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ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
H Q A  
HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE  
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

# Accreditation Report for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:

**Medicine**

**Institution:**

**University of Patras Department of Medicine**

**Date: 2-3-2019**

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**Επιχειρησιακό Πρόγραμμα  
Ανάπτυξη Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού,  
Εκπαίδευση και Διά Βίου Μάθηση**  
Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



Report of the Committee appointed by the HQA to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of the **Department of Medicine** of the **University of Patras** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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## **PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW**

### **I. The Accreditation Committee**

The Committee responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of the Higher Education Institution named: **University of Patras Department of Medicine** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HQA Register, in accordance with the Law 4009/2011:

1. Prof. Dimitris Grammatopoulos (Chair)  
Warwick Medical School, United Kingdom
2. Prof. Barbara Papadopoulou  
Faculty of Medicine, Laval University, Quebec, Canada
3. Prof. Agapios Sachinidis  
University of Cologne, Cologne Germany
4. Prof. Nikolaos Venizelos  
School of Medical Sciences, Örebro University, Örebro, Sweden
5. Prof Aristidis Veves  
Harvard Medical School, Boston, USA

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

Following formal acceptance of membership, the Accreditation Committee was formed and received relevant documentation from ADIP approximately 30 days prior to the date of the site-visit. The Committee received an impressive amount of documents related to the organization of the University of Patras and the Department of Medicine, the Study guide, detailed description of the curriculum for each semester, internal quality policies, examples of questionnaires assessing quality of teaching and internal evaluation reports. ADIP also provided copies of the previous external evaluation report, the evaluation of the University including points relevant to the Department of Medicine, and guidelines about the purpose and structure of the external evaluation report guidelines.

The Accreditation Committee met on the 25th of February 2019 at the premises of ADIP. They were briefed by Prof Kiprianos and other senior members of ADIP about the purpose and procedures of the accreditation process, in particular, the 10 overarching principles of the study programme review that the Accreditation Committee should use as a guide in order to assess Department's compliance.

The Accreditation Committee was transported to Patras on the afternoon of the 25<sup>th</sup> of February. The site-visit started on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February and was based on a series of meetings with the Vice Rector (Prof. Karamanos) and HoD (Prof. Goumenos), the MODIP and OMEA representatives, meetings with Faculty staff, undergraduate and graduate students and ex-graduates pursuing a career abroad. Members of the Committee had an ad-hoc visit to the University Hospital to obtain a first hand experience of clinical skills training. The Accreditation Committee also had a brief tour around the Department of Medicine buildings and facilities especially the research laboratories and core facilities. Towards the end of the visit the Accreditation Committee met with various stakeholders, i.e. representatives from the Patras Medical Association, the Private Medical Sector and Management of the National Health System (ESY) University Hospital of Patras that hosts University Clinical departments and staff members that are involved in the clinical training. At the end of the visit, the Accreditation Committee and members of MODIP, OMEA and senior staff of the Department and in the presence of the Rector Prof. V. Kyriazopoulou had a debriefing meeting that discussed the Committee's initial observations and ideas to address some of the barriers identified and explore possible opportunities.

Overall, the Accreditation Committee was impressed with the hospitality of the faculty and students willingness to engage in the accreditation process, and in general the vibrant environment and pride exhibited by both faculty and students.

The Accreditation Committee expresses its gratitude to Profs. Karamanos, Goumenos, Stathopoulos and Gogos and all other members of MODIP and OMEA for putting together documents, data and presentations and for organizing an efficient site-visit.

Generally, the Accreditation Committee found the reports and associated relevant documentation informative, and important for obtaining an overview of the functions and components of the structure of the Department and interpreting some of the findings of the External Evaluation Committee, although there was a considerable lag-phase of more than 5 years. The Committee also identified areas where data quality, usefulness and interpretation can be improved and simplified. A number of representative examples are provided below.

### III. Study Programme Profile

The University of Patras was established in 1964 as a self-administered academic institution under the supervision of the Greek Government. As stated in their website (<https://www.upatras.gr/en/students>) as of 31/8/2018 it has 32,770 students. It is divided into 5 Schools: the School of Natural Sciences, the School of Engineering, the School of Health Sciences, the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences and the School of Business Administration. There are 23 Departments including the Department of Medicine. The University is a two-city campus, situated in both Patras and Agrinion. Most departments are located in a purpose built self-contained campus located in the suburb of Rio.

The Department of Medicine was established in 1977. It is also located at the Rio university campus and is in close proximity to the University Hospital, a 750 bed University Hospital, which is a major advantage for the effective delivery of the clinical training part of the undergraduate curriculum. The Committee also noticed an active and on-going programme of development of new and existing buildings that need to be modernized. At the time of the visit, the Department had 1486 undergraduate, 192 postgraduate students and 496 PhD students creating an active graduate student community. The Department organisation is structured around a number of basic science (preclinical) and clinical departments that design and oversee delivery of the undergraduate teaching of the medical students. The Divisions (Τομείς) are: Basic Sciences I and II, Clinical Laboratory, Pathology (Internal Medicine) I and II, Surgery and Pediatrics, Gynecology and Obstetrics. At the time of the visit the curriculum was delivered by 127 faculty members (ΔΕΠ), 9 teaching and laboratory staff (ΕΔΙΠ), and 14 technical laboratory staff (ΕΤΕΠ).

As stated (<https://www.upatras.gr/en/node/131>), the Educational objectives of the undergraduate Medical Curriculum are twofold: First, to educate the future physicians in the biological and medical sciences underlying the practice of medicine and to help them develop the medical skills necessary for the efficient and effective treatment of patients. In addition, an equally important objective is to install to the students the values and the ethical principles, which are necessary for the practice of medical profession (*sic*).

The undergraduate curriculum follows a traditional set-up of 6-year studies split into 12 semesters; each semester includes a certain number of “teaching units” (t.u.), as well as ECTS units (European Credit Transfer System Units). There is an early introduction into the clinical environments and a progressive shift from the basic to clinical subjects.

