



**Εθνική Αρχή
Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης**
Hellenic Authority
for Higher Education

2021

annual report

on the Quality
of Higher
Education

SUMMARY REPORT

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HELLENIC AUTHORITY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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Preface

In 2021, the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education continued in a steady yet intensive pace to pursue its strategic goals and fulfill its mission and core responsibilities in order to ensure high quality in higher education.

The major task of reviewing the Internal Quality Assurance Systems (IQAS) for all Greek HEIs was successfully completed with the accreditation of the last 3 systems. The findings of the accreditation reports point to significant improvements in the way Institutions operate as a result of adhering to their internal quality procedures. The whole process has demonstrated that the efforts to systematically monitor academic operations through the IQAS are bearing fruits and can yield significant benefits for HEIs. This trend is expected to continue in the coming years. Equally important is the observation that a culture of quality has now emerged in our Universities and that the academic community has, in its vast majority, embraced the external evaluation of Institutions and their academic units by experts. With these positive signs, substantial efforts are now being directed towards better organizing and improving the internal communication between Quality Assurance Units (QAUs) and academic units in each Institution to ensure optimal operation.

The evaluation of Undergraduate Study Programmes (USPs) continued uninterrupted throughout the year and a total of 100 USPs were accredited, including one offered in the English language. The final accreditation reports, which are publicly available in HAHE's website, record an overall improvement in the quality of studies and the remarkable efforts of Institutions to meet the requirements of HAHE's quality standards. At the same time, however, the experts refer to the distance that must be covered by HEIs in order to confront mainly chronic weaknesses, such as the low numbers of teaching staff and their heavy workload, the delayed adoption of new technologies, the low funding levels, and the limited interaction of HEIs with the labour market.

Following the successful outcome of the Authority's efforts to amend the legislative framework so as to provide for student participation in External Evaluation and Accreditation Panels according to European standards, HAHE proceeded quickly and efficiently in the implementation of the relevant provisions with the establishment of the Student Register. In this context, and after a public call for expression of interest, the Authority received more than a hun-

dred student applications and enrolled the eligible candidates in the Register, after their applications were approved by the Evaluation and Accreditation Council.

In the context of its advisory role, HAHE carried out in 2021, for the first time, a study in order to determine the criteria for the allocation of the 20% of the annual state funding to HEIs, based on quality indicators and achievements of HEIs. In July 2021, the Supreme Council submitted its recommendation to the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs for the algorithm that allocates the Ministry's total annual regular budgetary funds to HEIs. The algorithm comprises two main parts: i) the method for allocating 80% of the annual state funding to HEIs based on objective criteria, related mainly to the size of the institutions, and ii) the method for allocating the remaining 20% of the available funds, which is based on a multifaceted collection of quality criteria and key indicators. This proposal was the product of intensive work by the members of the Supreme Council and repeated consultations with the Institutions that took place at successive Rectors' Synods. The Supreme Council's recommendation was finally accepted by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and became official as the Ministerial Decision 154781/Z1/30-11-2021 (Government Gazette 5629/B/2-12-2021). Following the provisions of this document, the Institutions submitted their annual performance reports to HAHE for the first time. These reports were based on actual quantitative data and quality indicators, thus showcasing a wide range of activities for each University and highlighting several aspects of their academic performance. As is usually the case with the introduction of a new procedure, feedback was collected and several adjustments were proposed and implemented so as to improve the efficiency and fairness of the algorithm in subsequent applications.

It is also worth mentioning that in 2021 HAHE, focusing on the connection of USPs to the needs of the labour market, performed a relevant study aiming at highlighting the academic and professional prospects of graduates of existing Departments, following the mergers of the Technological Education Institutions (TEIs) and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in 2018-2019. The conclusions of this study with respect to the current academic map and employment prospects of graduates are presented in the third part of this Report.

As every year, the Authority organized workshops with stakeholders (i.e. HEIs, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, chambers and professional associations) and numerous webinars on quality assurance issues both with HEIs and with members of EEAP in the context of their training. Moreover, HAHE worked with other state agencies that collect Higher Education data (Hellenic Statistical Authority, National Documentation Centre, etc.) to streamline data collection procedures and signed a memorandum of cooperation with the National Institute of Labour and Human Resources that engages in monitoring graduates' employment.

