POLICY OF THE INSTITUTION FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

(Απόφαση Πρυτανικού Συμβουλίου, συνεδρίαση 168/12-10-2021)

1.1 STATEMENT OF POLITICAL QUALITY OF THE INSTITUTION

The mission of the University of Thessaly (UTH) is to offer high quality education to its students and to promote knowledge and research in the knowledge areas related to its programs. The University of Thessaly aims to promote knowledge and specialization with rules of ethics, which will serve the needs of society, to form a free academic environment, to conduct high-level research, to guarantee that the teaching staff has the highest possible level for teaching and research, in shaping a culture of collaborations with educational and research institutions at home and abroad. The main goal of UTH is the recognition and attractiveness of its undergraduate and postgraduate programs within the next decade at the national level, as well as international acceptance of its ongoing research work.

The University of Thessaly considers as a central point of its policy the need to shape attitudes, develop ideas, culture and Quality Assurance Policy (QA) in the institution. The Board guarantees the safe course for the determination, but also the achievement of the Foundation's visions, mission, goals and policy. The economic crisis makes the cost of higher education unsustainable, students are increasing, staff are decreasing, however under any condition the UTH is accountable to society, which requires it to know all the qualitative and quantitative indicators that determine its identity. Through the QA the University satisfies its expectations and goals, but also its social role, as well as the needs of society.

The Quality Assurance System of UTH aims to develop a culture of continuous quality improvement in the academic community, so that it can fulfill its goals, through education, excellence, promotion of knowledge, and innovation in research. It is a commitment to processes of improvement and competition rather than competition, to processes that will lead to decision-making and strengthen his confidence. Follows the "Principles and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area", according to the European Union Declaration on Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009, Helsinki. https://www.enqa.eu/esg-standards-and-guidelines-for-quality-assurance-in-the-european-higher- education-area/

The University, in order to excel, must motivate, given the opportunity to students, teachers and administrators to highlight their potential and success in all areas: studies, knowledge, career, etc. The QA is the noblest path for motivation, effort and continuous improvement. In UTH not only teaching, learning, research, and service to society is pursued.

Quality is sought in teaching, learning, research and service to society. Good QA procedures are an indicator of internal democracy. These procedures are permanent and contribute to the achievement of the Foundation's autonomy.

The quality assurance through the correct evaluation of the work of the UTH leads to the formulation of documented recommendations for taking measures, for the establishment or improvement of institutions and for the formulation of directions and strategies for quality improvement of the educational, research and administrative function. A part of the quality assurance procedures is the evaluation of the Departments and the Institution as a whole. Evaluation is a continuous and participatory process. Through the evaluation, the Departments and the Institution establish an opinion on the quality of the work carried out based on academic and objective criteria and indicators of general acceptance.

1.2   CONNECTING POLICY QUALITY WITH THE STRATEGIC PLANNING OF THE INSTITUTION

The Institution's Internal Quality Assurance System and the implementation procedures for this project over the next 4 years, based on the Institution's strategic planning, are as follows:

1. The systematic improvement of the quality indicators of all units of the institution, administrative and academic, the evaluation of the teaching and research work of the departments and the staff, the systematic updating of the relevant information system of the Institution, the filing and evaluation of the annual and quadrennial reports evaluation of the departments, the analysis and consultation of the departments and the committee of the external evaluation reports, the qualitative and systematic updating of the websites of the departments, the periodic compilation of the evaluation reports of the institution as a whole based on the instructions of the ETHAAE.

2.   Contributing in every way to the creation of an environment and incentives for attracting highly trained scientists, stable and dignified living and working conditions, remuneration and remuneration for the achievement of quality and excellence in the academic community. The adoption of the best international selection and development criteria for all categories of teaching staff (a separate proposal will be submitted for this matter).

3.   The development of motivation strategies for students, teachers and administrative employees.

4. The activation of processes that will make UTH attractive for students and staff, through strategies to develop a climate of cooperation and competition between the different cognitive areas that are treated in its faculties. Each department should focus on areas where it can do better, either in research, or in publications,

or in attracting funding, or in attracting foreign-language students through Erasmus, or through foreign-language master's and doctoral programs, through international recognition, etc.

5. The promotion of UTH admission procedures in selected international university ranking lists. The UTH needs to gain the confidence and self-belief that it can distinguish itself internationally and properly managed assessment and quality assurance systems can help in this area.

6.   The creation of a climate of motivation and excellence, through the announcement on an annual basis of specific reward programs for individuals, research groups or departments for excellent academic performance, for excellent teaching, for the organization of foreign language programs, for attracting undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral students from other countries, for the preparation of original digital teaching materials, the preparation of courses for distance learning, etc.

The policy of UTH in the last decade aims at the continuous improvement and systematic organization of the Internal Quality Assurance System, at the undertaking of initiatives by the leadership of the Institution, the Departments and all functional units, the staff members and the students. The institution takes care of the safeguarding of academic values, the development of ethical rules, the respect and promotion of the values of equality at all levels, the prevention of discrimination, the involvement of external bodies in quality assurance, the continuous improvement of learning and teaching , the promotion of research and innovation, the quality assurance of study programs and their compliance with the standards of ETHAAE, the effective organization of services and the development and maintenance of infrastructure, the effective management of the necessary resources for the operation of the Foundation in measure of what is possible and finally the development and rational distribution of human resources.

1.3 PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION

Article Θ2, par. 3 of the Organization of the UTH Foundation explicitly states that "All members of the University community must know that no form of discrimination based on gender, racial or national origin, religious or other beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation, is not tolerated by the Foundation and that the principle of equal treatment should be ensured. No form of direct or indirect discrimination and sexual harassment is tolerated by the Foundation. In the workplace, all categories of members of the TO community must behave with due respect, absence of any form of discrimination and any form of harassment" (Organization

UTH, 2014, page 202). See also the relevant version of the Foundation's Code of Conduct and Harassment and Bullying Code here:

-   [Harassment - Bullying | University Of Thessaly (uth.gr)](uth.gr)

-   [Ethics Issues | University Of Thessaly (uth.gr)](uth.gr)

1.4 METHODS OF PUBLISHING THE INSTITUTION'S POLICY

1.5 The University of Thessaly follows completely transparent decision-making procedures, through its collective bodies, as well as the publication of quality assurance practices and reports. On the relevant websites of the Foundation https://www.uth.gr/, as well as on the websites of the individual academic units, and of MODIP https://www.uth.gr/panepistimio/axiologisi-poiotita/modip, which are available to the general public, one can locate the relevant information.

Summary: The University of Thessaly has established a clear quality assurance policy and culture for a decade. It aims at the systematic improvement of the quality indicators of all units of the Foundation, administrative and academic, at the creation of a motivational environment and the development of motivation and excellence strategies for students, teachers and administrative employees. This policy is in harmony with its strategic planning, internal and external evaluation reports, the planning and reports of its administrations, and the decisions of the competent bodies. Finally, it goes through processes of continuous renewal and revision with the ultimate aim of improving its services to students, and its contribution to the promotion of science and research in society.