The General Assembly of the Faculty is responsible for the design of the curriculum, which is revised every year in April. The Chairman of the Faculty convenes a committee that will supervise the curriculum. The committee consists of members of the General Assembly with an annual term and submits recommendations to the General Assembly, which follow the recording of the Sectors’ suggestions.

Currently, the Department delivers a revised “new” curriculum, which was established in 2003-2004 that aspires to modern European standards. The representatives of the students and the medical faculty participated in the process. The curriculum is revised by taking into account student evaluations of previous years, which are administered and recorded systematically. In addition, there is an educational committee that oversees implementation and makes suggestions for future changes and improvements.

Based on discussions with the Faculty, the majority of graduates are entering the national medical specialist training programme, although some pursue further academic postgraduate education and an increasing number of graduates opt to relocate abroad.

## PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

### Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT. THIS POLICY SHOULD EXPAND AND BE AIMED (WITH THE COLLABORATION OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS) AT ALL INSTITUTION'S AREAS OF ACTIVITY, AND PARTICULARLY AT THE FULFILMENT OF QUALITY REQUIREMENTS OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS.**

*The quality assurance policy of the academic unit is in line with the Institutional policy on quality, and is included in a published statement that is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special objectives related to the quality assurance of study programmes offered by the academic unit.*

*The quality policy statement of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement a quality policy that will promote the academic profile and orientation of the programme, its purpose and field of study; it will realise the programme's strategic goals and it will determine the means and ways for attaining them; it will implement the appropriate quality procedures, aiming at the programme's continuous improvement.*

*In particular, in order to carry out this policy, the academic unit commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate:*

- a) the suitability of the structure and organization of the curriculum;*
- b) the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education;*
- c) the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching;*
- d) the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff;*
- e) the enhancement of the quality and quantity of the research output among faculty members of the academic unit;*
- f) ways for linking teaching and research;*
- g) the level of demand for qualifications acquired by graduates, in the labour market;*
- h) the quality of support services such as the administrative services, the Library, and the student welfare office;*
- i) the conduct of an annual review and an internal audit of the quality assurance system of the undergraduate programme(s) offered, as well as the collaboration of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU);*

### Study Programme compliance

The Department of Medicine of the University of Patras has identified a number of strategic education goals centered around education, research and outward look. Key points include:

- high quality student-centered education and training;
- development of high quality research programme;
- advancing excellence and innovation and
- enhancement of outward looking and the international perspective of the Department
- enhanced connectivity with employers
- efficient administrative procedures and improvement departmental infrastructure.

There are 11 overarching learning objectives that guide the teaching of the Department activities.

To safeguard and promote the above targets the Department established a Quality Assurance Policy, found online on <http://www.med.upatras.gr/index.php?r=pages/index&id=qos&lang=el> describing the principles of the University Policy: key academic members of MODIP, responsibilities and policies, members and processes of internal evaluation mechanism, aims and relevant targets of the continuous quality assurance methods, regular updates according to up-to-date trends and requirements, methods of data collection, the curriculum description and the concept of personal academic tutor.

Overall, the Committee's view is that the policy is appropriate for the programme and adds value by monitoring a number of key parameters in learning objectives and student satisfaction. One of the positive aspects identified by the Committee was the visibility, acceptance of the policy and wide participation across the staff.

During the visit Prof. Stathopoulos presented information around the internal quality assurance system in place that monitors learning outcomes and qualifications. The programme follows European Standards and includes both yearly internal evaluation, 5-yearly evaluation plans and external evaluation organized and delivered by ADIP. Prof. Stathopoulos mentioned that the programme is designed to safeguard key strategic learning priorities of the Department such as focus on student –centered learning and is built around strategy, skills and shared values of the Department.

Overall, the system in place seems to be appropriate and achieving an effective oversight of the above objectives. The Committee agreed that future revisions of the programme could include a mechanism to quantitatively monitor effectiveness of added measures or implemented changes. There is a clear system in place monitoring quality and effectiveness of teaching; this is mainly based on student feedback, internal evaluation report of individual divisions and collection of data relevant to publication records of the faculty as key performance indicators in research. During the site visit the Committee had the opportunity to observe real life example of student feedback and unanimously agreed that the questionnaires were appropriate for capturing relevant information. The Committee and members of the OMEA also discussed how the collected data are analysed, evaluated and actioned in the General Assembly meetings. In addition, the students interviewed appeared overwhelmingly satisfied with the quality of teaching they received and confident that the quality of teaching is reflected by their employment prospects. They also commented that they compare extremely well to their peers from other Greek Medical Department when they participate in national committees and competitions. The Committee was also impressed with the plethora of teaching materials available to the students and the consideration for regular updates of the resources.

The main issue identified was around availability of relevant minutes of the General Assembly to the Committee mostly because of concern around protection of personal data. As a result, the Committee was unable to obtain a birds-eye view of the overall performance of the Department and assess performance of individual Divisions across the Department and identify possibly anomalies. Possible future improvement of the monitoring system could include an anonymized clear action matrix providing a detailed list of issues identified, action taken and impact of the change. In addition, the Department should consider introduction of a mandatory peer observation scheme to support the development of all academic educators and enable greater sharing of skills and experience across the Department.

The Committee had the opportunity to assess the published CV of a representative sample of faculty staff. CVs examined confirmed qualifications and experience was appropriate for the academic level of the faculty. Both faculty staff and students seem satisfied with the qualifications and skills mix of the academic staff. The Committee believes this provides an excellent platform and should be exploited for further quality enhancements. However, it would be important for the Department to introduce a mechanism of supporting faculty staff (especially junior staff) by formalizing the education support offered (for example by offering a teaching certificate) and for OMEA to monitor compliance and regular updates and revisions. This is particularly important since junior postgraduates are involved in the teaching sessions and also non-academic clinical staff from the local hospital are involved in the clinical training sessions of medical students. Therefore, it would be important to ensure that everyone is adequately qualified to deliver a satisfactory standard of training.

