its postgraduate education and research activity around key scientific priorities in fisheries science, aquaculture systems, aquatic ecosystem management, marine policy, and sustainable blue economy development. These

priorities reflect the need for new knowledge production in response to global challenges such as overexploitation of aquatic resources, climate change, biodiversity loss, and the transition toward sustainable food systems. The Department offers structured postgraduate and doctoral studies. A Master's programme in "Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture" has been established and periodically restructured within the University framework. In addition, since 2020, the Department provides third-cycle doctoral studies, with 14 active PhD candidates engaged in research activities, including international co-supervision with the University of Padua. Furthermore, an English-taught international Master's programme, "Marine Policy, Seafood Business Management & Marketing," is implemented in collaboration with the State University of New York at Oswego and the University of Alaska Southeast, strengthening interdisciplinary postgraduate education and internationalisation. Research activity is organised around interdisciplinary fields combining biology, ecology, technology, environmental science, economics, and policy analysis. This creates significant opportunities for cross-disciplinary research, particularly in areas such as aquatic resource management, aquaculture innovation, environmental monitoring, ecosystem-based fisheries management, and risk assessment in marine production systems. The Department participates in a wide range of competitive research projects funded by European and national sources, covering fisheries management, aquaculture production systems, biodiversity conservation, environmental protection, and socio-economic dimensions of aquatic resource use. Faculty members demonstrate strong research performance, including publications in high-impact international journals, contributions to scientific books, participation in international conference committees, and invited lectures in academic institutions and international organisations such as the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF). The Department also maintains active scientific networking through the co-organisation of the HydroMediT international conference series, participation in major national conferences in fisheries science, and regular outreach activities such as the annual Open Day on Aquaculture in Messoluggi, in collaboration with industry stakeholders.

II. Analysis

The Department fully satisfies the criterion concerning the definition of academic identity and mission. Its disciplinary orientation is well established, internationally recognized, and appropriately situated within the broader field of Agricultural Sciences. The explicit reference to the UNESCO ISCED 2013 classification demonstrates consistency with internationally accepted academic standards. The mission is coherent and reflects current scientific, environmental, and societal challenges. It emphasizes sustainable use of aquatic resources, application of modern technologies, and development of graduates capable of contributing to production, environmental management, and advanced academic research. The stated objectives are comprehensive and aligned with the needs of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors at both national and international levels.

The University's strategy demonstrates that the choice of this scientific field is academically, economically, and socially justified. Fisheries and Aquaculture constitute a specialized but nationally significant discipline closely linked to sustainable food systems, marine resource management, and environmental conservation. The Department addresses both labour market needs and broader societal priorities. The revised curriculum reflects this strategic analysis by aligning with the European Qualifications Framework, the National Qualifications Framework, and the European e-Competence Framework. The recent inclusion of the Department in the 4th Scientific Field of national entrance examinations broadens recruitment opportunities and strengthens its capacity to attract students with complementary skills in economics and information technology. The approval of an international joint master's programme with State University of New York at Oswego and University of Alaska Southeast further confirms the strategic emphasis on internationalization and academic diversification.

From a scientific perspective, the curriculum is consistent with international developments in the field,

particularly the shift toward integrated and sustainability-driven approaches. The emphasis on interdisciplinary training ensures that graduates are prepared to contribute to both research and applied industrial innovation. Regarding the academic map, the Department fills a necessary niche by integrating knowledge domains that are often separated in other institutions. Its existence helps balance fragmentation in marine-related higher education in Greece and provides a consolidated academic structure capable of supporting both national priorities and international competitiveness. The Department responds directly to both national and regional economic needs. The fisheries and aquaculture sector requires specialized graduates capable of addressing production efficiency, sustainability challenges, regulatory compliance, and innovation in aquatic systems. The programme therefore aligns academic outputs with labour market demands and sectoral development priorities. The comparison with other national programmes demonstrates that while there is partial curricular overlap, the proposed programme maintains a distinct identity through its applied focus on aquaculture production and fisheries management. This differentiation is critical in ensuring that it does not merely replicate existing programmes but instead complements and strengthens the national higher education offering in marine-related sciences.

The Department demonstrates a high degree of sustainability due to the strong integration of physical infrastructure, human capital, and financial support mechanisms. The geographical location provides exceptional access to natural research environments, significantly enhancing both teaching quality and research productivity. The current staffing structure ensures functional coverage of all core academic areas, while the planned five-year recruitment strategy provides a clear pathway for long-term academic consolidation and curriculum completeness. This forward-looking human resource planning is essential for maintaining academic quality standards. Financial sustainability is reinforced through diversified funding streams, combining stable public financing with strong participation in competitive research programmes. This dual model reduces dependency risk and enhances institutional resilience. Finally, the availability of comprehensive institutional services, both centralized and departmental, ensures effective academic administration, student support, and operational efficiency, thereby strengthening the overall functionality of the Department.

The structure of studies is coherent, comprehensive, and fully aligned with European higher education standards. The distribution of ECTS credits across disciplinary categories ensures both depth in core scientific areas and breadth through interdisciplinary and general education components. The inclusion of elective courses in later semesters supports academic maturity and specialisation. The teaching and learning methodology demonstrates a strong commitment to student-centred education. The combination of lectures, collaborative learning, laboratory training, fieldwork, peer teaching, and research-based activities promote active engagement and the progressive development of autonomy, analytical thinking, and practical skills. The integration of digital technologies further enhances accessibility and learning effectiveness. Learning outcomes are clearly defined and aligned with both academic progression and labour market needs. The programme equips graduates with scientific knowledge, technical competencies, and environmental awareness necessary for modern fisheries and aquaculture systems. The professional recognition of graduates strengthens the programme's relevance and ensures alignment with national regulatory frameworks governing the profession.

The admission trends reveal a clear dependence on national entry regulations, particularly the Minimum Admission Threshold, which has significantly reduced student inflow. Although the programme maintains a defined intake capacity, actual enrolment does not currently reach planned levels, creating a gap between institutional capacity and realised demand. The absence of directly equivalent programmes in other universities has a dual effect. On one hand, it reinforces the uniqueness and specialised character of the Department. On the other hand, it restricts student transfer flexibility, which may influence applicant

decision-making and perceived accessibility of the programme. The five-year outlook suggests that student intake will remain constrained unless proactive measures are taken, such as enhanced outreach, increased visibility of professional prospects, or adjustments in admission policies. Nevertheless, the cumulative enrolment structure ensures short- to medium-term stability in total student numbers.

The research strategy of the Department is clearly aligned with contemporary scientific priorities in fisheries and aquaculture. The emphasis on sustainability, ecosystem-based management, and blue economy development ensures relevance to both national and international research agendas. Interdisciplinary collaboration is a defining feature of the Department's research model, integrating natural sciences, environmental studies, and socio-economic analysis. This enhances the potential for innovative research outcomes and supports the development of solutions to complex environmental and production challenges. Postgraduate and doctoral programmes provide a structured framework for advanced training and knowledge production, while international collaborations significantly expand research capacity and academic visibility. The participation of faculty in competitive research projects demonstrates both scientific productivity and strong integration into European research networks. Overall, the Department shows a consistent upward trajectory in research performance and academic impact, supported by active engagement with scientific communities and industry stakeholders.

III. Conclusions

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture has a strong and well-articulated academic profile and mission. Its scientific field is clearly defined and formally aligned with internationally recognized classifications. The mission is relevant, forward-looking, and fully consistent with the educational and research objectives expected of a modern university department. Overall, the Department meets this criterion to a very high degree.

The academic development strategy of the University of Patras provides a robust and coherent foundation for the continued operation and advancement of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture. The strategy is informed by a clear assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and it demonstrates that the selected scientific field is of high academic relevance and national importance. The Department is strongly aligned with institutional priorities and is well positioned for sustainable growth in education, research, and international collaboration.

The operation of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture at the University of Patras is fully justified across all required dimensions. It addresses significant economic and employment needs, aligns with and complements existing national academic programmes, reflects current scientific advancements, and occupies a clearly defined and necessary position within the Greek academic landscape. The programme is therefore both relevant and strategically essential for the continued development of the sector and the advancement of higher education in this field.

The Department is fully sustainable on the basis of its robust infrastructure, qualified and structured human resources, diversified funding sources, and comprehensive institutional support services. The combination of existing strengths and planned strategic staffing development ensures that the Department can continue to deliver high-quality education and research over the long term, while maintaining full alignment with academic and societal needs in fisheries and aquaculture.

The study programme presents a well-structured and balanced academic design that integrates disciplinary depth, interdisciplinary breadth, and applied training. It ensures a student-centred learning environment supported by diverse teaching methodologies and modern technologies. Graduates acquire strong

scientific, technical, and professional competencies, along with formally recognised professional rights, making the programme academically robust and professionally relevant.

The Department shows a declining trend in new admissions following recent national policy changes, despite maintaining stable overall enrolment from previous cohorts. Projected intake over the next five years is expected to remain below nominal capacity unless mitigating measures are introduced. The lack of equivalent programmes in other Greek institutions highlights the uniqueness of the Department but limits transfer mobility. Overall, sustained attention to recruitment strategy and programme visibility is necessary to ensure stable future student inflows.

The Department has established a robust and dynamic research and postgraduate education system. Its clearly defined research priorities, strong interdisciplinary orientation, active participation in national and international projects, and solid postgraduate structures ensure continuous production of new scientific knowledge. Combined with strong research performance of academic staff and extensive collaboration networks, the Department is well positioned to contribute significantly to the advancement of fisheries and aquaculture science and the sustainable development of the sector.

Panel Judgement

Principle 1: Strategic planning, feasibility and sustainability of the academic unit	
a. The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
e. The structure of studies	
Fully compliant	X

Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
f. The number of admitted students	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
g. Postgraduate studies	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Principle 1: Strategic planning, feasibility and sustainability of the academic unit (overall)	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

R1.1 The decreasing trend in student numbers is worrying. This trend needs to be reversed but challenges remain with demographic factors and long duration (5 year) of this course.