Finally, the dedication and hard work of the Authority's staff deserves a separate mention. Although limited in number, our personnel, under the guidance of the Administration, succeeded in carrying out the complex and demanding tasks in a systematic way and always in compliance with the internal quality and control procedures of HAHE.

This report was drafted by an ad hoc working group and was unanimously approved by HAHE's Supreme Council by decision no 41/30-11-2022. It is submitted to the Greek Parliament and the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs in accordance with current provisions.

The President
Professor Pericles A. Mitkas

Summary

HAHE, as part of its mission to achieve high quality in higher education (a) annually reviews the developments in higher education at international, European and national level in order to systematically monitor and strategically evaluate both external and internal context of Greek Higher Education; (b) depicts the current structure of the national academic map; c) conducts activities in order to ensure and improve the quality of HEIs and d) implements its organizational and operational development plan. The annual report presents the Authority's annual activity according to the four above-mentioned pillars.

The first part of the report reviews the national and international context and analyses the overall figures of higher education in the form of international 'macro-indicators', which are compared with the Greek respective ones.

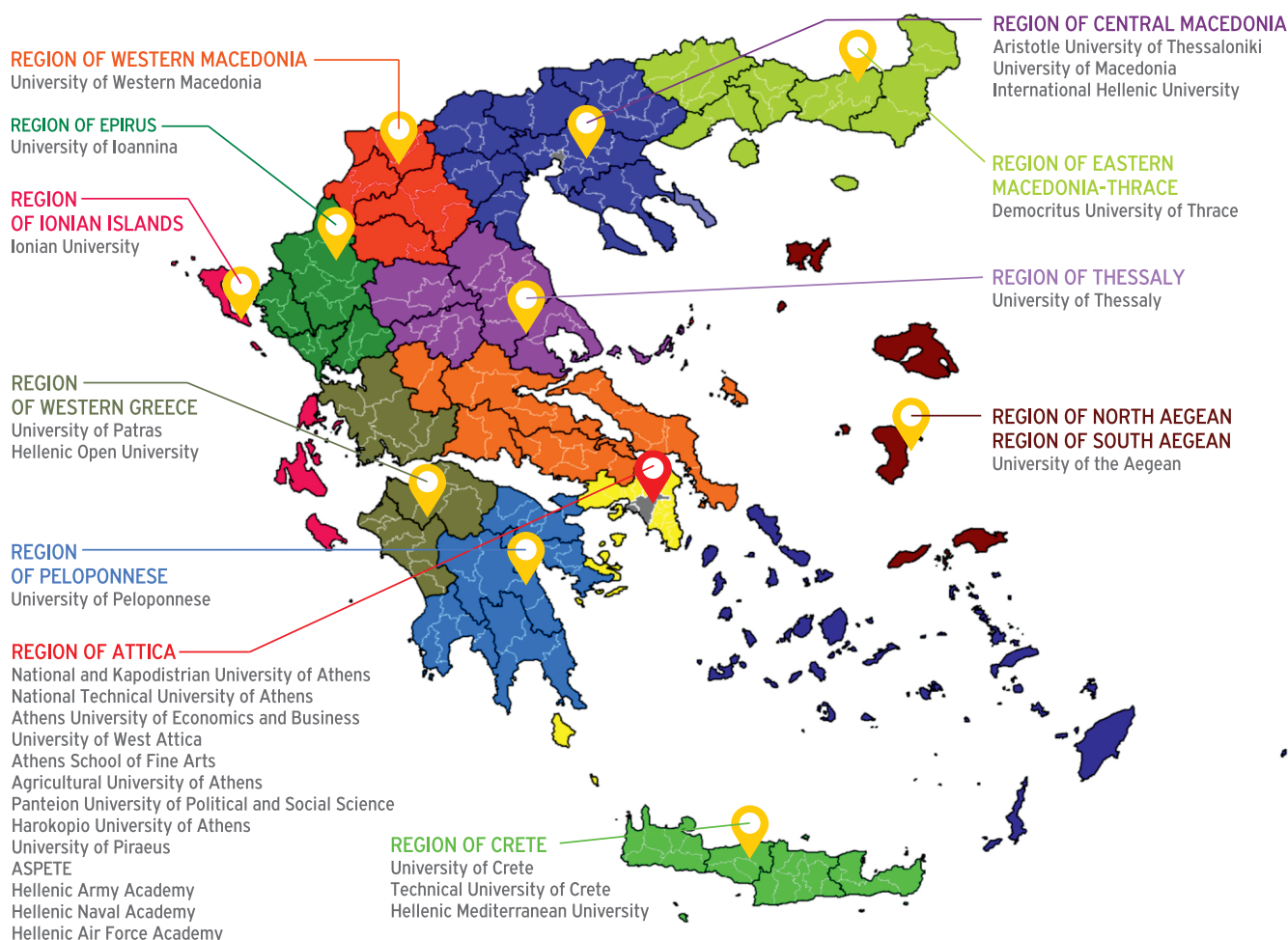
In the second part of the report, HAHE presents a) the analytical profile of Greek HEIs with some basic