OMEA and MODIP provided evidence of available mechanisms for monitoring the quantity of publications and total number of citations. The Committee agreed that the research and publication output, as judged by total number of publications and citations is satisfactory and shows consistent upward trends despite the adverse economical environment. However, it seems that the focus is on quantity and not quality of publications. Current monitoring methods based on such rather rigid measures of quantity and citations without taking into account other metrics such as the h-index of faculty and quality of the research outputs are inadequate to address this. The Department should be aware that current trends of monitoring research outputs place more emphasis on quality of publications (i.e., limited number of best publications rather than the total number of publications) and therefore there should be a repositioning of the focus of monitoring mechanisms.

Staff shortage due to financial restrictions coupled with an excessive number of undergraduates per yearly cohort result in a situation where existing staff spending an ever-increasing amount of time in teaching; inevitably this represents a major threat for the long term ability of staff to deliver high quality research. This was acknowledged by the staff during the site visit and the Committee would like to see additional processes that capture this and introduction of measures to address it and offer protected time for research. The issue of excessive expenses associated with publication of papers in top high quality scientific journals was mentioned by academic staff. We strongly encourage the Department and the University in general to take steps to address this and ensure that excellent scientific work from the Department of Medicine can be published in the appropriate journal, even if this requires payment of high publication charges. Possible solutions involve allocation of funds to support publication of excellent papers and development of dedicated awards.

During the visit it was clear that the staff are keen to support and deliver the Department's strategic education goals around Education and Research. Opportunities are available and most initiatives are centered around ad-hoc engagements and summer projects and also participation of students in journal clubs during their clinical training in individual clinics. Both interviewed staff and students recognize the important role of research in advancing teaching and in practice this is achieved since a number of ex-students follow academic careers. Although adequate at present, it is recommended that the Department could consider developing a more ambitious plan and offer more structured opportunities to undergraduate students for research training. Increasingly, research is fully embedded by modern medical Department curricula and therefore this would be an excellent opportunity to deliver the integrated research-teaching vision the Department has. This also offers the additional benefit of shaping undergraduate training around local research expertise and thus developing Departments' portfolio of unique selling points (USP) of research.

The Committee detected an overwhelming feel of optimism across the students about their job prospects. Involvement of previous students pursuing successful careers abroad further enhances this feeling. Further reassurance was received during the discussion with the stakeholders (since it appears that at present for most specialties there is little waiting time for residents). In addition, the students interviewed appeared overwhelmingly satisfied with the quality of teaching they received and confident that the quality of teaching is reflected in their employment prospects. The students appeared well attuned in employments opportunities nationally and abroad and optimistic about their job prospects. As a possible impact of the financial situation there was a more outward looking approach, entirely in tune with the Department approach. Perhaps development of an alumni register that could help and support interested students will facilitate and enhance this.

Inspection of the available material and the website suggests adequate provision of services that seem to be regularly updated and monitored. The committee had the opportunity to briefly visit few of these services. During the visit, the Committee was presented with evidence about use of the captured data (for examples % return of written vs. online satisfaction reports) providing evidence that such information is collected in real time. A systemic issue that was partially discussed was that students tend to follow popular lecturers but participation in non-popular or difficult lecturers is reduced. The Committee thinks that a policy mechanism needs to be in place for identifying methods to address this and capture improvements.

Overall, there seems to be a large number of documentation and internal structures in place to monitor quality assurance system. Annual reviews are carried out with the description of strategic targets, quality targets, relevant metrics and weighting, proposed actions and delegation of relevant staff and proposed timelines. This could be improved by adding another measurement of assessing the effectiveness of the proposed targets.

In general, the overall quality framework seems rather complicated and could benefit from application of Lean principles.

## Committee judgement

<b>Principle 1: Institution policy for Quality Assurance</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Committee Recommendations

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

Future revisions of the programme could include a mechanism to quantitatively monitor impact of implemented changes.

Introduction of a monitoring system based on clear action metrics that provides a detailed list of issues, identified actions agreed and impact. This should be available through the General Assembly minutes.

The Department should strongly consider introducing a mandatory peer observation scheme to complement existing evaluation by students.

## Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP THEIR 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.**

*Academic units develop their programmes following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile 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 National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education are described at this stage. The approval or revision process for programmes includes a check of compliance with the basic requirements described in the Standards, on behalf of the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).*

*Furthermore, the programme design should take into consideration the following:*

- *the Institutional strategy*
- *the active participation of students*
- *the experience of external stakeholders from the labour market*
- *the smooth progression of students throughout the stages of the programme*
- *the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System*
- *the option to provide work experience to the students*
- *the linking of teaching and research*
- *the relevant regulatory framework and the official procedure for the approval of the programme by the Institution.*

### Study Programme compliance

The goal of the Department of Medicine of the University of Patras is to provide the best scientific knowledge and ethical training to medical doctors who will be mainly involved in clinical practice while a portion of them are expected to follow an academic career that will involve additional research and teaching activities.

The strategy the Department has developed especially after the introduction of the new undergraduate curriculum that operates since 2003-2004 and its main aim is to provide a student-centered and integrated basic, preclinical and clinical teaching. Theoretical courses are offered in the first four years and involve the basic (preclinical) teaching complemented by laboratory practice and clinical branches that are supplemented by hospital clinical training in the fifth and sixth years of study. The core curriculum comprises special study modules, 360 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) (30 per semester (68 compulsory and 38 optional courses). Thus, student workload is fully compliant with European guidelines for medical departments. The student guide is fully detailed, informative and appropriate. The Committee's view is that this integrated educational strategy is appropriate and successfully delivered over the years. The overall programme is compatible with EU standards and responds to European directives.