R1.2 Efforts should be made to increase the retention and progressions of students in this programme. This may be achieved with even better mentoring and tutoring of students to improve student engagement and the student experience. The department may also want to explore joined efforts with the Hellenic Organization of Aquaculture Producers (ΕΛΟΠΥ) to develop a promotional video to advertise nationally the importance of this undergraduate programme and the professional opportunities it provides to its graduates.

R1.3 Try attracting increasing number of international Erasmus students by offering appropriate modules in English, where appropriate.

R1.4 The programme is already strong but, if possible, add more experiential learning components (e.g., civic engagements, more practical placements, labs) during the early years (year 1 and 2) to inspire and engage further career-focused students.

R1.5 The campus infrastructure appears rather outdated, except for student accommodation which has been refurbished, and needs sustained maintenance and refurbishment. The first impression of incoming students

and their parents is important, and every effort should be made to give a good and inspiring first impression to influence and improve student retention.

Principle 2: Quality Assurance Policy of the Institution and the Academic Unit

The Institution should have in place an accredited Internal Quality Assurance System, and should formulate and apply a Quality Assurance Policy, which is part of its strategy, specialises in the operation of the new academic units and the new study programmes, and is accompanied by annual quality assurance goals for the continuous development and improvement of the academic units and the study programmes.

The quality assurance policy of the Institution must be formulated in the form of a published statement, which is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special annual quality goals related to the quality assurance of the new study programme offered by the academic unit. In order to implement this policy, the Institution, among others, commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate: the adequacy and quality of the academic unit's resources; the suitability of the structure and organisation of the curriculum; the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff; the quality of support services of the academic unit and its staffing with appropriate administrative personnel. The Institution also commits itself to conduct an annual internal evaluation of the new undergraduate programme (UGP), realised by the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the Institution.

The quality assurance policy of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement quality procedures that will demonstrate: a) the adequacy of the structure and organisation of the curriculum, b) the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, c) the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of the teaching work, d) the adequacy of the qualifications of the teaching staff, e) the promotion of the quality and quantity of the research work of the members of the academic unit, f) the ways of linking teaching with research, g) the level of demand for graduates' qualifications in the labour market, h) the quality of support services, such as administration, libraries and student care, i) the implementation of an annual review and audit of the quality assurance system of the UGP through the cooperation of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the Institution.

Relevant documentation

- Revised Quality Assurance Policy of the Institution
- Quality Assurance Policy of the academic unit
- Quality target setting of the Institution and the academic unit (utilising the S.M.A.R.T. methodology)

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Quality Assurance Policy of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, University of Patras, is comprehensive and closely aligned with the institutional quality framework established by the University and coordinated by the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP). The policy explicitly states the academic unit's

commitment to providing high-quality higher education and to the continuous enhancement of its undergraduate programme.

The policy contains clear references to:

- Compliance with applicable national and European quality assurance requirements, including the standards of the HAHE and the European Higher Education Area.
- Continuous improvement of teaching, research, and administrative services.
- Regular review and revision of the undergraduate curriculum.
- Student-centered education, practical and laboratory training, and alignment with labour market needs.
- Monitoring of student progression, research performance, and graduate employability.

The academic unit has identified strategic objectives related to:

- Teaching quality and curriculum development.
- Student satisfaction.
- Achievement of learning outcomes.
- Practical training and international mobility.
- Research activity and external funding.
- Graduate employability.

Monitoring mechanisms are in place, including:

- Semester-based student evaluations of courses and instructors.
- Annual curriculum review.
- Data collection by the Internal Evaluation Group (OMEA).
- Oversight by MODIP.

The policy is publicly available through the official websites of the University, MODIP, and the Department, ensuring broad accessibility to stakeholders.

II. Analysis

Commitment to Applicable Requirements and Continuous Improvement: The policy clearly satisfies both criteria. It explicitly refers to compliance with national and European standards and demonstrates a formal commitment to continuous improvement through the annual review of the Internal Quality Assurance System and the undergraduate programme.

Promotion of Continuous Improvement: Continuous improvement is promoted through structured and recurring processes:

- Collection and analysis of performance data.
- Student feedback mechanisms.
- Annual programme revision.
- Monitoring of graduate outcomes.
- Strategic planning and target setting.
- Participation in research and international collaboration.

These mechanisms are systematic and embedded in the academic unit's governance.

Communication of the Quality Assurance Policy: The policy is communicated effectively through publicly accessible websites and through participation of faculty, staff, and students in quality assurance activities. However, while dissemination is adequate, the documentation does not explicitly articulate:

- The specific benefits associated with improved quality.
- The risks or consequences of failing to meet quality standards.

Communication therefore emphasizes transparency rather than awareness-building regarding implications and accountability.

SMART Goals: The academic unit has established relevant and achievable goals in the areas of teaching, curriculum, student mobility, research, and employability. Nevertheless, the goals are primarily descriptive and strategic rather than fully SMART:

- Specific: Generally yes.
- Measurable: Partially; metrics are implied but not always quantified.
- Achievable: Yes.
- Relevant: Yes.
- Timely: Partially; periodic reviews are mentioned, but target deadlines are not consistently specified.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): Appropriate indicators can be inferred, such as:

- Student evaluation scores.
- Graduation and retention rates.
- Number of students participating in internships and Erasmus+.
- Research publications and funded projects.
- Employment rates of graduates.

However, these KPIs are not formally presented in the policy with baseline values, targets, and thresholds.

Monitoring, Updating, and Communication of Goals: The academic unit has robust monitoring arrangements through OMEA and MODIP, supported by annual reviews and data collection. Goals are updated regularly through programme revision processes. Communication occurs via formal reports and institutional websites. Nonetheless, the absence of a consolidated performance dashboard reduces the visibility and usability of progress information.

III. Conclusions

The Quality Assurance Policy of the academic unit is well-developed, coherent, and strongly aligned with institutional and national quality assurance requirements. It demonstrates a clear commitment to compliance and continuous improvement and includes effective governance structures and monitoring processes.

The policy is particularly strong in:

- Institutional alignment.
- Stakeholder participation.
- Structured review mechanisms.
- Emphasis on student-centered and research-informed education.

The main limitations are:

- Limited use of explicitly defined SMART objectives.
- Lack of formally documented KPIs with numerical targets.
- Insufficient explanation of the benefits of quality improvement and the consequences of non-compliance.

Overall, the policy is fully adequate and operational, but further formalization of measurable objectives and performance indicators would strengthen its effectiveness and accountability. Implementing the following

recommendations will enhance the measurability, transparency, and strategic impact of the Quality Assurance Policy and further support the successful delivery and continuous development of the new undergraduate programme.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2: Quality assurance policy of the Institution and the academic unit	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

R2.1 Formulate explicit SMART objectives and define quantitative targets (e.g., student satisfaction > 85%, graduation rate > 75%, employment within 12 months > 80%).

R2.2 Develop a formal KPI framework and establish documented indicators with baseline values, annual targets, and responsible persons.

R2.3 Create a quality performance dashboard and publish annual progress reports summarizing achievements against targets.

R2.4 Strengthen communication of quality benefits and risks and clearly explain how quality improvement benefits students, staff, and stakeholders, and describe the implications of non-conformance.

R2.5 Introduce benchmarking and compare performance against peer departments in Greece and internationally.

R2.6 Enhance stakeholder engagement and involve employers, alumni, and professional bodies more systematically in reviewing programme outcomes.

R2.7 Document corrective and preventive actions and record specific improvement measures taken in response to identified weaknesses.

R2.8 Increase transparency and make quality objectives, KPIs, and annual results readily accessible on the Department's website.

Principle 3: Design, Approval and Monitoring of the Quality of the New Undergraduate Programmes

Institutions should design the new undergraduate programmes following a defined written process, which will involve the participants, information sources and the approval committees for the programme. The objectives, the expected learning outcomes, the intended professional qualifications and the ways to achieve them are set out in the programme design. The above details, as well as information on the programme's structure, are published in the Student Guide.

The Institutions develop their new undergraduate study programmes, following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile, the identity and orientation of the programme, the objectives, the subject areas, the structure and organisation, the expected learning outcomes and the intended professional qualifications according to the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education are described at this stage. An important new element in the structure of the programmes is the introduction of courses for the acquisition of digital skills. The above components should be taken into consideration and constitute the subject of the programme design, which, among other things, should include: elements of the Institution's strategy, labour market data and employment prospects of graduates, smooth progression of students throughout the stages of the programme, the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the option of providing work experience to the students, the linking of teaching and research, the international experience in study programmes of similar disciplines, the relevant regulatory framework, and the official procedure for the approval of the programme by the Institution.

The procedure of approval or revision of the programmes provides for the verification of compliance with the basic requirements of the Standards by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).

Relevant documentation

- Senate decision for the establishment of the UGP
- Curriculum structure: courses, course categories (including courses for the acquisition of digital skills), ECTS awarded, expected learning outcomes according to the EQF, internship, mobility opportunities.
- Labour market data regarding the employment of graduates, international experience in a related scientific field.
- Student Guide
- Course outlines
- Teaching staff (list of areas of specialisation, its relation to the courses taught, employment relationship)
- QAU minutes for the internal evaluation of the new study programme and its compliance with the Standards

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Undergraduate Study Programme (UGP) of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the School of Agricultural Sciences at the University of Patras has been developed through a structured and institutionally approved process that aligns with the strategic priorities and quality assurance policies of the University. The programme constitutes the continuation and academic evolution of the former Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Technological Educational Institution (TEI) of Messologgi, originally established in 1981, and formally integrated into the University of Patras in 2019 under Law 4610/2019. The Department was subsequently renamed as the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture under Presidential Decree 52/2022.

The programme design has been developed in accordance with the University's strategic planning and internal quality assurance procedures. The University Strategic Plan 2022–2025 identifies the restructuring and enhancement of academic programmes as a central institutional objective following the integration of former TEI departments into the University structure. The Senate decision No. 190/29.7.2021 approving the restructuring and establishment of the academic unit demonstrates Institutional approval and governance oversight of the programme.

The curriculum structure is comprehensively documented within the Student Guide and Course Outline documentation. The programme includes compulsory, elective and specialised courses distributed across ten academic semesters and aligned with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The programme awards integrated Level 7 qualifications and incorporates theoretical teaching, laboratory training, practical applications, internships, mobility opportunities and diploma thesis work.

