

UNIVERSITY OF CRETE -
Department of Computer Science



Quality Policy of the
Master's Program (MPS)

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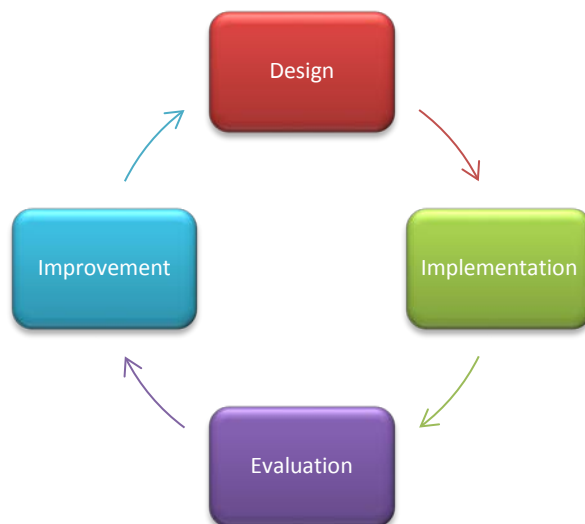
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1 Introduction

The quality policy of the PMS of the Department of Computer Science of the University of Crete is consistent with the quality policy of the University, supports the academic character, orientation and objectives of the study program, is implemented with the participation of all members of the teaching, administrative and technical staff of the Department and of its students and is implemented with quality control procedures in key parts of the curriculum. The Department's quality policy begins with the objectives of the Graduate Studies Program (MSP). The goals of the Department's Study Program are:

- The high quality with international criteria.
- Its alignment with modern understandings of computer science and technology, information technology, and telecommunications.
- The right combination of depth and breadth of knowledge.
- The emphasis on laboratory education, alongside the cultivation of research and creative thinking and the understanding of principles, in order to achieve the correct education of the scientist and engineer.
- Specializing in cutting-edge fields and conducting international-level research, in collaboration with the Foundation for Research and Technology (FORTH).
- Aiming to provide knowledge to solve real problems in industry nationally and internationally.



Achieving the above goals is a key concern of the Department, and is made possible thanks to the high level of the Department's members and the active participation of students in its activities.

The Department of Computer Science has adopted a continuous improvement strategy that is implemented with the quality cycle in the adjacent picture that guides the processes of design, implementation, evaluation, and improvement. Overall, the quality policy of the Department of Computer Science's QMS takes into account the QMS objectives, the mechanisms for their implementation in each time period, continuous measurement and evaluation, and incremental improvement. This continuous process of improvement implemented since the establishment of the Department, has led to a clear and modern curriculum that is an important advantage of the Department in the international field of education.

Design	Implementation	Evaluation	Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting goals • Strategic and operational design based on objectives • Development of the PMS, its structure, components, and their flow in the form of a model program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the PMS through appropriate courses and activities • Human Resource Development • Functioning of the relevant roles and bodies: lecturers, study committee, Department assembly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection of data and information from evaluations of courses, students, teachers, external bodies • Internal and external evaluation of goals and results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design update • Improving PMS content (courses) • Human resource improvement • Improving activities • Improving roles and processes

2 Postgraduate PROGRAMME

The Study Program and in general the Department's quality assurance have been designed in accordance with the

University's quality assurance policy as well as international practices such as e.g. the Quality Code for UK Higher Education.¹

2.1 Selection of Graduate Students

Students are selected through procedures that ensure the following ²criteria ³:

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

In order to attract postgraduate students, the Department additionally carries out the following activities:

- Advertising campaign through social networks explaining the advantages of studying at the Department.

These actions:

- provide information to undergraduate students facilitating them to make an **informed decision** .
- **remove barriers** (such as geographical distance) to students' access to correct information.

2.2 Curriculum

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

- The **level of the curriculum** is **in line with similar international programs**
- The **responsibility for planning the program is assigned to the Graduate Studies Committee** with the supervision and approval of the General Assembly.
- Creating new courses is a flexible process that can easily incorporate a new course into the curriculum. The creation can come from a teacher or from the Study Committee. In the first case, the teacher makes an application to the Studies Committee (there is a special form) where he/she analyzes the necessity of the course, the learning objectives, the content, the examination method, similar courses in other good Universities. The Study Committee examines 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 contributors** to course creation include the instructor, the Study Committee, other faculty members on the subject, faculty members from other Universities, alumni of the Department, and student representatives. The different contributors are involved in different steps of the process: Research, Application, Study Committee, General Assembly. Obviously not everyone involved has the same experience in designing and developing courses for Higher Education. But, everyone can make a contribution from their own perspective.
- After course approval, all course descriptions are available in the course catalog ⁴and individual course web pages.
- After teaching the course, feedback is collected from the students who wrote (through questionnaires), from the lecturers and from past graduates (at 30-year check-up). That 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 very high standard of teaching (and learning) as follows:

- The **professors of the Department are selected in such a way that they are internationally renowned researchers**. This means that they are very likely to be doing research in the very field they are teaching in class. In this way, they know firsthand what they teach and to a large extent participate in research in its development.
- The Department provides teachers with access to teaching seminars such as “ **Train the Trainers** ”.
- The Department provides a high-level 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 completed outside the University through participation in practical exercises (internships) in cutting-edge technology companies with a global scope.