The Department has an extensive mechanism of quality policy and assurance to continuously and systematically ensure, improve, and enhance the quality of the medical training provided. The Curriculum Committee of the Department of Medicine (OMEA) is responsible for maintaining high standards of the study programme and plays a major advisory role in curriculum issues for both teachers and students. These involve discussions in incorporating new proposals and recommendations for improving the programme and annual evaluation of reports and statistics related to the curriculum as well as the participation of students through regular questionnaires. The quality policy is planned by the Department on a yearly basis and is approved by the general meeting of the faculty members and the appropriate University authorities. Additionally, there is input from the medical association of Patras and retired faculty members who are currently in private practice. The curriculum takes into account modern medical practices and adapts, when needed, through the addition of optional courses to respond to particular needs. A recent example is the addition of an optional course in emerging infectious disease and threats in response to the immigration-related health problems in

the region during the last few years. However, it seems that there is no mechanism to compare the effectiveness or the revision of their curriculum with other Departments of Medicine within Greece or elsewhere. This could include regular evaluation by external members from other faculties both in Greece and abroad.

The curriculum is built around didactic lectures and training in clinical skills from the first year into small groups, group tutorials, problem based learning (PBL) and task based learning (TBL) facilitates and encourages more active participation of the students. Both students and faculty reported that attendance to courses is high. Of note, the numbers have improved during the economic crisis. However, there are small numbers of courses in which attendance is low and according to students this is because of the not-so great quality of teaching. The committee recommends that attendance to courses should be a quality criterion and emphasis and further support should be given to improve courses that fail to attract high number of students.

The students successfully progress throughout the stages of the programme as translated by the high percentage (around 80%) of student graduation on time while the vast majority of the students graduate within one year after the compulsory six years of studies. It is also very encouraging that the drop-out rate is extremely low. This is a major accolade for the Department. Students have multiple opportunities to acquire experience in the hospital in addition to their clinical training. Feedback from students suggest that at present the list of clinical skills required to acquire is not well defined. Therefore, the Department needs to set minimum standards of student-exposure to a variety of clinical cases and also pre-defines the minimum clinical skills students need to develop during their clinical rotation. The Committee would advise the Department to establish communication with students to strengthen student understanding of the clinical skill matrix required and have an appropriate monitoring pathway.

The Department of Medicine of the University of Patras has a strong research component and is the second ranked Department in the University in attracting competitive external research funds. This creates many opportunities for the students not only to get exposure but also to participate in research projects. Moreover, through several optional courses, students can learn how to perform a bibliographic search on PubMed and critically analyze scientific articles on specific topics. The Department has also established exchange programmes with international research centers and institutions abroad for students to improve research and clinical expertise and skills. For example, selected students (>70 in the last 5 years) through a competitive process had the opportunity to do research training with ERASMUS+ traineeships in several European countries (e.g., Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Romania, Cyprus, Turkey). Moreover, the Department offers three fellowships for undergraduate training at Johns Hopkins University. The importance of such training abroad for the undergraduate students has been very well understood by the Department, which is now creating exchange programmes for research and medical training (HELMSIC) with highly prestigious universities in the USA such as the Harvard Medical Department, the Yale Department of Medicine, the Stanford Department of Medicine, the Columbia Department of Medicine, etc. It is reassuring that these relationships are formally established through dedicated memorandums of understanding (MoUs) rather than casual ad-hoc interactions. Also, the students through HELMSIC and their local association, EEFIE, are called to organize workshops or round tables on specific topics and to participate in research meetings. Several students seem to take advantage of these opportunities. However, students expressed some concerns that the accessibility to research training within the Department is not well structured and advertised. For example, students who are interested in research training are not properly informed about the different opportunities offered. The committee recommends that faculty members use more structured mechanisms to advertise training possibilities for research for the undergraduate students.

### Committee judgement

<b>Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Committee Recommendations

Attendance to courses should be a quality criterion and emphasis and further support should be given to improve courses that fail to attract high number of students.

There should be a more structured way to systematically encourage research training opportunities and to involve a higher number of undergraduate students in research projects.

There should be a mechanism to compare the effectiveness or the revision of the curriculum with other Departments/Schools of Medicine within Greece or elsewhere. In addition, periodical evaluation should include external members from other Departments/Schools both in Greece and abroad.

## Principle 3: Student-centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE 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.**

*Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. The above entail continuous consideration of the programme's delivery and the assessment of the related outcomes.*

*The student-centred learning and teaching process*

- *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 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.*

*In addition :*

- *the academic staff are familiar with the existing examination system and methods and are supported in developing their own skills in this field;*
- *the assessment criteria and methods are published in advance;*
- *the assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary is linked to advice on the learning process;*
- *student assessment is conducted by more than one examiner, where possible;*
- *the regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances*
- *assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures;*
- *a formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*

### Study Programme compliance

The undergraduate curriculum implemented in 2003-2004 focuses on student-centered learning and teaching approaches. Teaching is based on an integrated approach combining theoretical courses with early contact of students with clinical practice and adopts modern approaches and principles in the medical curriculum like bioethics, PBL methods and more recently TBL methods for preclinical and clinical training. Students familiarize early in their training on how to approach patients, take history and later perform clinical examination. Teaching involves a variety of learning methods such as lectures, seminars, tutorials, preclinical and clinical training with emphasis on small groups learning. This is greatly appreciated by the students and provides a more integrated knowledge both at the theoretical, practical and clinical training. However, the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) method that is widely used by modern curricula in Europe, USA and worldwide has not yet been established despite the previous recommendation by the external evaluation committee in 2013. In agreement with the previous comments of the external evaluation committee, the accreditation Committee strongly recommends this type of final examination, which will clearly test students' knowledge in skill performance and competence and improve the curriculum in reaching even higher

international standards. Overall, the current study programme fulfills the learning needs of the students and provides high flexibility of learning.

The Department regularly evaluates the quality and effectiveness of teaching, as documented especially through student surveys, which helps improving learning methods at all levels. The results of the surveys are in general satisfactory and plans were presented for further improvement. There are well documented and appropriate assessment criteria and methods in place to ensure that the undergraduate programme is delivered in a way that encourages students to actively participate in the learning process. Although at present this appears adequate, more concrete efforts should be made to increase the active participation of all students in their study programme but also to introduce measurables of how this works in practice.

