

UNIVERSITY OF CRETE -  
Department of Computer Science



Quality Policy of the  
Undergraduate Programme of Studies (PPA)

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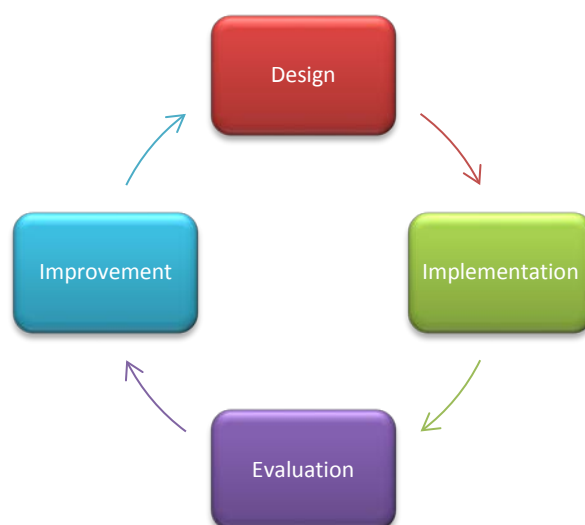
## 1 Introduction

The quality policy of the QPF of the Department of Computer Science of the University of Crete is in line with the quality policy of the Institution, supports the academic character, orientation and objectives of the curriculum, is implemented with the participation of all members of the teaching, administrative and technical staff of the Department and its students and is implemented with quality control procedures in the key parts of the curriculum.

- The Department's quality policy starts with the objectives of the Undergraduate Curriculum (POC). The objectives of the Department's Curriculum are:
- High level and quality by international standards.
- The harmonization with the modern concepts of science and technology of computer science, information technology, and telecommunications.
- The applied orientation, with emphasis on laboratory training, along with the cultivation of research and creative thinking and understanding of principles, in order to achieve the proper education of the scientist and engineer.
- The right combination of depth and breadth of knowledge.
- At the undergraduate (and postgraduate) level, specialisation in cutting-edge areas and conducting research of international standing, in collaboration with the Foundation for Research and Technology - Hellas.

The achievement of the above objectives is a key concern of the Department, and is made possible by the high quality of the members of the Department and the active participation of students in its activities.

The Department of Computer Science has adopted a continuous improvement strategy implemented by the adjacent quality cycle which guides the processes of planning, implementation, evaluation, and improvement. Overall, the quality policy of the Department of Computer Science's QPF takes into account the QPF's objectives, the mechanisms for their realization in a given period of time, continuous measurement and evaluation, and incremental improvement. This continuous improvement process, implemented since the establishment of the Department, has resulted in a clear and up-to-date curriculum that is an important asset of the Department in the international education arena.



Design	Implementation	Evaluation	Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting objectives</li> <li>• Strategic and operational planning based on the objectives</li> <li>• Development of the Undergraduate curriculum, its structure, its components, and their flow in the form of a model programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the Undergraduate curriculum through appropriate lessons and activities</li> <li>• Human Resources Development</li> <li>• Functioning of relevant roles and bodies: lecturers, study committee, departmental assembly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection of data and information from course evaluations, students, lecturers, external bodies</li> <li>• Internal and external evaluation of objectives and results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design update</li> <li>• Improvement of Undergraduate curriculum content (courses)</li> <li>• Improving human resources</li> <li>• Improvement of activities</li> <li>• Improving roles and processes</li> </ul>

## 2 Undergraduate Programme of Studies

The Programme of Studies and more generally the quality assurance of the Department have been designed in accordance with the University's quality assurance policy and international practices such as the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.1 Selection of Undergraduate Students

The selection of students is made through the Panhellenic examinations which ensure the following criteria<sup>2</sup>:

- Transparency, reliability, and accessibility
- Fair and reliable assessment of candidates

In order to attract undergraduate students, the Department additionally undertakes the following activities:

- An advertising campaign through social networks analyzing the advantages of studying at the Department
- Organized visits of high schools to the Department in the January period (except COVID period)
- Organised teleconferences with schools (mainly outside Crete)

These actions:

- Provide information to students, making it easier for them to make a **decision based on correct information**.
- **They remove barriers** (such as geographical distance) to students' access to correct information.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/admissions-recruitment-and-widening-access>