The programme clearly defines its mission, educational objectives, expected learning outcomes and intended professional qualifications. The Student Guide specifies that the programme aims to provide scientific knowledge and practical competencies in fisheries, aquaculture, aquatic ecosystems, aquatic resource management and environmental sustainability. The programme mission focuses on providing high-level scientific education and applied training in fisheries, aquaculture, aquatic ecosystems and environmental management, while promoting research, innovation and sustainable development within the aquatic production sector. The educational objectives of the programme include the development of scientific knowledge and professional competencies in fisheries science, aquaculture production, aquatic ecology, fish health, biotechnology, fisheries management, and environmental sustainability. Expected learning outcomes are linked to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and include knowledge acquisition, analytical thinking, research skills, interdisciplinary collaboration, digital competencies and professional application.

A significant element of the programme design is the integration of courses supporting the acquisition of digital skills. The Department has formally documented a dedicated catalogue of digital skills modules, including courses in Biostatistics, Informatics, Data Analysis, Geographic Information Systems, Remote Sensing Applications and Experimental Design and Simulations. These modules demonstrate alignment with contemporary scientific and labour market needs in fisheries and aquaculture sciences.

The curriculum demonstrates strong alignment between teaching, research and applied professional practice. The programme includes laboratory-based learning, research-oriented diploma projects and a structured internship framework. Furthermore, course outlines provide detailed information on teaching methods, learning outcomes, assessment methods and competencies for each module.

The programme also incorporates mobility opportunities through Erasmus+ and establishes mechanisms supporting internationalisation. The quality objectives of the programme include increasing outgoing and

incoming Erasmus student mobility and strengthening bilateral collaborations with international institutions.

Labour market relevance and graduate employability are explicitly considered in the programme design. The feasibility and sustainability study highlights the strategic importance of fisheries and aquaculture within the Greek economy and emphasises the Department's advantageous geographical location near significant aquatic ecosystems and aquaculture activity. The programme also provides professional rights of its graduates and eligibility for registration with the Geotechnical Chamber of Greece (GEOTEE) as Ichthyologists.

The programme is supported by qualified academic staff with specialisations corresponding to the courses taught. The teaching staff list demonstrates alignment between academic expertise and curriculum delivery. Some of the staff demonstrates stronger research activities than others.

The programme approval and monitoring procedures include oversight by the University Quality Assurance Unit (QAU/MODIP). The internal evaluation conducted by the Quality Assurance Unit 4957/2022 confirms that the programme has undergone internal review in accordance with national legislation and the Internal Quality Assurance System of the University (16/05/2025). The evaluation process utilised annual internal reports, quality indicators, programme revision proposals and quality targets to assess compliance and continuous improvement.

Additional governance and student support mechanisms further contribute to quality monitoring and programme effectiveness. These include the academic advisor system, student complaint management procedures, programme regulations, internship regulations and Erasmus mobility regulations.

II. Analysis

The programme reflects strong alignment with the strategic priorities of the University of Patras and the School of Agricultural Sciences. The restructuring of the Department following the integration of the former TEI into the University environment has enabled the transition from a technologically oriented programme into a modern university-level scientific curriculum with enhanced academic depth, research integration and professional orientation.

A key challenge identified for the programme relates to student retention rates, which currently appear relatively low. For example, although 249 students achieved the required entry marks and were eligible to enroll in the programme during the 2023–2024 academic year, only 11 students registered in the programme. This may indicate limited awareness among prospective students regarding the programme's academic value, professional opportunities and significance within the fisheries, aquaculture, and production sectors of the economy. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that students who do engage with the programme during their first year of study develop substantial interest in the scientific field and become increasingly motivated by the interdisciplinary and applied nature of the subject area.

The curriculum design demonstrates coherence and progression across study levels. Foundational scientific knowledge in biology, chemistry, zoology and oceanography is progressively linked with specialised fisheries and aquaculture subjects, research methodologies, applied technologies and environmental management topics. The structure supports smooth student progression through the programme while maintaining a balanced distribution of workload in accordance with ECTS principles. During the first years of the course, fundamental sciences are introduced, as the subject is quite specific, it would have been more interesting for the students to include some specific aquaculture information, related either at the

laboratory introduction or maybe focused on careers development of graduates.

The inclusion of digital skills courses constitutes a strong aspect of the programme. Contemporary fisheries and aquaculture sectors increasingly rely on data analysis, modelling, geographic information systems and digital technologies. The dedicated inclusion of modules such as Informatics, Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing Applications demonstrates responsiveness to evolving labour market and scientific needs. This reflects compliance with the requirement for integrating digital skills into new undergraduate programmes.

The programme further demonstrates appropriate alignment with the European and National Qualifications Frameworks. Learning outcomes are clearly articulated and linked to professional competencies, analytical skills, scientific reasoning and applied problem-solving abilities expected at Level 7 qualification standards. The integration of diploma theses, practical training and laboratory teaching additionally supports the development of advanced academic and professional competencies. However, although the curriculum appears academically comprehensive and professionally oriented, there is no evidence within the submitted documentation demonstrating the formal involvement of professional bodies, industry representatives or external stakeholders in the design, development or review of the programme curriculum. Greater engagement with external stakeholders could further strengthen the labour market relevance, professional alignment and responsiveness of the programme to current sector needs.

Given the strong geographical relevance of the Department to the subject area, it is important that the curriculum is more closely connected to the unique environmental, historical, and industrial context of the region. The wider Messologgi area hosts significant fisheries and aquaculture activity, which represents a major educational and professional advantage for the programme. However, the distinctive characteristics of the Messologgi lagoon ecosystem and the historical importance of the region in fisheries and aquaculture are not currently reflected sufficiently within the curriculum. In addition, laboratory teaching appears to rely predominantly on indoor laboratory-based exercises, with limited integration of field-based learning and practical utilisation of the natural aquatic resources available locally. Greater incorporation of experiential learning within the natural environment of Messologgi could significantly enhance the applied character, distinctiveness, and overall value of the programme.

The equipment and facilities available to students to support learning and the development of specialised expertise appear to be extensive. However, several of the simulated aquaculture systems were not operational during the EAAP visit, which may create a negative impression regarding the maintenance of facilities and the overall professional image of the programme. In addition, the limited functionality of some practical training resources could affect students' confidence in the programme's ability to provide a consistently high-quality educational and hands-on learning experience. There are though some new laboratory classes in development, especially the ones that were newly refurbished as part of successful grand applications.

The Department has also incorporated elements of internationalisation and mobility into programme design. Erasmus mobility targets and international collaboration objectives demonstrate awareness of European higher education priorities and contribute to the international orientation of the programme.

The labour market orientation of the programme is strongly justified. Greece has a well-established fisheries and aquaculture sector, and the Department benefits significantly from its strategic geographical location as well as its long-standing academic expertise within the discipline. Furthermore, the recognition of professional rights and eligibility for professional registration enhance both the employability of

graduates and the overall relevance of the programme to the national labour market. Additional enhancement of the programme website through the inclusion of graduate success stories (i.e., testimonials), career pathways and examples of professional achievements could further strengthen the visibility and attractiveness of the programme, potentially encouraging greater student interest and increasing enrolment numbers.

Nevertheless, while the programme demonstrates substantial strengths, certain areas could benefit from further enhancement. Although labour market relevance is well discussed qualitatively, more extensive quantitative labour market forecasting data and systematic graduate employability tracking mechanisms could strengthen evidence regarding employment outcomes and future workforce demand. Additionally, while internationalisation objectives are present, the proportion of incoming international students remains relatively limited and could be further developed through English-language modules and expanded international partnerships.

III. Conclusions

The USP of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture at the University of Patras substantially complies with Principle 3 concerning the design, approval and monitoring of the quality of new undergraduate programmes.

Panel Judgement

Principle 3: Design, approval and monitoring of the quality of the new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel agrees that this Programme leads to a Level 7 Qualification according to the National & European Qualifications Framework (Integrated Master)	YES	NO*
	X	

**In case of negative judgement, please justify.*

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

R3.1 Increase the laboratory classes/sessions that are related to the local ecosystem and industry.

R3.2 Enhance the programme website with dedicated sections showcasing graduate employment destinations, alumni success stories, industry collaborations and examples of professional achievements within the fisheries

and aquaculture sector. This would improve the visibility of career opportunities associated with the programme and strengthen its attractiveness to prospective students.

R3.3 Develop stronger partnerships with fisheries, aquaculture and environmental organisations through internships, field placements, guest lectures and collaborative projects, to further reinforce the connection between academic learning and labour market needs.

R3.4 Increase the promotion of the programme at secondary schools, career fairs and national educational events to improve awareness of the significance of the fisheries and aquaculture sector within the Greek economy and the professional opportunities available to graduates.

R3.5 Expand experiential and field-based learning opportunities linked to the unique aquatic ecosystems and aquaculture industries of the Messologgi region early in the curriculum, thereby strengthening the distinct identity and applied nature of the programme.

R3.6 Establish a systematic graduate tracking and employability monitoring mechanism to collect data on employment outcomes, career progression and employer satisfaction. Publishing these outcomes could further demonstrate the programme's relevance and effectiveness.

R3.7 Prioritise the restoration and full operational functionality of the simulated aquaculture systems to ensure that students consistently experience high-quality practical and applied training aligned with industry standards.

R3.8 Increase field-based and industry-linked practical training opportunities to complement laboratory-based simulations, particularly through partnerships with local fisheries and aquaculture industries in the Messologgi region.

R3.9 Develop demonstration and pilot aquaculture systems that reflect current industry technologies and sustainable production methods, thereby strengthening students' professional preparedness and confidence in the programme's practical training ability.

R3.10 Encourage greater student involvement in laboratory development, applied projects and research activities within the new facilities, which may enhance students' engagement.

Principle 4: Student-centred Approach in Learning, Teaching and Assessment of Students

The academic unit should ensure that the new undergraduate programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process. The assessment methods should reflect this approach.