2.4 Student evaluation

The main dimensions of the evaluation are as follows:

- The evaluation 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 anyone else interested.
- The evaluation takes place in the examination periods immediately after the completion of the courses.

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

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

³ Article 3 of the Graduate Studies Regulation defines these procedures.

⁴ https://www.csd.uoc.gr/index.jsp?content=pg_courses_catalog&openmenu=demoAcc4&lang=gr

- Students **prepare for the assessment** through a series of activities that include tutorials, lectures, and solution exercises.
- Assessment encourages **academic integrity** and penalizes instances of copying (facilitated by available software: MOSS and turnitin).
- The Department informs its students about **ethics and plagiarism issues**.⁵
- The evaluation process takes into account the particularities of the students following different procedures (e.g. oral examination, extra time) for students and particularities (eg **learning difficulties**) according to the guidelines of the University Counseling Center.
- The evaluation process **is aligned with the learning objectives** emphasizing the theoretical or practical part accordingly.
- After completing the exam, students have the opportunity to review their writing, and ask questions to learn from their mistakes, as the exam itself is nothing more than a part of the learning process.
- The lecturers of the courses are selected through strict procedures (elections for permanent staff) in which both their research and teaching work are evaluated.
- The Department takes the necessary measures so that the **evaluation process** is **secure**. For example, the exams (competitions) are held in the Department's halls, the grading is done as soon as possible immediately after the exam, invigilators during the exam 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 Study Program is evaluated on a permanent basis through a series of actions as follows:

- Students enrolled in a course complete **a questionnaire** in which they give comments and a grade for the course. They comment on the course, instructor, assistants, lectures, tutorials/workshops (if any), and can provide feedback as free text.
- Graduates **fill out 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 undergoes periodic evaluations and certifications by external expert committees that provide feedback on the curriculum.

2.6 Complaints

The Department, as part of its operation within the University's regulations and the relevant legislation, has established a **fair and transparent framework for receiving and handling complaints**. The goal is to improve the academic experience.

- **Complaints about ratings** - rating
 - At the first level, students express their complaints to the teacher of the relevant course
 - If the problem is not solved there, they turn to the president of the Department.
 - The University is working on a central complaints system which will be available soon
- **Complaints unrelated to grading**
 - Students can contact the student advocate⁶.

We should also emphasize the following:

- The whole process is clear and **transparent** in terms of steps and their result.
- The process is **accessible** to all students without exceptions.
- All complaints are treated accordingly, with the most serious ones receiving **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 requests and receives assistance from external⁷ contributors as follows:

- The Department undergoes periodic **evaluations** and **certifications** by **expert committees** who provide their

⁵ https://www.csd.uoc.gr/uploaded_files/antigrafi_logoklopi-1.pdf

⁶ <https://www.uoc.gr/studies-at-uni/tutor/synigoros.html>

⁷ External collaborators may be (1) outside the University, or (2) inside the University but external to a process – e.g. students who do not take a course are external to that course.

advice on the program and procedures. The advice is evaluated, and an action plan is drawn up with clear responsibilities. The plan is reviewed by OMEA and MODIP periodically to ensure progress is being made. The evaluations/certifications take several days during which the committees get information and talk to all the contributors involved.

- The **students** of the Master's Program provide feedback through the institutions in which they participate institutionally and through the questionnaires. Finally, they speak privately and with the evaluation/monitoring committees.

4 Recruitment of teachers

It should be said that the Department has very little control over the number of professorships it can announce as well as the time period when this announcement can be made. Nevertheless, the Department has managed to attract **specialized professors of international reputation**, who can provide a **high-quality education and academic experience** to students. These professors have given him a pioneer in Greece. For example, in a recent evaluation, seven of the Department's professors were on the list of Greek IT professors with the most references.⁸ There are two main criteria that play an important role in recruitment:

- Important research activity of international level
- Important educational work such as e.g. creating new courses, major overhaul of old courses, etc. (mainly for the high ranks)

5 General Assembly

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

6 Graduate Studies Secretariat

The Department operates a graduate studies secretariat which handles the procedural issues of registrations, grades, degrees, etc.

- The information on the studies is described in the Postgraduate Studies Guide⁹, which also includes the rules of the Postgraduate Study Program.
- The Department provides every year the complete list of courses¹⁰.

7 Buildings

The Department has a recent building infrastructure¹¹ (2013), which allows it to provide **a comfortable and high-quality academic experience** to its students.

8 Other infrastructure

8.1 Library

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

8.2 Gym

All students have access to the University's Gymnasium-swimming pool which is very close to the Department building (less than 10 minutes by foot). In this way, students can exercise and gain energy during the day.

8.3 Counseling center

Students have access to the counseling center which provides psychological support for occasional difficulties related to developmental and personal problems and/or adjustment problems, as well as support for students with special educational needs, disabilities and learning difficulties.

⁸ <https://www.csd.uoc.gr/CSD/index.jsp?content=news&ann=353>

⁹ <https://www.csd.uoc.gr/index.jsp?content=moc&openmenu=demoAcc4&lang=gr>

¹⁰ https://www.csd.uoc.gr/index.jsp?content=pg_courses_catalog&openmenu=demoAcc4&lang=gr

¹¹ https://www.csd.uoc.gr/CSD/index.jsp?content=contact_and_location

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.