figures and indicators of their activities, as well as the overall academic map, b) HAHE's studies on emerging issues that are related to the mission and activities of Higher Education Institutions.

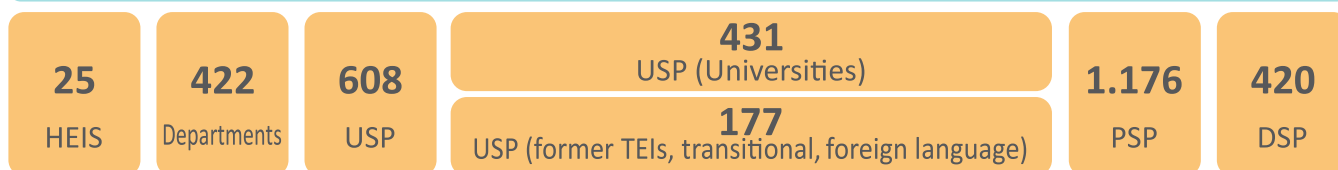
In the third part of the report, HAHE presents its activities in order to ensure and improve the quality of HEIs, namely their activities, results and achievements. In particular, the following are presented: a) the conclusions of external evaluation and accreditation b) the studies that are carried out by HAHE on the employment of graduates and the structure of academic map, as well as c) the proposal for the allocation of state funding to HEIs, based on objective criteria of their operation and their performance and achievements.

The fourth part of the report outlines the organizational and operational plan of the Authority and in particular, the activities that are developed by HAHE's governance and organizational units, as well as the co-operation activities with the interested parties.

The map of Greek Higher Education (2021)



ACADEMIC STRUCTURE



STUDENTS & GRADUATES



STAFF & FUNDING



Source: NISQA 2021 (28/06/2021)

Part A

Overview of developments in Higher Education and the position of Greece in the international arena

The upward trend in the number of bachelor graduates

During 2021, significant developments are taking place in the national and international scene in higher education. Almost 40% to 50% of population worldwide, and 43% of young people in Greece hold a higher education degree, giving it a massive character. In fact, the last decade was a critical period for this development, with the annual change of bachelor graduates having a consistently positive sign. Women are now the largest group of bachelor graduates internation-

ally, while in Greece they outnumber men by 14.5%.

The numbers of higher education degree holders are constantly increasing. Given that the educational level of population is directly related, not only to the economic development and social well-being, but also to the implementation of human rights and culture, the efforts of governments and international organizations are aiming at its continuous improvement.

The employment prospect of graduates

The employment of graduates and their access to the labour market is an important aspect of the increasing rates of graduates internationally. It is a fact that the prospect of employment as well as the level of remuneration remain the strongest motives that push young people to pursue a higher education degree. However, Greece has comparatively reduced employment rates of new graduates at 70%, while the European average is 82% and the average of the OECD countries is 83%. These percentages combined with the unemployment rate of new graduates (17% compared to 10% average rate of OECD countries) do not only contribute to an unfavorable status of the country, but above all create unpropitious employment prospects for its graduates. The lower level of remuneration for graduates in Greece (a difference of 12% from the average rate of OECD countries) is added to the disadvantages of their employment prospects.