In the implementation of student-centered learning and teaching, the academic unit:

- ✓ *respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths*
- ✓ *considers and uses different modes of delivery where appropriate*
- ✓ *flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods*
- ✓ *regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and application of pedagogical methods aiming at improvement*
- ✓ *regularly evaluates the quality and effectiveness of teaching, as documented especially through student surveys*
- ✓ *reinforces the student's sense of autonomy, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teaching staff*
- ✓ *promotes mutual respect in the student-teacher relationship*
- ✓ *applies appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints*

Relevant documentation

- *Questionnaires for assessment by the students*
- *Regulation for dealing with students' complaints and appeals*
- *Regulation for the function of the academic advisor*
- *Reference to the planned teaching modes and assessment methods*

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

Regarding student-centred approach in learning, teaching and assessment of students, the Department utilizes many and diverse methods of teaching, be it traditional lectures, using computers, organizing outdoor activities and fieldtrips or seminars and talks on matters regarding Fisheries and Aquaculture. The Department uses evaluation forms to assess the USP. Specifically, students fill out questionnaires so they can anonymously evaluate the quality and the effectiveness of the teaching means for each subject and instructor in the programme. These suggestions/complaints are then taken into consideration by the Department which applies the measures needed for the betterment of the USP. In addition, the Department offers academic advisors to students in case they have any inquiry about the programme, regulations or need assistance in any matter regarding their studies, their stay at the campus or other needs. Lastly, according to the students and the staff, the relationship between them is exemplary.

II. Analysis

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the School of Agricultural Sciences at the University of Patras utilizes flexible and diverse modes of teaching and means of delivery to make the USP more advanced, intriguing and exciting for every student. By using lectures, laboratories and workshops and individual or team assignments, students can easily get used to the University environment, learn how to operate in a team or individually during research or projects assigned by the instructors. Unfortunately, according to programme graduates, the courses that contain laboratories and hands on experience with Fisheries, Ichthyology and Aquaculture are few and are scheduled for the students to attend in the last years of the programme. Lastly, according to the programme graduates, few are the staff members that really try to teach the students practical methods and needed hands on skills by going out of their way to either include students in extra lab work or involve them in extracurricular activities.

All students have access to an onsite library which, according to students, is quite useful and offers peace and quiet for when they need to study or concentrate. Furthermore, students have access to online tools, media, websites and forums which they can use to get information on research or studying material and at the same time familiarize themselves with modern and necessary tools and equipment which will prove useful to them in the near future and provide them with mandatory digital skills.

The Department has adopted extracurricular activities such as fieldtrips and pedagogical visits to nearby Aquaculture and Fish Spawning stations in the private sector so the students can get in touch with national companies and associations so they can broaden the horizons and learn first-hand the reality of their sector or outdoor field days to Missolonghi Lagoon. Unfortunately, these visits are too few, considering that the vast majority of Aquaculture and Fisheries in Greece are near the Department grounds. Also, according to staff members, these field days, due to the nature of Fisheries, to be successful, have to be spontaneous and cannot be programmed months in advance due to many specific conditions that must be met such as weather, humidity, season and many other variables. This being the case, these outings are not organized by regular licenced private or public transport companies; as a result, they are being carried out by private vehicles of staff members at their own risk without any liability insurance.

The Department organizes seminars in which external speakers give speeches on subjects related to Fisheries and Aquaculture by which students get ideas, motivated and start step by step shaping their career paths.

According to the teaching staff and the students interviewed by the EEAP, the evaluation of the programme is of the utmost importance. Specifically, students fill out questionnaires/forms regarding courses, instructors, facilities and the overall state of the programme to evaluate the USP according to their standards and beliefs. These evaluations are crucial for the advancement and honing of the programme. Sadly, according to provided statistics and numbers, during the last six (6) years, the participation of the students in course/instructor evaluations has declined dramatically and dwindled down to one (1) to ten (10) evaluations per semester. As a result, not many actions and measures are taken by the Department administration and staff to address these results/complaints. The Department also has strict regulations regarding active students' complaints and appeals regarding courses, improper actions by the teaching and administrative staff, problems with teamwork and synergy and lack of guidance or evaluation by the academic staff.

The Academic Advisors are an excellent way to help students familiarize themselves with the programme and the University environment and get advice related to career paths and the way forward creating a bridge of immediate interaction and communication. The number of students under each Advisor is determined by the number of first year students divided by the number of teaching staff

members/Advisors. Then students are assigned alphabetically to each faculty member, and the same process follows for the students of each year. Each student's advisor is known upon registration to the Department, and they have to get in contact with him/her as soon as possible during their first semester. Students can also schedule meetings with their Academic Advisor and talk privately about matters that concern them; they are given a form in each meeting to complete regarding their complaints or needs.

The relationship between the students and the teaching staff is very friendly and both parties claim that due to the nature of this specific programme, the number of enrolled students, and the programme location, they are close to one another; the community they have formed is one to admire.

III. Conclusions

The Department has adopted and is following a strong student-centred teaching approach giving students the tools necessary to excel in almost every aspect and subject the programme offers, but organized extracurricular visits are few. The students are involved in every matter concerning the Department and work together along with the teaching staff for the betterment of the USP. The relation between them is exceptional enabling them to work on issues and matters coherently and effectively. The above is supported by positive comments the students gave during their interview by the EEAP. The percentage/number of students who take part in the course/instructor evaluation is extremely low leading to few actions taken.

Panel Judgement

Principle 4: Student-centred approach in learning, teaching and assessment of students	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

R4.1 The Department should increase the number of extracurricular visits and field trips to nearby companies and aquaculture sites so that students can get to know from early on the environment and the opportunities this sector has to offer.

R4.2 The Department staff should encourage students to participate in the course/instructor evaluations by providing feedback and showing the latter that their suggestions and recommendations are taken into consideration for the betterment of the programme.

Principle 5: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Academic Qualifications and Award of Degrees and Certificates of Competence of the New Study Programmes

Academic units should develop and apply published regulations addressing all aspects and phases of studies of the programme (admission, progression, recognition and degree award).

All the issues from the beginning to the end of studies should be governed by the internal regulations of the academic units. Indicatively:

- ✓ *the registration procedure of the admitted students and the necessary documents - according to the law - and the support of the newly admitted students*
- ✓ *student rights and obligations, and monitoring of student progression*
- ✓ *internship issues, granting of scholarships*
- ✓ *the procedures and terms for writing the thesis (diploma or degree)*
- ✓ *the procedure of award and recognition of degrees, the duration of studies, the conditions for progression and assurance of the progress of students in their studies*

as well as

- ✓ *the terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility*

Appropriate recognition procedures rely on relevant academic practice for recognition of credits among various European academic departments and Institutions in line with the principles of the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. Graduation represents the culmination of the students' study period. Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes, and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed (Diploma Supplement).

All the above must be made public within the context of the Student Guide.

Relevant documentation

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the new study programme*
- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility and student assignments*
- *Printed Diploma Supplement*

Certificate from the President of the academic unit that the diploma supplement is awarded to all graduates without exception together with the degree or the certificate of completion of studies

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

All information related to Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Academic Qualifications, as well as Award of Degrees and Certificate of Competence is provided in the Student's Guide Handbook and is readily available in the Department's website. Students are admitted to this USP via the national examination or by placement examination for those holding another degree from another University programme. The Department holds the Student's Welcome Day, during which freshman students get accustomed to the University. The USP Administration and specifically the Secretary of the Department holds all necessary documents with every student's progression of studies which is monitored via many different types of evaluation and knowledge assessment.

The Department participates in the Erasmus+ programme which enables student mobility to and from other international institutes. The Department also takes part in many scholarship programmes. The ECTS is applied throughout the Curriculum and dictates the progression of students' studies towards the final goal of obtaining the diploma. The Diploma Thesis is a required core course to obtain the degree. The Thesis allocation for every student and the exam/evaluation of the course is done under standard procedures. Students by the end of their studies can get a certificate of digital knowledge. The Diploma Supplement, the diploma itself and the Certificate of Competence both in Greek and English are all issued for all graduates free of charge and without request.

II. Analysis

Enrolment to the USP is achieved through national examination for secondary education students; placement examination for graduates of any other tertiary education Department; transfer students from either the Department of Agriculture, Ichthyology and Marine Environment of the University of Thessaly or the Department of Oceanography and Marine Biosciences of the University of the Aegean. The latter have recognized semesters and courses between the Departments and get the allocated ECTS that count towards their degree in this USP. That way these students begin their studies in this programme from the second year on. The Student's Welcome Day, hosted at the start of each academic year, provides information about the courses, students' options and career paths, including possible postgraduate studies and various professions.

The progression of the students' studies towards the completion of their degree is based on the ECTS. In total, students need 300 ECTS to acquire the degree and graduate. Practical training is an elective course that students can participate if they wish to do so on the last 4 semesters of their studies in which they can take up elective courses. The course lasts 2 months during which students can work in many organizations relevant to the USP and grants 5 ECTS. According to the Department staff, practical training is funded and organized by NSRF (ΕΣΠΑ).

Students' progression is constantly monitored based on their lecture participation, laboratory exercises, individual or team projects, work assignments and the progress of the final examinations. Progression records are held by the Secretary of the Department and is readily available to the students in Greek and English should they wish to acquire a certificate of studies, analytical grades or competence for any external use. Students' mobility is possible through the Erasmus+ and Erasmus Mundus programmes and is encouraged according to the students' interview by the EEAP. Students can submit their interest and application form along with a certificate of competency in a foreign language and get in touch with the foreign institute. After that, the institution has to send an acceptance letter on which the dates and conditions of the mobility are clearly stated. Various courses in foreign Universities count according to specific criteria as similar to this USP's courses and have the respective ECTS given to the students.

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture participates in many scholarship programmes such as the

University of Patras, the State Foundation of Scholarships (I.K.Y.), EU Scholarships, Trusts and Organisations, Foreign Cultural Foundations, Private Citizens, Foreign Governments and various Research Institutions which all provide financial aid to financially challenged students and options/opportunities for them to study.

Students have the option to obtain the Certificate of Digital Competence by partaking in a total of 10 courses (4 core courses, 2 elective courses and 4 core Diploma Thesis courses). By the end of their studies, graduates will have the title of Agronomist and Ichthyologist and the opportunity and qualifications to be employed in public organizations, in the private sector and in international organizations such as: the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, in central and regional services, and as secondary education teachers; Ministries of National Economy, Environment – Spatial Planning and Public Works, etc.; Cooperative Organizations in related positions in departments of Production, Processing and Marketing of Agricultural Products, etc.; International Organizations such as UN, EU, UNESCO, F.A.O., WHO, etc.