The fact that the students are exposed to clinical cases at early stages of their training, encourages development of high sense of autonomy. This was evident during the Committee discussions with a representative group of both undergraduate and graduate students and also alumni who are currently pursuing careers abroad. All students demonstrated important attributes such as self-reflection and self-confidence. Students participate in external educational workshops and in the co-ordination of round tables or banquets at scientific colleges of medicine, which helps them develop leadership, experience and communication skills. Several students also participate in exchange programmes for basic and clinical research of HELMISC (ERASMUS, HELMSIC, MoU). Students are also encouraged to apply to internal competitive fellowships for their training abroad. Excellence awards are given each year for highly performing students to promote excellence. Overall, the students showed maturity and self-confidence and expressed optimism regarding their future potential. It is unfortunate however, that most of the best-qualified students choose to immigrate resulting in vacancies in a large number of resident positions. As a large portion of the faculty members is expected to retire over the next decade, such lack of young doctors may be critical.

Students have access to a designated personal tutor from the first year of their degree. This was deemed by both students and faculty members to be a very successful method that improves communication and minimizes conflicts. Overall, the committee did not notice any tension between faculty and students. Relationships between teachers and students seem to be mutually cordial and respectful. Finally, appropriate procedures are in place to address students' complaints such as the possibility to discuss issues related to performance or examination procedures and grades.

The Department provides training to the academic staff in order to better fulfill their teaching activities but this could be done in a more structured way (see previous comment on page11). Many faculty members have broad academic experience and research activity and are internationally recognized. A substantial number of clinicians (staff of the national health system) with documented knowledge and skills supervise and help students in their day-to-day clinical practice. No major criticisms or complaints were noticed by the Committee. However, the current reduction in academic staff in combination with the increased number of admitted students in the Department has resulted in an unfavorable student-to-teacher ratio. This may adversely affect the effort to focus on small group teaching, one of the major strengths of the curriculum. As previously mentioned this could also affect the time faculty members invest in their research activities

### Committee judgement

<b>Principle 3: Student- centred Learning, Teaching an Assessment</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Committee Recommendations

Implementation of the OSCE system is strongly recommended.

Devise a plan to improve the student/academic staff ratio to maintain effectiveness and quality of teaching.

## Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

### INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP AND APPLY PUBLISHED REGULATIONS COVERING ALL ASPECTS AND PHASES OF STUDIES (ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION).

*Institutions and academic units need to put in place both processes and tools to collect, manage and act on information regarding student progression.*

*Procedures concerning the award and recognition of higher education degrees, the duration of studies, rules ensuring students progression, terms and conditions for student mobility should be based on the institutional study regulations. Appropriate recognition procedures rely on institutional practice for recognition of credits among various European academic departments and Institutions, in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.*

*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).*

#### Study Programme compliance

The Committee met with 5 students in the years 4 and 5 of their course and 5 PhD students. The Committee had several questions about their experience and appreciation of their course. Based on the student's statements, the transition from the theory to the clinical practice works efficiently although more clinical cases could be integrated in the preclinical training to increase the quality of learning. Students were satisfied from the non-hierarchical way of communicating with faculty staff. Students are offered a well-organized introduction to the different educational facilities through welcome courses. The academic as well as the administrative staff are very responding to any requirement by the students. In general, the Committee felt that the students were very satisfied from their day-to-day life at the University campus.

The overall impression of the Committee was very positive. The students were quite enthusiastic and proud of studying in the Department of Medicine of the University of Patras. They also confirmed active participation in the education lectures, seminars and practical courses. Apart of the traditional written and oral examinations, small group examinations in different preclinical and clinical disciplines add to the innovation of the programme. However, the OSCE (objective structured clinical examination) has not been introduced yet in their clinical examinations. Students receive the appropriate documentation and have access to adequate e-course materials that are systematically deposited on the website of the Department. The study programme has been harmonized with EU standards including (PBL and TBL) with tutorial small groups of approximately 7-10 students. However, they expressed the wish to have more possibilities in integrating research programmes. The Committee's recommendation is to offer more systematic possibilities for research training to undergraduate students. All the graduates obtain the Diploma Supplement after completing the required teaching units.

In general, the Committee felt that students were very satisfied with the early integration of clinical learning in the curriculum. Clinical training is introduced in the curriculum from the first year. This is highly appreciated by the students. The close proximity of the Department with the University hospital greatly facilitates and optimizes the practical clinical training and allows students developing appropriate level of clinical skills. Students have access to patients as well as patients' samples for research, if and when required.

Student's mobility through exchange programmes for basic and clinical research of HELMISC (ERASMUS, HELMSIC, MoU) is well established and still developing. The academic staff seems also to be well connected with several internationally renowned Universities, which increases training opportunities for the students.

The Committee was impressed by the social, educational and scientific activities coordinated by the students (e.g., yearly students-conferences with exhibitions of different activities) with the help and supervision of the academic staff.

### Panel judgement

<b>Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Committee Recommendations

The number of admitted students exceeds the educational capacity of the Department and may lead to suboptimal training of the students. It is recommended that the Department and the relevant authorities apply strict and realistic targets for student admission.

## Principle 5: Teaching Staff

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ASSURE THEMSELVES OF THE QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCE OF THE TEACHING STAFF. THEY SHOULD APPLY FAIR AND TRANSPARENT PROCESSES FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHING STAFF.**

*The Institutions and their academic units have a major responsibility as to the standard of their teaching staff providing them with a supportive environment that promotes the advancement of their scientific work. In particular, 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 recognize 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;*

### Study Programme compliance

Since the foundation of the Department, one major strength that differentiates it from other well established medical departments/schools in Greece was the faculty recruitment strategy. Particular emphasis was given in recruiting highly skilled faculty members with successful careers both in clinical medicine and research in highly respected foreign institutions. This resulted in an envious outward looking mentality. Unfortunately, during the recent economic crisis, replacement of retired faculty was halted resulting in a considerable reduction of the active faculty. More specifically, from 154 faculty members in 2011, 127 are currently actively involved in teaching and research activities. As indicated in the previous external evaluation, the freezing of hiring resulted in an inverted faculty pyramid and disproportional number of senior vs. junior faculty. It is encouraging that the Department tried to remedy the situation by exploring other possibilities such as ‘named chairs’, which are supported by industry and philanthropy funding. This “out of the box” thinking and initiative should be commented and should guide similar approaches. The committee was encouraged by the fact that new faculty positions will be developed in the near future replacing retired faculty. It was also encouraging that the strategic thinking of the Department and the University favours the recruitment of candidates with established track record abroad that will be able to enrich the Department with new expertise and ideas. The committee strongly agrees and advocates this policy as it will continue the outward looking mentality of the Department, modern ways of teaching and research, and a better international visibility and networking. Attention should be given however to gender balance. The Committee noticed that the vast majority of faculty members were men.