## 2.2 Curriculum

The aim of the Department is to provide **courses and general education of high quality**. The important dimensions that ensure this quality are:

- **The level of the curriculum is harmonized with national and international standards** - e.g. ACM/IEEE standard curricula for computer science and curricula of leading universities.
- **The responsibility for the design of the programme is entrusted to the (undergraduate) Studies Committee** with the supervision and approval of the General Assembly.
- The creation of new courses is a flexible process which can easily integrate a new course into the curriculum. The creation can come from a lecturer or from the Curriculum Committee. In the first case the lecturer makes a request to the Curriculum Committee (there is a special form) where he/she analyses the necessity of the course, the learning objectives, the content, the way of examination, similar courses in other good universities and the relation of the course to the IEEE/ACM standard curriculum. The Curriculum Committee reviews it and in case of a positive answer the request is forwarded to the General Assembly. The process can be completed within a few weeks.
- **Key players** in course creation include the instructor, the Curriculum Committee, other relevant faculty members, faculty members from other universities, alumni of the Department, and student representatives. Different stakeholders are involved in different steps of the process: Research, Application, Study Committee, General Assembly. Obviously not all involved have the same experience in designing and developing courses for higher education. However, they can all give a contribution from their own perspective.
- Once the course has been approved, all course descriptions are available in the course catalogue<sup>3</sup> and on the individual course websites.
- After the course is taught, feedback is collected from the students who enrolled (through questionnaires), from lecturers and from past graduates (in the 30-year check-up). Feedback is evaluated. Small changes can be incorporated immediately. Major changes need to go through the same approval process.

## 2.3 Teaching

The Department maintains a high level of teaching (and learning) as follows:

- **The Department's professors are selected in such a way that they are internationally renowned researchers.** This means that they are very likely to do research in the very field they teach in the classroom. In this way what they teach they know first-hand and to some extent they are involved (research-wise) in its development.
- The department provides faculty with access to teaching seminars such as "**Train the Trainers**"
- The Department provides a high quality teaching environment: new classrooms, laboratories, reading room, access to the University library, etc. This environment helps in meaningful learning and academic experience.
- The educational process can be complemented outside the University through the **Internship programme** in organizations and companies.

## 2.4 Student evaluation

The main dimensions of the evaluation are as follows:

- The assessment process (e.g. final exam, exercises, etc.) is published on the course website **in a clear and transparent manner**. The process is accessible to all students and any other interested parties.
- Assessment takes place in the examination periods immediately after the completion of the

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.csd.uoc.gr/CSD/index.jsp?content=courses\\_catalog&openmenu=demoAcc3&lang=en](https://www.csd.uoc.gr/CSD/index.jsp?content=courses_catalog&openmenu=demoAcc3&lang=en)

course. In the case of the second examination period (September) students are given approximately two months to prepare before being examined for a second time in the same course.

- Students **prepare for the assessment** a series of activities including tutorials, lectures, and exercise solutions.
- The assessment encourages **academic integrity** and penalizes cases of cheating (which is facilitated by available software: MOSS and turnitin).
- The Department informs its students about **ethics and plagiarism issues**.
- The assessment process takes into account the particularities of students by following different procedures (e.g. oral examination, extra time) for students and specialities (e.g. **learning difficulties**) according to the guidelines of the University's Counselling Centre.
- The assessment process is **aligned with the learning objectives**, emphasizing the theoretical or practical component accordingly.
- After completing the examination, students have the opportunity to look at their writing, and ask questions to learn from their mistakes, since the examination itself is nothing more than a part of the learning process.
- Course lecturers are selected through rigorous procedures (elections for permanent staff) in which both their research and teaching work is evaluated.
- The Department takes the necessary steps to ensure that **the evaluation process is secure**. For example, examinations (tests) are held in the Department's classrooms, marking is done as soon as possible immediately after the examination, invigilators during the examination make sure that there are no copies, the identity of the examinees is checked, etc.

Based on the above, the evaluation process is **fair, consistent, and reliable**.

## 2.5 Curriculum Evaluation

The Curriculum is evaluated on a permanent basis through a series of actions as follows:

- Students enrolled in a course complete **a questionnaire** in which they provide comments and a grade for the course. They comment on the course, instructor, teaching assistants, lectures, tutorials/labs (if any), and may provide comments as free text.
- **Graduates complete a questionnaire** about all their studies in the department
- The Department collects **statistics** on the actual **duration of studies**, success rate in courses, etc.
- The Department goes through periodic evaluations and accreditations by committees of external experts who provide feedback on the curriculum.
- Graduates (through the 30-year checkup process) provide feedback on the Curriculum and the impact it has had on their careers.