It is certain that the effective access of graduates to

the labour market is a structural element of the higher education that is provided, so that the academic qualifications and skills that are acquired by graduates meet its needs. In addition, the prevailing conditions in the labour market constitute another array of factors that the country must focus on in order to make the best use of the available workforce comprised by graduates of higher education.

The improvement of employment rates and salaries of HE graduates constitute a special challenge for our country. Of particular concern is the low employment rate of graduates aged 25-34, which can partly be attributed to the pandemic conditions that negatively impacted the labour market in 2020-21.

The study prepared by HAHE, in 2021, on the employment of graduates as well as the strategic options in higher education (whose major findings appear in the third part of this Annual Report) show the way to improve graduates' employability.

The effectiveness and efficiency of studies

Student population, teaching staff and state funding are the main components in the academic activity of Higher Education. A key result of this activity is the completion of studies within the normal duration of studies. The comparative study of the relevant indicators showed that Greece apparently excels in the student population as a percentage of the general population of the country (7.5%), compared to the respective average percentage of the OECD countries (4.03%). However, the student population of Greece

also includes inactive students, who appear as registered, resulting in a fictitious increase of the percentage. Nevertheless, teaching staff in Greece presents one of the lowest percentages (0.16%) among European countries (0.31%), when it is reduced to the country's general population. The ratio of students per teaching staff also is excessively high (47 students per teacher) compared to the European average ratio (13 students per teacher). The high ratio is due, on the one hand, to the increased number of students

which includes also inactive ones and, on the other hand, to the really small number of teaching staff. The total funding that was utilized by HEIs, in 2021, was increased by only 1.2% from the previous year (2020), according to HAHE's data, as submitted by Institutions. Finally, our country falls behind in terms of study completion rates, compared to the European average, since the ratio of graduates in the student population is only 8.65% compared to the European 23%. Here

again, however, the result includes inactive students, that works against this ratio.

In any case, our country needs to increase the number of teaching staff and the available funding, in order to resolve the problem of inactive students and focus on faster completion of studies, so that the resources that are invested in Higher Education have a noteworthy outcome.

Academic research and its international competitiveness

Research activity of Greek HEIs is, as in previous years, at a relatively good level, especially regarding the production of scientific publications as well as their international impact, according to international bibliometric indicators. However, since the beginning of the previous decade (2011) until today, Greece has shown a relative decline in research performance. A longitudinal comparison shows that research publications per researcher fell from 0.75 in 2011 to 0.55 in 2020. Universities are in the third position, after research centers and companies, as for their participation in the funding of research projects in the European competitive program Horizon, even though they have the largest number of researchers and research infrastructures among the three categories. Therefore, research, a

particularly competitive part of academic activity and HEIs' mission, needs the attention of the state and Institutions.