Overall, the discussion with the staff was very constructive. The staff assured the Committee that the procedure of the recruitment and promotion is fair and is based on transparent procedures and evaluations based on the CVs. The promotion criteria are well documented and available at the Department. Interactions between the teaching staff and the students seem to be very smooth. The impression of the committee is that the teaching staff are very collaborative and take pride of the academic role/duties even after deterioration of working conditions (low salaries, excessive workload) experienced over the past few years. Potential conflict of interest situations are normally solved between the conflicting parties by involving the head of the Department.

The concept of the “post-education of the academic staff” is an important instrument for assuring a high quality of teaching. New faculty members are supported by more experienced colleagues. During the site visit it was mentioned that the new faculty receive introductory training for teaching. However, no details of this were presented to the Committee.

The Department is keen to maintain a culture of collaborative research and junior staff is encouraged to participate in ongoing research projects. Faculty members with external grants are able to set up independent research programmes and have control over publication policies. The high quality research outputs of the preclinical departments is

impressive. On the other hand, clinical teams have access to well characterized patients and biological samples from the University Hospital. We recommend that the Department develops and implements measures to encourage a closer collaboration between clinical and preclinical groups if possible to ensure there is wider participation in high quality research across the Department. This will improve the overall quality of research outputs. Development of such multidiscipline research is directly relevant to the education and research aims of the Department.

### Committee judgement

<b>Principle 5: Teaching Staff</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Committee Recommendations

The University management and the Department are aware of the need to bring new faculty with an international recognition compatible with the outward look and the international perspective of the Department.

The establishment of an “Office of education” is recommended. Such an office can be helpful in improving the teaching skills of the faculty.

Mechanisms should be introduced for conflict management resolution among faculty members or between faculty and students. In addition, mechanisms should be introduced to address issues of sexual harassment.

## Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER 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 funding and means to support learning and academic activity in general, so that they can offer to students the best possible level of studies. The above means could include facilities such as libraries, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communications services, support or 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 or international students, students with disabilities) and 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. However, the internal quality assurance ensures that all resources are appropriate, adequate, and accessible, and that students are informed about the services available to them.*

*In delivering support services the role of support and administrative staff is crucial and therefore they need to be qualified and have opportunities to develop their competences.*

### Study Programme compliance

All lecture and seminar rooms seem adequate, although some lecture halls have to be renovated. The Department has secured funding for such renovations. The Department has its own library in addition to the one at the University campus, offering students access to appropriate standard medical textbooks that are useful for their preclinical and clinical studies. Students have also the opportunity to read textbooks in English, as well as copy and print didactic material for a very low price. Electronic access to several journals is also possible for free.

The infrastructure for preclinical training in the Department is very good. The Committee had the opportunity to visit some of these laboratories that found them appropriate. The microscopic anatomy/pathology laboratory was fully equipped with a sufficient number of microscopes for examining histological organ sections/preparations (sections of different organs are also available). Research laboratories are very well equipped with conventional but also cutting-edge instruments (e.g., life imaging confocal microscope). The infrastructure of the animal house (mainly mice) fulfills the European standards. There are also specialized laboratories where work with genetically modified organisms is possible.

The Committee was impressed by the close interactions between the Department and the University hospital at the top management level. This ensures access of the students to cutting edge medical instruments (i.e. PET Scan). The Department and the University hospital work closely to raise funds to improve the infrastructure, also for the benefit of the students' training.

### Committee judgement

Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Committee Recommendations

## Principle 7: Information Management

**INSTITUTIONS 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.**

*Institutions are expected to establish and operate an information system for the management and monitoring of data concerning students, teaching staff, course structure and organisation, teaching and provision of services to students as well as to the academic community.*

*Reliable data is essential for accurate information and for decision making, as well as for identifying areas of smooth operation and areas for improvement. Effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on study programmes and other activities feed data into the internal system of quality assurance.*

*The information gathered depends, to some extent, on the type and mission of the Institution. The following are of interest:*

- *key performance indicators*
- *student population profile*
- *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
- *student satisfaction with their programme(s)*
- *availability of learning resources and student support*
- *career paths of graduates*

*A number of methods may be used for collecting information. It is important that students and staff are involved in providing and analyzing information and planning follow-up activities.*

### Study Programme compliance

The Quality Assurance Information System (ΠΣΔΙΠ) is linked to the University of Patras's central identification service that securely provides encrypted SSL access. Students use their UPnet ID for accessing all University services (email, e-class, etc), can electronically evaluate the courses through regular (every 6 months) questionnaires and have access to their results. Faculty members can also safely submit documentation regarding their research and teaching activities for each calendar year. The MODIP and OMEA can access and administer this information to ensure quality control. The results of the questionnaires are presented and discussed in the general assembly of faculty members. The provided documents and the presentations during the onsite visit indicated a steady improvement of the key performance metrics. The data were well documented and clearly presented. These indicators helped in the overall picture of the Department and the process of evaluating the teaching work and capturing the research activities is now part of the academic culture. It would be useful if comparative data with other Medical Departments in Greece were provided by ADIP.

Students are selected through a highly competitive national examination. Student progression is very satisfactory, graduation rate is high, within the expected time frame and drop-out rates are extremely low. Tutoring also helps students to efficiently progress through their course. Overall, the discussions the Committee had with the students indicated a high level of satisfaction for the quality of the curriculum and the way it is executed.