The above information is readily available and easily accessible in detail on the Department website as separate annotations and in the Student's Guide Handbook/Study Guide. The above-mentioned information was further clarified through the discussions of the EEAP with the Department administration and faculty members. Stakeholders from various public and private organizations working in the related area/sector were very supportive of this programme.

III. Conclusions

Student admission, progression, recognition of academic qualifications and award of degrees and certificates are very effectively and efficiently handled. The students' progression is based on ECTS which complies with the Standard Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Union. Information on all of the above is very easily accessible on the Department website and the Student's Guide Handbook.

Panel Judgement

Principle 5: Student admission, progression, recognition of academic qualifications, and award of degrees and certificates of competence of the new study programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

The EEAP has no specific recommendations for Principle 5.

Principle 6: Ensuring the Competence and High Quality of the Teaching Staff of the New Undergraduate Study Programmes

Institutions should assure themselves of the competence, the level of knowledge and skills of the teaching staff of the academic units, and apply fair and transparent processes for their recruitment, training and further development.

The Institution should attend to the adequacy of the teaching staff of the academic unit, the appropriate staff-student ratio, the suitable categories of staff, the appropriate subject areas and specialisations, the fair and objective recruitment process, the high research performance, the training – development, the staff development policy (including participation in mobility schemes, conferences and educational leaves- as mandated by law).

More specifically, the academic unit should set up and follow clear, transparent and fair processes for the recruitment of properly qualified staff and offer them conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching and research; offer opportunities and promote the professional development of the teaching staff; encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research; encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies; promote the increase of the volume and quality of the research output within the academic unit; follow quality assurance processes for all staff members (with respect to attendance requirements, performance, self-assessment, training, etc.); develop policies to attract highly qualified academic staff.

Relevant documentation

- *Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment*
- *Regulations or employment contracts, and obligations of the teaching staff*
- *Policy for staff recruitment, support and development*
- *Performance of the teaching staff in scientific-research and teaching work, also based on internationally recognised systems of scientific evaluation (e.g., Google Scholar, Scopus, etc.)*

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture provides evidence that it has teaching staff with appropriate academic qualifications, subject specialisations and research experience to support the delivery of the Undergraduate Study Programme.

The teaching staff list shows a clear mapping between members of staff, their academic rank, subject expertise and the courses assigned to them. The Department includes permanent academic staff with

specialisations in areas such as aquaculture, fisheries resources, biometrics, informatics, fish pathology, aquatic organism physiology, fisheries management and quality control. This demonstrates that teaching allocations are broadly aligned with the scientific identity of the programme and the specialist fields included in the curriculum.

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture employs the following permanent academic and teaching staff (2024-2025): 5 full professors, 3 associate professors, 3 assistant professors, 1 laboratory teaching staff member, and 4 special technical laboratory staff members.

The Department is going to employ further academic staff, one of which has been employed recently in the subject area of nutrition of farmed fish. Four more academic staff members are going to be employed soon as the recruitment process is currently active.

The accreditation proposal and documentation received by the EAAP states that current staffing covers a relatively broad range of subject areas, reflecting the interdisciplinary character of the Department.

The Student Guide includes staff profiles and representative publications, showing active research engagement in fisheries, aquaculture, aquatic ecosystems, fish pathology, environmental science and related fields. Examples include publications in Aquaculture Research, Hydrobiologia, Fisheries Research, Fish and Shellfish Immunology and other relevant journals. Some staff have strong research profile. It is quite noteworthy that students are also able to be part of research programmes and thus be included in conference and journal publications.

The Department supports staff development through participation in conferences, seminars, research programmes and scientific activities. It is important to note that academic staff has not been supported in completing personal development mini programmes, in subjects like unconscious bias, stress management, teaching and learning methodologies...

The conditions of employment support academic freedom, equal opportunity, teaching distinction and research development. The Department also seeks to provide new teaching staff with access to appropriate equipment for teaching and research needs.

There is evidence of quality assurance of teaching performance. The accreditation proposal states that all teaching staff are evaluated by students at the end of each semester through MODIP's electronic evaluation system. It also notes that teaching performance, research performance and internal evaluation findings are communicated to teaching staff so that they can take improvement actions.

The Department also supports staff mobility and international engagement. The programme regulations state that Erasmus+ supports staff mobility for teaching and training, and that internationalisation is a priority for the Department.

II. Analysis

The teaching staff profile is appropriately aligned with the curriculum, and the subject areas represented among academic staff correspond closely to the core areas of the programme, including fisheries biology, aquaculture, aquatic systems, fish pathology, biotechnology, environmental management, data analysis and quality systems. The teaching allocation table provides a transparent link between staff expertise and course delivery, which supports confidence in the academic integrity of the programme.

The Department demonstrates a clear research-teaching connection. Staff publications and research profiles indicate that teaching is informed by active scholarly work in relevant scientific fields. This is particularly important for a five-year integrated programme, where students are expected to develop advanced scientific and professional capabilities. The inclusion of diploma dissertations, laboratory teaching and specialist courses further strengthens the relationship between research activity and student learning.

Staff development mechanisms are present and appropriate. The availability of Erasmus+ mobility for teaching and training provides a further route for pedagogic and international development, however only a few members of staff utilise the opportunity

The quality assurance processes for teaching are also clearly evidenced. Student evaluation of teaching through electronic questionnaires provides a formal mechanism for monitoring teaching quality, while internal evaluation processes allow teaching and research performance to be reviewed. The communication of evaluation results to staff is a positive feature, as it supports reflective practice and continuous improvement.

Although staff development opportunities are described, a more explicit staff development policy with annual targets, participation rates, training priorities and follow-up evaluation would provide clearer assurance. The Department's strategy to strengthen staffing is positive, particularly the reference to new academic posts in progress and planned future appointments, but this should continue to be monitored against student numbers, teaching load and specialist curriculum needs.

III. Conclusions

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture demonstrates full compliance with Principle 6.

Panel Judgement

Principle 6: Ensuring the competence and high quality of the teaching staff of the new undergraduate study programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

R6.1 Develop a more formalised staff development strategy with clearly defined annual objectives related to professional development, pedagogical training, research performance, internationalisation and innovation in

teaching practices and methodologies.

R6.2 Encourage greater participation of academic staff in international research collaborations, Erasmus+ mobility schemes, scientific networks and interdisciplinary projects to enhance international visibility and knowledge exchange.

R6.3 Further strengthen the integration of research and teaching by increasing opportunities for undergraduate students to participate in staff-led research projects, applied fieldwork and industry-linked scientific activities.

Principle 7: Learning Resources and Student Support of the New Undergraduate Programmes

Institutions should have adequate funding to meet the needs for the operation of the academic unit and the new study programme as well as the means to cover all their teaching and learning needs. They should -on the one hand- provide satisfactory infrastructure and services for learning and student support and -on the other hand- facilitate direct access to them by establishing internal rules to this end (e.g., lecture rooms, laboratories, libraries, networks, boarding, career and social policy services, etc.).

Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient resources, on a planned and long-term basis, to support learning and academic activity in general, in order to offer students the best possible level of studies. The above means include facilities such as, the necessary general and specific libraries and possibilities for access to electronic databases, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communication services, support and counselling services. When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed students, students with disabilities), in addition to the shift towards student-centred learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the institutional context. Students should be informed about all available services. In delivering support services, the role of support and administration staff is crucial and therefore this segment of staff needs to be qualified and have opportunities to develop its competences.

Relevant documentation

- Detailed description of the infrastructure and services made available by the Institution to the academic unit to support learning and academic activity (human resources, infrastructure, services, etc.) and the corresponding specific commitment of the Institution to financially cover these infrastructure-services from state or other resources
- Administrative support staff of the new undergraduate programme (job descriptions, qualifications and responsibilities)
- Informative / promotional material given to students with reference to the available services

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture belongs to the School of Agricultural Sciences of the University of Patras. The campus in the city of Messologgi, located 5 km from the town center, hosts the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture. It has sufficient human resources, appropriate infrastructure, and comprehensive services to support learning and overall academic activity.

The human resources include academic, administrative, and other support staff. The infrastructure includes classrooms and study areas, network facilities, computer rooms, a library, educational and scientific

equipment. The services include information and communication technology services, as well as support and counseling services. Within the framework of the internal quality assurance process, the quantity and quality of the available infrastructure and services are systematically monitored, and corrective actions are initiated whenever deficiencies are identified. The financial support for services and infrastructure is provided through the Institution's resources.

II. Analysis

The Department is academically and administratively autonomous. The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture employs the following permanent academic and teaching staff (2024–2025): 5 full professors, 3 associate professors, 3 assistant professors, 1 laboratory teaching staff member, and 4 special technical laboratory staff members. Finally, the Department is supported by 3 administrative staff members.

To cover the courses of the undergraduate study programme, the Department recruits temporary teaching staff (Adjunct Lecturers) in accordance with Article 173 of Law 4957/2022, as well as through the programme "Acquisition of Academic Teaching Experience by Young Scientists Holding a PhD." In addition, it benefits from its proximity to the Department of Agriculture by assigning General Education courses to faculty members of that Department. Regarding the number of faculty members, it is worth noting that after a reduction in staff over the last five years due to retirements, the number of faculty members will increase by 27% from the next academic semester (2026–2027) through the filling of new positions replacing those retirements. Specifically, the procedures for two tenure-track Assistant Professor positions have already been completed and publication in the Government Gazette is pending in the fields of "Recirculating Systems" and "Marine Biology." In addition, the recruitment process is underway for two new positions in the fields of "Marketing and Policy of Agricultural Products" and "Informatics and Modelling."

During 2026, a faculty position in "Fish Pathology" is expected to be announced following a staff member's death, and this appointment will likely be completed during the following academic year (2027–2028). Furthermore, according to the Department's three-year strategic plan approved by the Senate of the University of Patras, the Ministry of Education has been requested to approve two additional faculty positions in the fields of "Ichthyology" and "Freshwater Fish Farming."