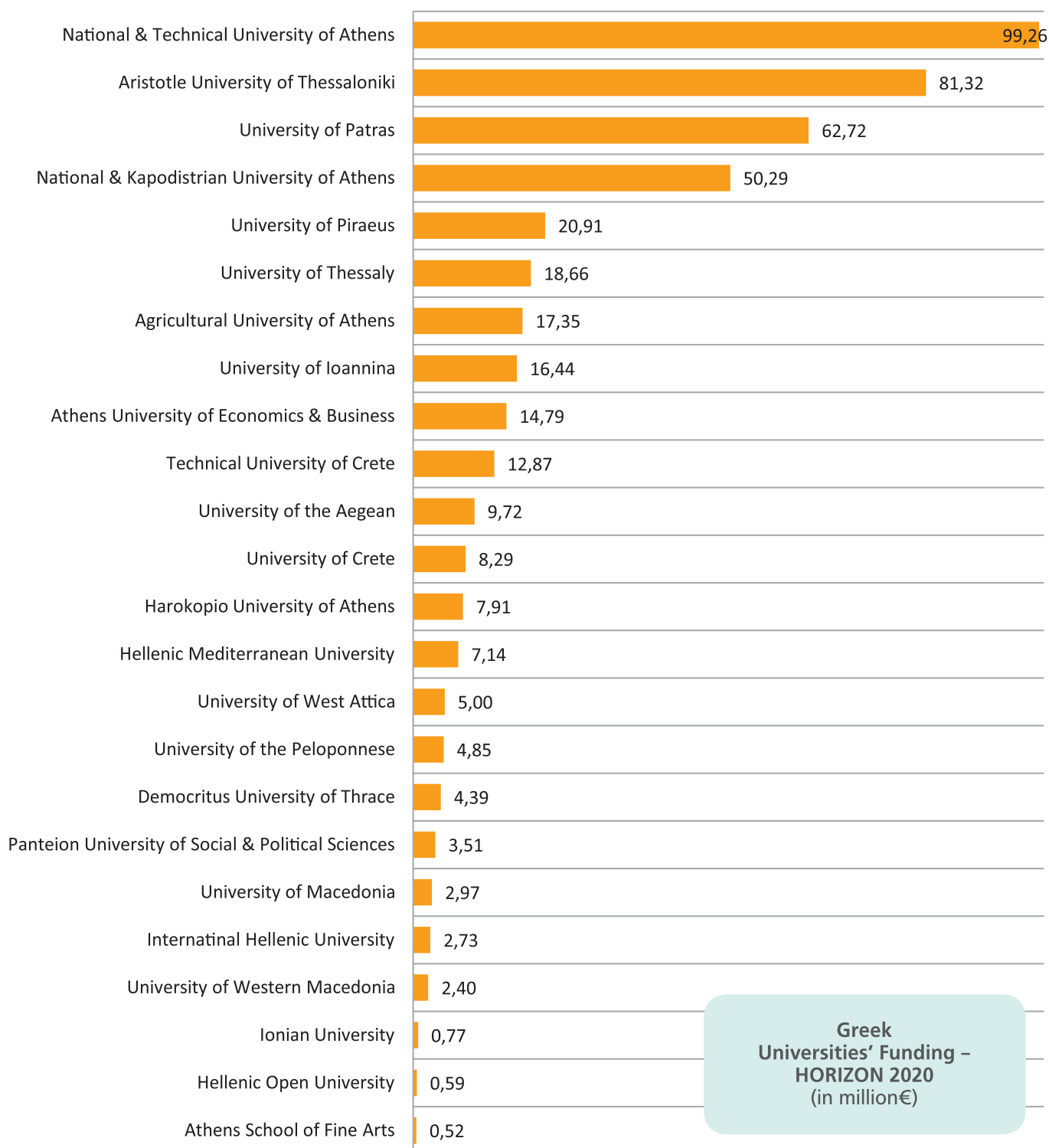
Despite the positive results for the country's research activity, the contribution of HEIs is not sufficiently highlighted. HEIs, while having the largest number of researchers and research performance, are lagging behind in terms of research funding. HEIs should design and implement a specific research strategy in order to be able to compete with other institutions at a national and international level. It is also important, in the context of the national strategy for Higher Education, to design specific activities in order to support and strengthen academic research.

Part B1 Higher Education in Greece

Profile, key figures and indicators of HEIs

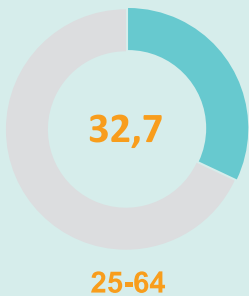
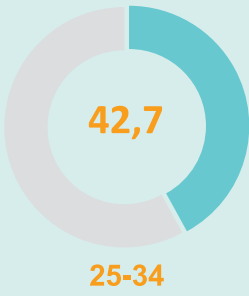
HAHE illustrates the academic map as of 2021, including the Institutions, the Departments and the Study Programmes, with their geographical dimension and particular figures, such as student population, teaching staff and newly admitted students. In addition, data on

their research activity and funding is presented, as well as the achievements from their participation in the European funded research and their performance in international league tables.