There is satisfactory representation of men and women in the Department including a small percentage of foreign students. The University provides ways to facilitate training for foreign students who have now access to the Hellenic language Department for learning the Greek language. It is very encouraging that the University creates opportunities for foreign students. No information was available however, on how the Department or the University deals with visible minorities and individuals with disabilities.

The Department provides modern learning resources to the students. These include well equipped laboratories for preclinical work, libraries, IT services, electronic access to teaching material and to scientific medical journals. The

Committee visited the anatomy and histology laboratories, some core facilities of the Department and also wards and clinical departments in the hospital and found them to be appropriate for undergraduate student training. The Committee had also a brief overview of the university campus and the provided infrastructures. The close proximity of the Department with the university hospital is a major advantage as it can facilitate easy transition from preclinical to clinical environment and it is greatly appreciated by all students who have indeed multiple opportunities of learning. Also, the close proximity with other departments such as Pharmacy, Biology, Chemical engineering, Computer engineering and informatics, Material science and the ongoing collaborations both at the research and teaching levels with most of these departments allow easy communication and facilitate student access to a more multidisciplinary environment.

Although the Department of Medicine does not have a dedicated procedure in place to allow follow-up of their graduates (alumni), nonetheless, the Committee had the opportunity to hear from two graduates who currently follow successful career abroad. These two graduates mentioned that their training was more than adequate and placed them on par with their counterparts in their adoptive countries. Rather worryingly, further discussions with faculty members and the chairman of the Medical Association of Patras indicated that a considerable number of graduates opt to immigrate to complete their residency training in other countries, mainly in the EU and USA. Although this is unfortunate for the Greek medical system as mentioned elsewhere, it is nevertheless a very valuable resource for the career path of the graduates. Hopefully, internationally trained graduates can bring back knowledge, expertise and networking when and if conditions allow their return to Greece.

### Committee judgement

<b>Principle 7: Information Management</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Committee Recommendations

Although the Department stays in touch with successful graduates who work abroad, a more formal way of communication with all alumni can greatly increase visibility, networking and fund-raising efforts.

## Principle 8: Public Information

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES WHICH IS CLEAR, ACCURATE, OBJECTIVE, UP-TO-DATE AND READILY ACCESSIBLE.**

*Information on Institution's activities is useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public.*

*Therefore, institutions and their academic units provide information about their activities, including the programmes they offer, the intended learning outcomes, the qualifications awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students, as well as graduate employment information.*

### Study Programme compliance

The University of Patras has an outstanding IT facility, which greatly facilitates the information dispersal, accessibility and visibility from outside. The Department of Medicine takes great advantage of these high IT standards. The webpage site of the Department is well structured and up-to-date. All possible information including study programme, e-courses, structure, mode of attendance, criteria for curriculum assessment, degree awarded, and the CVs of faculty members are available online. Since 2018-2019, all courses and lectures of the Department are evaluated electronically. The Academic Unit policy for quality assurance (MODIP) is also available online both in Greek and in English. MODIP has submitted the Self-Assessment Report for the period 2010-2014 and updated it in June 2015. Accessibility is very good.

The Committee very much appreciated the clear and readily available access to all public information regarding the activities of the Department of Medicine.

### Committee judgement

Principle 8: Public Information	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Committee Recommendations

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

## Principle 9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Internal Review of Programmes

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR THE AUDIT AND ANNUAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF THEIR 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 study programmes aim to maintain the level of educational provision and to create 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. Revised programme specifications are published.*

### Study Programme compliance

The main bodies for the internal quality assurance system are the MODIP and OMEA. The OMEA is a team consisting of established senior members (Professors and lectures). Based on the documents received from the representatives of OMEA and MODIP, a significant progress has been made from 2009 to the end of 2016 in establishing appropriate quality processes especially those involving student feedback (for example, the response rate of questionnaires completed by students was increased by 5 fold). The Committee felt that the implementation of the quality assurance programme between 2009 and 2016 significantly improved quality of teaching and student satisfaction rates.

Based on the interview with the students it seems there is a smooth collaboration between them and the OMEA to improve and assure the quality of the teaching. Concerns of the students are seriously taken into account and result to teaching improvement. The students' satisfaction seems to be very high. According to the student's opinion, the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment is working well.

In general, the content of the programme incorporates the research activities of the Department. There are adequate transgenic animal mouse facilities, state of the art instruments (e.g., life imaging facilities). The undergraduate and graduate students have several opportunities to take part and to be updated about the latest research.

The high standards of the information technology service (IT-service) allow efficient monitoring of the course activities for continuous improvement.

An additional strength is that the Department is very adaptive to the changing environment of social needs. This can be best seen by the training of faculty in the management of tropical diseases that affect immigrants who are located in the adjacent to the Department area.

### Committee judgement

<b>Principle 9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Internal Review of Programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### **Committee Recommendations**

Bedside manners and professional and social behavior are key aspects of medical student training. More emphasis should be given on this issue in future revisions of the curriculum.

## Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes

**PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY COMMITTEES OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HQA, AIMING AT ACCREDITATION. THE TERM OF VALIDITY OF THE ACCREDITATION IS DETERMINED BY HQA.**

*HQA is responsible for administrating the programme accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by a committee of independent experts. HQA grants accreditation of programmes, 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 template's requirements, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees.*

*Both academic units and institutions participate in the regular external quality assurance process, while respecting the requirements of the legislative framework in which they operate.*

*The quality assurance, in this case the accreditation, is an on-going process that does not end with the external feedback, or report or its follow-up process within the Institution. Therefore, Institutions and their academic units ensure that the progress made since the last external quality assurance activity is taken into consideration when preparing for the next one.*

### Study Programme compliance

This is the first time that the Medical Department has undergone accreditation review and as a result, there were no previous reports to check for compliance. However, there was an external evaluation that was performed in November 2013, which was similar in scope to the current accreditation process. The report of this evaluation, which was thorough and well performed by esteemed evaluators from abroad, was made available to the Committee. Therefore, compliance of the Department was based on the response to the previous evaluation report in conjunction with the documents that were provided by the Department. It should be emphasized that the provided documents were very detailed, to the point that sometimes it was felt that they were excessive and difficult to be thoroughly reviewed by the Committee. It would be helpful if a point-by-point response to the previous evaluation was available to this Committee.