The University of Patras has a complex of buildings in Messologgi located 5 km west of the city center. Access to the campus from the Ionian Highway is through the exit toward Messologgi, leading directly to the Department's facilities. The Department's infrastructure consists of administrative and educational spaces. The administrative facilities are located within a single building that includes the Secretariat offices, the Head of Department's office, and a meeting room.

The campus complex hosting the Department includes ceremonial amphitheaters, a library with a computer network, a conference center, and a student restaurant. Within the campus there is a renovated student residence complex, as well as sports facilities including an indoor gymnasium with stands, strength-training equipment, a medical office, dance and martial arts rooms, and outdoor football, basketball, volleyball, and tennis courts. Funding and maintenance of the infrastructure are covered by institutional resources. However, some facilities require renovation and others require maintenance.

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture includes 5 buildings, 7 classrooms, 11 teaching laboratories, 10 research laboratories, and 25 offices and auxiliary spaces. The Department's laboratory and research equipment is generally modern and innovative, ensuring the transfer of cutting-edge knowledge in its academic fields, while modern digital equipment is available in classrooms and laboratories. The Department has 70 computers. All classrooms are equipped with fully functional lecture projection systems

and air conditioning. In addition, all facilities have reliable internet access, greatly facilitating staff work. Toilets are available in all buildings. Cleanliness standards are satisfactory. Central heating and air-conditioning-based heating are available throughout the premises. A diesel-powered generator also operates in case of power outages.

Students are transported hourly to the campus from the city of Messologgi by public buses. The first departure to the campus is at 8:15 a.m. and the last departure from the campus to the city is at 8:15 p.m. No bus routes operate during weekends, which creates difficulties for the social life of students living on campus.

The Secretariat is staffed by three administrative employees. It is responsible for administrative, academic, and student affairs, including student registration and transfers, management of course declarations and grades, scholarships, issuing transcripts and degrees, graduate entrance examinations, and more. The Secretariat serves students on all working days from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Services are also provided electronically.

The Department's research laboratories are aligned with its main research axes: Aquaculture, Fisheries Management, and the Environment. The "Applied Ecology of Aquatic Ecosystems" Laboratory is an officially established research laboratory (Government Gazette 2680/B/11.12.2015).

Students have access to all services provided by the Department and the University of Patras. These include electronic services such as webmail, wireless network access, e-learning systems (e-class), access to the University Library, and more. They also include services offered by individual University offices, such as Student Welfare Services, the Career Office, and the Internship Office.

In Messologgi there is also a student residence and all student welfare facilities, including a restaurant, gymnasium, and cafeteria. Student meals are provided in a dedicated restaurant located on campus. Student representatives reported that the quality of the food is satisfactory. Meals are provided from September 1st until June 30th of the following year, excluding Christmas and Easter holidays.

During the on-site visit by the EEAP, students reported that some landlords charge extra fees for the use of appliances such as washing machines and even remove the knobs from electric stoves to prevent their use.

The Department provides academic and career counseling, as well as psychological support. Evaluation includes support for student exchanges, management of applications, and participant feedback.

Students are informed from the beginning and throughout their studies about all services offered by the University of Patras. Information is provided in person during orientation ceremonies for first-year students, as well as through the Study Guide, announcements on the Department website, academic advisors, and other channels.

Students have direct and detailed information through the official website of the Department, which is very well structured. The Department systematically informs students through the announcement board on its website regarding administrative services and University services related to students.

III. Conclusions

The USP of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture at the University of Patras fully complies with Principle 7 concerning Learning Resources and Student Support of the New Undergraduate Programme.

Panel Judgement

Principle 7: Learning resources and student support of the new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

R7.1 Private landlords renting apartments to students should be inspected and regulated by the University to avoid abuse of tenants.

R7.2 The campus grounds and the external conditions of buildings require frequent maintenance.

R7.3 It is necessary to establish public bus routes to and from the campus during weekends so that students can travel to the city.

Principle 8: Collection, Analysis and Use of Information for the Organisation and Operation of New Undergraduate Programmes

The Institutions and their academic units bear full responsibility for collecting, analysing and using information, aimed at the efficient management of undergraduate programmes of study and related activities, in an integrated, effective and easily accessible way.

Effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on the operation of Institutions, academic units and study programmes feed data into the internal quality assurance system. The following data is of interest: key performance indicators for the student body profile, student progression, success and drop-out rates, student satisfaction with the programme, availability of learning resources and student support. The completion of the fields of National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) should be correct and complete with the exception of the fields that concern graduates in which a null value is registered.

Relevant documentation

- Report from the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) at the level of the Institution, the department and the new UGP
- Operation of an information management system for the collection of administrative data for the implementation of the programme (Students' Record)
- Other tools and procedures designed to collect data on the academic and administrative functions of the academic unit and the study programme

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

A key role in the collection, analysis, and use of information for the effective management of the USP of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, as well as other related departmental activities, is mainly played by:

- the information system of the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) of the University of Patras,
- the Integrated National Quality Information System (OPESP) of the HAHE,
- the unified electronic Secretariat system for Department services (such as course declarations, grade submissions via class web, etc.), to which, in addition to the Department Secretariat, the teaching staff also have partial access rights,
- and other supporting information systems (such as e-class, Eudoxus, etc.).

II. Analysis

All members of the Department participate in the process of collecting information regarding the operation of the Department. Specifically, students participate by completing questionnaires, the teaching staff participate by completing individual inventory reports and course inventory reports on a semester basis, and the administrative staff participate by extracting data from the electronic Secretariat systems and incorporating them into the reports prepared by the Department.

The main tools used for collecting information and deriving useful conclusions are:

- the unified Information System of the Institution's MODIP,
- various Secretariat documents, including the electronic Secretariat system,
- student course/instructor evaluation questionnaires (undergraduate and postgraduate), which assess various aspects of teaching and staff performance,
- questionnaires and inventory reports for courses and staff,
- the Scopus and Google Scholar databases,
- and other information systems such as e-class.

The analysis of the information collected is mainly conducted by the Department's Internal Evaluation Group (OMEA) and subsequently by the Department Assembly, where the results are assessed. The analysis conducted by OMEA is based on statistical methods and aims both to identify areas operating satisfactorily and, more importantly, those requiring improvement. The conclusions derived from the analysis are used in the proposed improvement plans for the Department's operation.

The Department began its evaluation procedures during the academic year 2022–2023 since it officially started operating as a Department of the University of Patras in the academic year 2019–2020. As a result, the Department is not yet able to adequately evaluate key indicators related to the student population profile, dropout rates, graduation rates, student satisfaction with the curriculum, and similar metrics. The data from the annual evaluation reports and their processing (statistical analyses, reports, etc.) are available within the Department for assessment. This information is used for monitoring, evaluating, and revising the objectives of the USP and contributes to the decision-making process for its improvement, as well as to the drafting of evaluation reports.

Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP)

The procedures established for collecting information regarding students, staff, infrastructure, the structure of the USP, the organization and quality of teaching, service provision, etc., are based on the evaluation information system of the MODIP of the University of Patras. By adopting the standards of the HAHE, the University of Patras has developed an information system for collecting and recording data concerning the overall operation of the institution. Through this system, the information mainly collected concerns:

- the development of Department personnel (students, faculty members, administrative and technical staff),
- the undergraduate study programme,
- the postgraduate and doctoral study programmes,
- teaching activities,
- research activities and funded research and development projects.

As part of the evaluation process, the Department submits reports containing extensive information regarding the progress of its USPs, the teaching and research activities of faculty members, the administrative staff and infrastructure of the Department, the results of the evaluation of teaching work and support structures by students and graduates (through the corresponding questionnaires), as well as proposals for issues requiring improvement and ways to implement them.

The reports present aggregated results to facilitate the extraction of useful conclusions and support the decision-making process for future improvement actions. These reports are uploaded to the MODIP information system of the University of Patras and submitted to HAHE. Additionally, the OMEA processes, analyzes, and presents the results of the Department's reports and evaluations to the General Assembly. Following the study and discussion of the results, improvement actions are proposed whenever required, and, if deemed necessary, the Department's strategic planning and corresponding policies are revised and updated.

Electronic Secretariat

Through the Electronic Secretariat information system, the Department provides students and faculty members with a series of online electronic services: progress.upatras.gr/irj/portal

Specifically, for students, the system provides electronic services such as:

registration in the undergraduate study programme, application for postgraduate programmes, renewal of registration, course declarations, access to personal academic records, study regulations, progress monitoring, submission of applications for certificates, information regarding the academic structure, courses, instructors, etc. The electronic Secretariat system also offers services to faculty members related to grade submission and publication, maintenance of grading history per course, and extraction of statistical data regarding student performance and academic progress. Using this information system, the Department collects, analyzes, and uses data to derive conclusions about key performance indicators (e.g., course examination success rates, re-examination rates, etc.), as well as specific and general characteristics of the student population.

“Alexandria”

“Alexandria” is a tool for connecting with international bibliographic databases (Google Scholar and Scopus), which records the bibliometric performance of the University within specific timeframes. Users have access to individual bibliometric data (through their institutional account), aggregated University statistics, and selected aggregated statistics, for example by School, Department, or academic rank.

III. Conclusions

The USP of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture at the University of Patras fully complies with Principle 8 concerning Collection, Analysis and Use of Information for the Organisation and Operation of New Undergraduate Programme.

Panel Judgement

Principle 8: Collection, analysis and use of information for the organisation and operation of new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

The EEAP has no specific recommendations for Principle 8.

Principle 9: Public Information Concerning the New Undergraduate Programmes

Institutions and academic units should publish information about their teaching and academic activities in a direct and readily accessible way. The relevant information should be up-to-date, clear and objective.

Information on the Institutions' activities is useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public. Therefore, Institutions and their academic units must provide information about their activities, including the new undergraduate programmes they offer, the intended learning outcomes, the degrees awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students. Information is also provided, to the extent possible, on graduate employment perspectives.