## 2.6 Complaints

The Department within the framework of its operation within the University's regulations and relevant legislation has established a **fair and transparent framework for the receipt of complaints**. The aim is to improve the academic experience.

- **Complaints about grades** - assessment
  - At the first level students raise their complaints with the teacher of the relevant course
  - If the problem is not resolved there, they go to the department chair.
  - If the problem is not solved there either, the students can turn to the Dean's Office, where in case they do not pass a course three times they can ask for a review by a committee (n. 4009/2011 33(10)). The committee does not include the course grader.
- **Complaints unrelated to the grading**

- Students can contact the student Ombudsman <sup>4</sup>

We should also stress the following:

- The whole process is clear and **transparent** in terms of the steps and their outcome.
- The process is **accessible** to all students without exceptions.
- All complaints are dealt with accordingly, with the most serious ones being given a **protocol number**.
- Confidentiality and anonymity are maintained in accordance with the procedure.
- Response time is kept to a minimum with the simplest of complaints being resolved within a few days.

### 3 External Contribution

The Department shall seek and receive assistance from external<sup>5</sup> contributors as follows:

- The **Department's alumni** actively contribute. Once a year the Department activates the 30-year alumni (30-year checkup). They are given a presentation about the Department and the Program. They give feedback on what has helped them in their career and on what else they would like to see in the Program of Studies.
- The Department undergoes periodic **evaluations** and **accreditations** by **expert committees** who provide their advice on the program and procedures. The advice is evaluated, and an action plan with clear responsibilities is developed. The plan is reviewed periodically by the OMEA and the PMP to ensure that progress is being made. Assessments/certifications are held over several days in which the committees get information and talk to all the stakeholders involved.
- The **students** of the department provide feedback through the bodies in which they are institutionally involved and through questionnaires. Finally they also talk privately with the evaluation/monitoring committees.

### 4 Teacher recruitment

It should be said that the Department has very little control over the number of professorships it can advertise and the period of time during which this advertisement can be made. Nevertheless, the Department has been able to attract **qualified professors of international reputation** who can provide a **high quality education and academic experience** to students. These professors have given it a leading position in Greece. For example, in a recent evaluation, seven of the Department's professors were on the list of the most cited Greek computer science professors.

There are two main criteria that play an important role in recruitment:

- Significant research activity of international standing
- Significant educational work such as e.g. creation of new courses, significant reform of old courses, etc.

### 5 General Assembly

The General Assembly has an institutional role which gives it the final responsibility for the Programme of Studies and for most of the Department's procedures. Faculty members, student representatives (undergraduate and postgraduate) and representatives of the Department's employees participate in the Assembly.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.csd.uoc.gr/CSD/index.jsp?custom=sinigorosfoithth&openmenu=demoAcc5&lang=en>

<sup>5</sup> External collaborators can be (1) outside the University, or (2) within the University but external to a process - e.g. students not taking a course are external to that course.

## 6 Secretariat of Undergraduate Studies

The Department has a secretariat for undergraduate studies which handles the procedural issues of registration, grades, degrees, etc.

- Information about studies is described in the Undergraduate Study Guide.
- The Department provides a standard curriculum and a full list of courses

## 7 Buildings

The Department has a recent building infrastructure<sup>6</sup> (2013), which allows it to provide a **comfortable and high quality academic experience** to its students.

## 8 Other Infrastructure (Library, gym, etc.)

### 8.1 Library

Students of the Department have access to the University library. The goal of the library is to provide the necessary learning resources to ensure that students have a **high quality academic experience**.

### 8.2 Gym

All students have access to the University's Gym-Gym which is located very close to the Department building (less than 10 minutes walk). This way students can exercise and gain energy during the day.

## 9 Quality Assurance Policy - monitoring

This quality assurance policy is drawn up and renewed by OMEA once a year at the beginning of the academic year.

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.csd.uoc.gr/CSD/index.jsp?content=contact\\_and\\_location](https://www.csd.uoc.gr/CSD/index.jsp?content=contact_and_location)