Regarding the previous external evaluation, as mentioned above, the Committee judged it to be very thorough, accurate and fair. The report was considered very carefully, first each member read it alone and then it was discussed during one of the committee sessions. Particular emphasis was given to the raised concerns and plans were made to inquire regarding the response of the Department during the ensuing years.

Overall, the Committee felt that the previous evaluation was positive and indicated that the Department was in the right direction, despite the severe economic crisis that was affecting any aspect of life in the country. It was also very gratifying to see that the same general type of interaction among all participants existed during the two evaluations. More specifically, it was felt that all Department representatives were very cooperative with the committee, were eager to respond to all questions and were frank in their responses. In addition, they were very keen to take into consideration all raised points and try to improve them.

### Committee judgement

Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## **Committee Recommendations**

In future evaluations, the Department in agreement with ADIP should provide documents that respond point-by-point to the comments of the previous evaluation.

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

### **I. Features of Good Practice**

Overall, the Committee's view is that the Department of Medicine of the University of Patras is a vibrant and well run institution that accomplishes its mission regarding both educational, clinical and research objectives. Both faculty and students are of high quality and take pride of their educational and research achievements. The curriculum is well structured and responsive to societal needs and fulfills all the strategic objectives of the Department.

As with the previous evaluation, a major strength of the Department is the existing infrastructure, which is modern and comprises of rather new buildings, the proximity between the Department and the university hospital that allows collaboration between preclinical and clinical departments, the proximity with other university departments that allows multidisciplinary research, especially at preclinical level, and the University support and commitment to the Department. Additional points of strengths were:

1. The staff leading the preclinical courses and labs is of high quality and have excellent track-record of success. This provides the opportunity of high quality research and collaboration with institutions abroad, both in Europe and USA. It also allows the establishment of exchange programmes with these institutions that enable medical students to visit foreign institutions for summer internships. It was very rewarding to see that there are efforts to develop the concept of 'physician-scientists', which is not well established in Greece. Overall, it was thought that the preclinical part of the Department is outward looking, very efficient and productive and that is able to compete internationally, establish productive relationships with high quality foreign institutions and industry and help in the development and expansion of biopharma industry in Greece. The Committee strongly believes and recommends that this strength should be preserved and further strengthened by the recruitment of new faculty of high caliber that has considerable experience and also established itself in well-known foreign institutions.
2. The clinical part of the Medical Department mainly consists of physicians highly experienced in managing medical conditions at tertiary level. Of note, there are programmes that are national leaders and centers of excellence, such as oncology and nephrology. In addition, a major strength is the very good climate of collaboration between academic and National Health System physicians that allows the involvement of the latter in various academic activities with special emphasis of clinical student teaching.

### **II. Areas of Weaknesses**

The Committee also identified weaknesses that need consideration not only at local but also at relevant governmental authorities as well.

1. A major weakness, which was also noted during the previous evaluation, is the increased number of admitted students that severely exceeds the objective training capability of the Department. The Committee realizes that decisions regarding the number of the admitted students are outside the control of the Department or the University but, nonetheless, sincere efforts should be taken by all parts to address the problem.
2. The problems with faculty recruitment that have risen due to the national economic situation during the last decade have grossly exaggerated the already existing problem of the ratio between junior and senior faculty that results in a grossly inverted pyramid. This, in addition to the ageing of the National Health System staff and the problems in filling resident spots due to junior doctor immigration, has the potential to severely affect not only the training capability of the Department but also the provision of adequate specialist health care in the community for years and decades to come. The Committee realizes that this problem cannot be solved at a local level alone but recommends that the Department participates in the planning to remedy this situation. Efforts on their part that can be very productive include the recruiting of highly successful physicians, preferably with great experience in different health care systems as well as international research standing, to directly replace retiring heads of

department or divisions rather than automatic promotion of existing staff. Such policies have the potential to attract junior doctors to complete residency in the Department rather than immigrating abroad, attract external research funding and collaboration with academia and pharma industry and, at least partly, reverse the currently disappointing system of loss of the most promising graduates to other countries, which benefit of the hard labor of the Department and expenses and Greek society. The fact that the success of the Department was based on such principles should be an additional impetus to follow this direction.

### III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

Individual recommendations are included in each section. Emphasis should be given to the following points:

1. Although signs of nepotism, a major problem not only of Greek academia, were not detected, better guidelines can be established and made easily available to the faculty regarding promotion policies. The guidelines should pay attention to promotion on merit rather than hierarchy. In addition, guidelines and structural procedures should be established regarding conflict resolution and various forms of harassment, including sexual harassment.
2. Recognition of the efforts of the faculty can greatly improve the morale. The Committee proposes the establishment of non-monetary awards that recognize mentorship of senior faculty and teaching of junior faculty. Such awards should be given based on the vote of junior faculty and students, respectively. It should also be emphasized that such awards should be major criteria factors for future promotions. Naming such awards after prominent previous faculty that excelled in such activities (e.g. the Vagenakis award) or sponsors of the Department provides an excellent opportunity to recognize the efforts of all these persons who persevered in the past for the success of the Department.
3. The Committee also recommends regular anonymous surveys of the faculty and students to identify the general feeling pulse of the Department and its progression, hopefully to the better, over time. Such surveys can be conducted in collaboration with the IT department and have the potential to provide equally good information with the one that is currently obtained using the student evaluations.
4. The curriculum should encourage stronger integration of research in the undergraduate training and a more ambitious approach in improving the professional and social skills of the graduates.
5. A mechanism should be established to quantitatively monitor impact of implemented changes in the curriculum.

### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are 1-10.

Overall Judgement	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

**The members of the Accreditation Panel for the  
Medicine Undergraduate Programme of the University of Patras**

**Name and Surname**

**Signature**

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**Prof. Barbara Papadopoulou**, Université Laval, Québec, Canada

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