Relevant documentation

- *Dedicated segment on the website of the department for the promotion of the new study programme*
- *Bilingual version of the website of the academic unit with complete, clear and objective information*
- *Provision for website maintenance and updating*

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the University of Patras provides publicly accessible information concerning the USP through a dedicated departmental website and a range of official Institution documents. The programme's academic identity, objectives, structure, regulations, learning outcomes and student support mechanisms are publicly communicated through the Department's online presence and published study materials.

The Department maintains a dedicated website for the promotion and dissemination of information related to the Undergraduate Study Programme. The website address is consistently referenced throughout the programme documentation and course outlines. The accreditation presentation additionally highlights the Department's online presence through the official departmental website.

The Student Guide provides extensive and detailed information concerning the operation and organisation of the programme. It includes information on the Department's history, mission, governance structure, academic regulations, curriculum, ECTS allocation, course content, learning outcomes, professional rights, student support services, mobility opportunities and graduation requirements. The Guide also includes details regarding academic calendars, examination periods, and programme regulations for students.

The programme structure and course information are transparently communicated through detailed course outlines. The course outline documentation includes information on course objectives, weekly teaching hours, ECTS credits, language of instruction, availability to Erasmus students, learning outcomes, teaching

methods and assessment procedures. This contributes to clear communication regarding teaching, learning and assessment practices.

The programme's intended learning outcomes and professional qualifications are explicitly published within the Student Guide. The Guide specifies the expected competencies and professional orientation of graduates, including scientific knowledge, research abilities, environmental management competencies and professional rights associated with registration in the Geotechnical Chamber of Greece (GEOTEE).

The Department provides information regarding student learning opportunities and mobility schemes. Erasmus mobility regulations and opportunities are included within programme regulations and quality objectives. The programme also publishes information regarding practical training, diploma theses and postgraduate study opportunities.

The Department additionally communicates information concerning student support mechanisms and institutional regulations. Publicly available regulations include the academic advisor system, complaint and appeals procedures, mobility regulations and practical training regulations.

The programme documentation also indicates that some information is available in English; however, the website visited on the 20/5/2026 was not friendly in use.

II. Analysis

The Department provides extensive information regarding the Undergraduate Study Programme in a direct, structured and publicly accessible manner.

The Student Guide represents a significant strength of the programme's public information strategy. It provides comprehensive information on curriculum structure, learning outcomes, student regulations, teaching organisation, assessment procedures and professional prospects. The information is detailed, clearly organised and aligned with the requirements of transparency and accessibility expected in higher education programmes.

The course outlines further strengthen transparency by providing detailed module-level information regarding educational objectives, teaching methods, workload and assessment procedures. This supports prospective and current students in understanding programme expectations and learning requirements. The publication of learning outcomes and competencies also demonstrates alignment with student-centred educational principles and European quality assurance expectations.

The Department demonstrates good practice in communicating programme regulations and support systems. Public access to regulations concerning mobility, practical training, academic advising and complaint procedures contributes positively to institutional transparency and student support.

The existence of a dedicated departmental website supports programme visibility and accessibility for prospective students, graduates and external stakeholders. The website in English was not working appropriately.

The Department also demonstrates evidence of regular updating of public information, as reflected by the recent publication dates of programme documentation. This supports confidence that information is current and actively maintained.

Although substantial information is available regarding programme content and student opportunities, less evidence is provided concerning the publication of graduate employment statistics, pass rates or broader performance indicators. While professional rights and employability prospects are discussed qualitatively, systematic publication of graduate outcomes and programme performance metrics would further strengthen compliance with Principle 9 and enhance transparency for stakeholders.

III. Conclusions

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture demonstrates full compliance with Principle 9.

Panel Judgement

Principle 9: Public information concerning the new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

R9.1 Ensure that the English-language version of the Department website is fully operational, regularly maintained, and accessible across all pages and functions, to support international students, collaborators, and external stakeholders effectively.

R9.2 Introduce a dedicated section on graduate employability outcomes, including employment statistics, career pathways, alumni achievements, and examples of professional progression within the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

R9.3 Publish additional programme performance indicators, such as pass rates, graduation rates, student satisfaction findings and mobility participation rates, to further strengthen transparency and alignment with quality assurance expectations.

Principle 10: Periodic Internal Review of the New Study Programmes

Institutions and academic units should have in place an internal quality assurance system, for the audit and annual internal review of their new programmes, so as to achieve the objectives set for them, through monitoring and amendments, with a view to continuous improvement. Any actions taken in the above context, should be communicated to all parties concerned.

Regular monitoring, review and revision of the new study programmes aim at maintaining the level

of educational provision and creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students. The above comprise the evaluation of: the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up to date; the changing needs of society; the students' workload, progression and completion; the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students; the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme; the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the programme. Programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date.

Relevant documentation

- *Procedure for the re-evaluation, redefinition and updating of the curriculum*
- *Procedure for mitigating weaknesses and upgrading the structure of the UGP and the learning process*
- *Feedback processes on strategy implementation and quality targeting of the new UGP and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*
- *Results of the annual internal evaluation of the study programme by the QAU and the relevant minutes*

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

IV. Findings

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (Chair, members of the Internal Evaluation Group – OMEA, and Secretariat) implements the internal evaluation procedures established by the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP). For this purpose, it collaborates closely with University MODIP and actively participates in all relevant activities. Halfway through each academic semester, the internal evaluation of the Department is conducted as follows: students anonymously evaluate courses and instructors by completing questionnaires through a special electronic platform developed by the Institution's MODIP. In addition, through the same electronic platform, the teaching staff annually submit data concerning their scientific and research work, as well as the courses taught during the specific academic year.

At the end of each academic year, the results of the student evaluations are communicated to the instructors and to OMEA. Considering both the evaluation results and the aggregated data derived from the individual faculty activity reports and course report forms, the OMEA prepares the annual internal evaluation report within the MODIP information system.

The evaluation results and the conclusions arising from the annual internal evaluation report are discussed at the General Assembly to highlight strengths and make decisions regarding corrective actions. The objective is to improve the educational and scientific work provided by the Department, as well as to enhance the undergraduate study programme. It should be noted that based on the documentation received by the EEAP, the latest annual internal evaluation of the Department was conducted in the academic year 2021–2022.

The courses of the undergraduate study programme, especially elective courses in the later semesters, are evaluated both in terms of their subject matter and the level of student interest in selecting them. These courses are under continuous monitoring to ensure that they cover modern subject areas that deepen and broaden students' knowledge and support their professional development. The annual internal evaluation of the Department reflects both student opinions regarding each course and their preferences for specific elective courses. Therefore, data from the course report forms provide information of areas where the undergraduate curriculum requires revision or updating. Based on their academic fields, course instructors and OMEA propose possible changes, and the General Assembly approves or rejects these changes. Subsequently, the Institution's Senate votes on these modifications. The decisions are incorporated into the Study Guide and published in the Department website.

The revision and updating of course syllabi are carried out annually under the responsibility of the Chair and faculty members of the Department. Each course instructor proposes updates to the course description and structure. The instructors' proposals are based on their experience teaching the course in previous academic years, their understanding of labor market needs, and feedback received from students during the courses.

V. Analysis

The process of addressing weaknesses, strengthening positive aspects, and improving the learning process is continuous and takes place throughout the academic year. It involves all stakeholders, namely instructors, students, the department secretariat, and other staff members. The aim is to optimize learning procedures and achieve the learning objectives of the undergraduate study programme. More specifically, potential weaknesses arising during the learning process may be addressed at two levels. Initially, through a private discussion between the Chair of the Department and the instructor to identify weaknesses and find ways of improvement. At a second level, discussion of the issue at the General Assembly may contribute to resolving the identified weaknesses.

Feedback Mechanisms for the Strategy and Quality Objectives of the New Undergraduate Study Programme include:

- Continuous communication with students to strengthen channels of cooperation with instructors, aiming at the optimization of the undergraduate study programme.
- Evaluation of courses by students each academic semester through an official process designed and supervised by the Institution's MODIP.
- Continuous communication with professional bodies with the aim of linking the undergraduate study programme and the knowledge provided to the needs of the labor market.
- Review of best practices in corresponding departments in Greece and abroad.

The above are taken into consideration so that the undergraduate study programme is updated annually. It should be noted that the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture began operating its undergraduate study programme in the academic year 2019–2020, and additional time is expected to be needed for the evaluation process to be fully informed by data from all courses.

In the documentation received by the EEAP, there was no documented evidence of feedback by students, external stakeholders, and professional bodies in the annual programme evaluation, an important requirement set by HAHE, aiming at the continuous improvement of the programme.

VI. Conclusions

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture at the University of Patras complies substantially with Principle 10 concerning Periodic Internal Review of the New Study Programme.

Panel Judgement

Principle 10: Periodic internal review of the new study programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

R10.1 Develop a procedure for the systematic and documented feedback by students, alumni, and external stakeholders. Make such input a necessary component of every annual internal evaluation of the USP.

Principle 11: Regular External Evaluation and Accreditation of the New Undergraduate Programmes

The new undergraduate study programmes should regularly undergo evaluation by panels of external experts set by HAHE, aiming at accreditation. The results of the external evaluation and accreditation are used for the continuous improvement of the Institutions, academic units and study programmes. The term of validity of the accreditation is determined by HAHE.

HAHE is responsible for administrating the programme accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure and implemented by a panel of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, based on the Reports submitted by the panels, with a specific term of validity, following to which revision is required. The accreditation of the quality of the programmes acts as a means of verification of the compliance of the programme with the Standards, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees. Both academic units and institutions must consistently consider the conclusions and the recommendations submitted by the panels of experts for the continuous improvement of the programme.

Relevant documentation

- *Progress report on the results from the utilisation of the recommendations of the external evaluation of the Institution and of the IQAS Accreditation Report.*

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The University of Patras, through its Quality Assurance Unit (QAU/MODIP), in coordination with the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, organized and supported the May 2026 external evaluation process of the USP according to the specific guidelines and directions of the HAHE.

The USP of the reformed Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the University of Patras has not undergone an external evaluation by a HAHE-appointed accreditation panel. The last external evaluation of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the former Technological Educational Institution (TEI) of Messologgi was in 2010. External evaluations of the University of Patras Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) were conducted in 2018 and 2024. The latest external evaluation found the IQAS of the University of Patras fully compliant and was accredited by the HAHE. In the IQAS Accreditation Report (26 May 2024), there were no specific recommendations for follow-up actions pertinent to undergraduate study programmes. Recommendations for follow-up actions with relevance to the current USP evaluation included in the 2024 IQAS Accreditation Report pertain to involvement of students in committees, and participation of external stakeholders in internal processes and policies.

II. Analysis

The programme accreditation proposal received by the EAAP, which was provided by the University of Patras through the HAHE, although described in detail the process of external evaluation and accreditation following HAHE guidelines and standards, did not provide any information relative to prior external evaluations of the former TEI as well as the University of Patras (i.e., the 2024 IQAS Accreditation Report).

Recommendations included in the above-mentioned 2024 IQAS Accreditation Report, such as a) involvement of students in committees; and b) participation of external stakeholders in internal processes and policies, all of which are pertinent to all study programmes, have not been fully implemented and documented by the USP Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Given the articulated quality assurance and control policy and procedures (see Principles 1 and 2), the experience of the Department and teaching staff, as well as the experience of the University QAU (MODIP) administration and staff with the review and accreditation process, it is expected that the Department will fulfil the HAHE standards and requirements.

Measures should be taken to ensure systematic, documented feedback from students, alumni, and external stakeholders, as well as the documented implementation of the programme's periodic internal evaluation findings. The participation of alumni and external stakeholders in the annual USP evaluation and in the further development of the USP should be made in a formal, structured, and documented manner.

III. Conclusions

The Department administration, faculty, and staff are aware of the importance of external evaluation and accreditation, as well as the HAHE standards and requirements related to Principle 11. The recommendations below will enhance the implementation and documentation of the quality policy and the continuous development of the programme.

Panel Judgement

Principle 11: Regular external evaluation and accreditation of the new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

R11.1 Develop a procedure for the systematic and documented feedback by students, alumni, and external stakeholders.

R11.2 Develop a formalized and systematic process for adopting the recommendations of external evaluations with a detailed and documented action plan, as well as implementation timelines.

R11.3 Consider establishing a formal External Advisory Board to advise on the strategic development and enhancement of the Programme.

Principle 12: Monitoring the Transition from Previous Undergraduate Study Programmes to the New Ones

Institutions and academic units apply procedures for the transition from previously existing undergraduate study programmes to new ones, in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Standards.

Applies in cases where the department implements, in addition to the new UGPs, any pre-existing UGPs from departments of former Technological Educational Institutions (TEI) or from departments that were merged / renamed / abolished.

Institutions should implement procedures for the transition from former UGPs to new ones, in order to ensure their compliance with the requirements of the Standards. More specifically, the institution and the academic unit must have a) the necessary learning resources, b) appropriate teaching staff, c) structured curriculum (courses, ECTS, learning outcomes), d) study regulations, award of diploma and diploma supplement, and e) system of data collection and use, with particular reference to the data of the graduates of the pre-existing UGP. In this context, the Institutions and the academic units prepare a plan for the foreseen transition period of the existing UGP until its completion, the costs caused to the Institution by its operation as well as possible measures and proposals for its smooth delivery and termination. This planning includes data on the transition and subsequent progression of students in the respective new UGP of the academic unit, as well as the specific graduation forecast for students enrolled under the previous status.

Relevant documentation

- *The planning of the Institution for the foreseen transition period, the operating costs and the specific measures or proposals for the smooth implementation and completion of the programme*
- *The study regulations, template for the degree and the diploma supplement*
- *Name list of teaching staff, status, subject and the course they teach / examine*
- *Report of Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) on the progress of the transition and the degree of completion of the programme. In the case of UGP of a former Technological Educational Institution (TEI), the report must include a specific reference to how the internship was implemented*

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, and thus the USP Fisheries and Aquaculture, were established in 2019 as a new Department of the new School of Agricultural Sciences of the University of Patras which absorbed the TEI of Western Greece, which evolved from the TEI of Messologgi. The newly reformed department has been in operation from the academic year 2022-2023 implementing two parallel study programmes. A study programme that supports the students of the former TEI until their graduation and the reformed study programme of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Based on the requirements of Law 4610/2019 (art. 43, par. 5), the Assembly of the Department of Animal Production, Fisheries and Aquaculture (the pre-runner of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture) of

the University of Patras at the meeting 10/12-5-2021/topic B2o, set clear conditions for obtaining a University degree, if desired, by students of the former TEI of Western Greece. The procedure for obtaining the University degree by the former TEI students was based on the successful attendance and examination of courses in the curriculum of the reformed Department and on getting credit for the new reformed Department courses with specific corresponding to the former TEI courses. To help the former TEI students in the transition period, the Department created a table mapping courses to the former TEI courses.

II. Analysis

The programme accreditation proposal received by the EAAP, which was provided by the University of Patras through the HAHE, although described in detail the process of the transition from the former TEI to the new, reformed Department following HAHE guidelines and standards, did not mention specific actions taken in the transition period. However, a separate document was included in the documents folder received by the EEAP stating all actions and procedures followed for the TEI to University transition period.

III. Conclusions

The University, and thus the Department, implemented the required procedures for the transition from the former TEI programme to the new USP, thus ensuring compliance with the HAHE requirements and standards.

Panel Judgement

Principle 12: Monitoring the transition from previous undergraduate study programmes to the new ones	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

The EEAP has no specific recommendations for Principle 12.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

Please state aspects of good practice identified, with regard to the new undergraduate study programme in operation.

- The Programme has the necessary procedures for monitoring quality assurance and continuous improvement, which align with the strategic objectives and policies of the Department and the University, following HAHE guidelines and standards.
- Faculty and staff are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and dedicated to USP's mission, resulting in a very positive and professional environment.
- Infrastructure and other resources are generally adequate, albeit some needing refurbishment, for the successful operation of the USP.
- The employment potential of USP graduates in the public and/or private sectors is significant.
- Stakeholders and social partners praised the USP and believe there is a clear need for such graduates.
- The Programme is addressing an area of need in the Greek economy at both the local and national levels.

II. Areas of Weakness

Please state weak areas identified, with regard to the new undergraduate study programme in operation.

- The number of admitted and registered students in recent years is far below the feasible upper number of admitted students per academic year (190) set by the USP, raising concerns of long-term viability of the Programme.
- Quality targets and key performance indicators, particularly those related to students' performance, are not set up and monitored.
- There has not been a formal, organized, and documented involvement of external stakeholders and alumni in the design as well as the annual evaluation and the continuous development of the Programme.
- Significant students' graduation delays are beyond the standard study period.
- Insufficient explanation of the benefits of quality improvement and the consequences of non-compliance.
- Limited use of explicitly defined SMART objectives.
- The USP website does not include graduate employability outcomes, including employment statistics,

career pathways, and alumni achievements.

- Faculty mobility through Erasmus+ and/or other similar programmes, as well as broader utilization of sabbatical leaves, is low.
- Participation of visiting international faculty in the USP is limited.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

Please make any specific recommendations for development.

- 1) Develop a formal mechanism for the input of alumni and external stakeholders, as well as the systematic implementation and documentation of such input in the Programme's evaluation. Make such input a necessary component of every internal evaluation of the USP.
- 2) Consider introducing experiential and field-based learning opportunities to 1- and 2-year students to further enhance their early connection to the Programme subjects.
- 3) Include students' learning assessment and mobility as a necessary component in the USP annual internal evaluation as well as in the USP quality targets with appropriate KPIs (See Principle 2 recommendations).
- 4) Formulate explicit SMART objectives and define quantitative targets (e.g., student satisfaction > 85%, graduation rate > 75%, employment within 12 months > 80%).
- 5) Create a quality performance dashboard and publish annual progress reports summarizing achievements against targets.
- 6) Establish a formal process for the active participation of students in the curriculum development of the Programme.
- 7) Encourage students to participate in the course/instructor evaluations.
- 8) Survey graduates regularly to systematically record and document the employability and career paths of USP graduates.
- 9) Identify and review the factors contributing to graduation delay beyond the standard study period.
- 10) Provide specific training to academic staff in relation to teaching and pedagogy.
- 11) Further strengthen the integration of research and teaching by increasing opportunities for undergraduate students to participate in staff-led research projects, applied fieldwork and industry-linked scientific activities.
- 12) Introduce a formal mentoring process for USP early-career faculty and other teaching staff to accelerate their professional development and promotion.
- 13) Encourage and support the sabbatical leave process.

- 14) Provide incentives to support the publication efforts of USP faculty members.
- 15) Improve the campus grounds and the external conditions of buildings with frequent maintenance.
- 16) Establish public bus routes to and from the campus during weekends to facilitate students' travel to the city.
- 17) Explore additional funding opportunities to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the Programme and further develop its learning infrastructure and student support.
- 18) Promote ties with foreign Universities to enhance faculty and student mobility by utilizing opportunities provided by the Erasmus+ programme.
- 19) Enhance the international visibility and reach of the USP.
- 20) Enhance the PSP website to provide up-to-date information on research projects and existing external collaborations. Include success stories and testimonials of PSP graduates.
- 21) Develop a formal and systematic process for adopting the recommendations of external evaluations, along with a detailed and documented action plan, as well as implementation timelines.
- 22) Consider establishing a formal External Advisory Board to advise on the strategic development and enhancement of the Programme.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 12

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

2, 3, 4, 10, and 11

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

None

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:

None

Overall Judgement	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	

Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel agrees that this Programme leads to a Level 7 Qualification according to the National & European Qualifications Framework (Integrated Master)	YES	NO
	X	

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname	Signature
PAVLOSTATHIS SPYROS	Signed by PAVLOSTATHIS SPYROS - 16/06/2026 12:26:04 +03:00
Apostolou Ioanna	Signed by Apostolou Ioanna - 16/06/2026 12:26:04 +03:00
Soultanas Panagiotis	Signed by Soultanas Panagiotis - 16/06/2026 12:26:04 +03:00
TSIAMI AMALIA	Signed by TSIAMI AMALIA - 16/06/2026 12:26:04 +03:00
Δασκαλάκης Μάριος	Signed by Δασκαλάκης Μάριος - 16/06/2026 12:26:05 +03:00