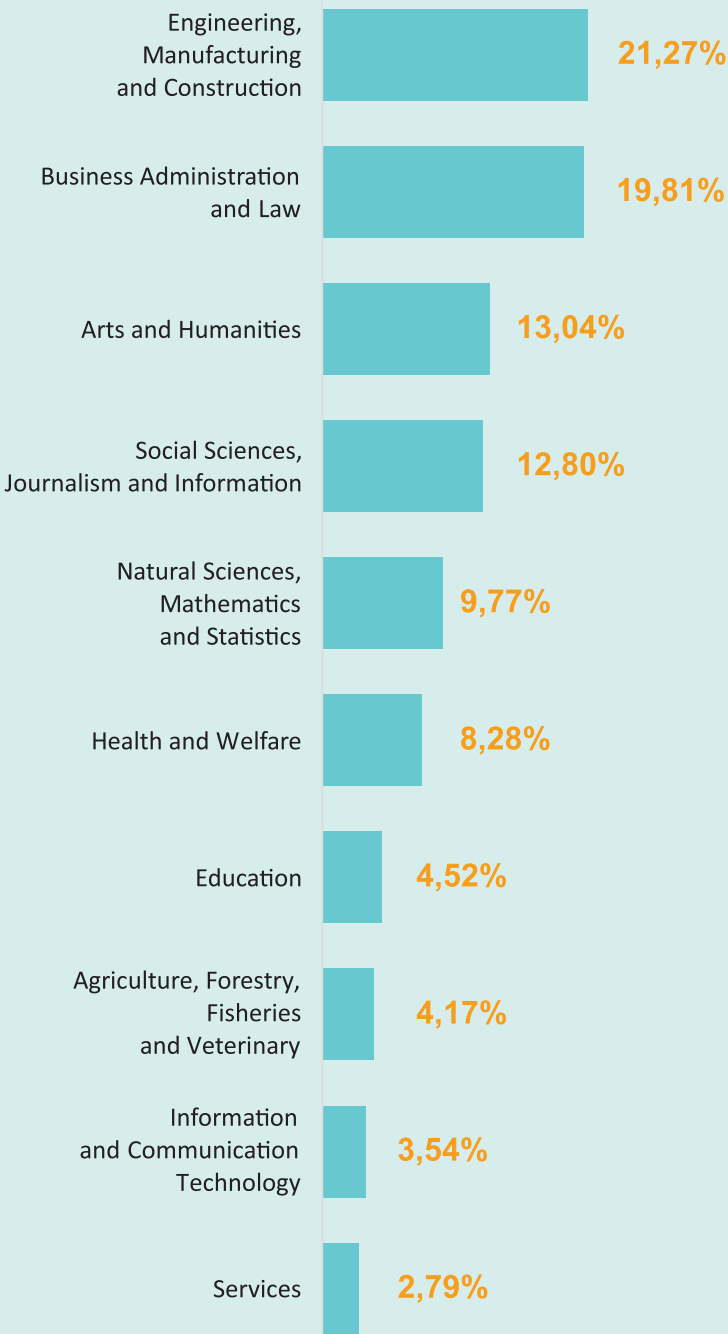


The Greek Higher Education in numbers

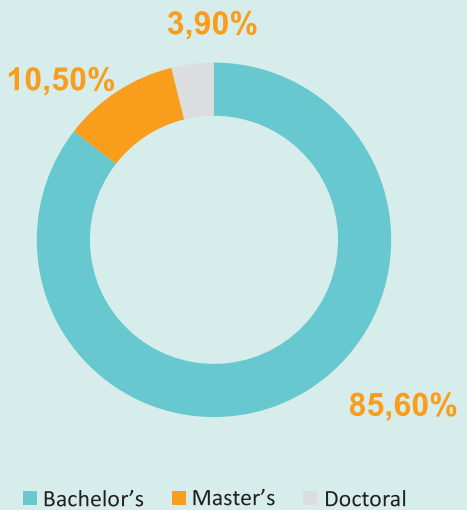
% of population with tertiary education



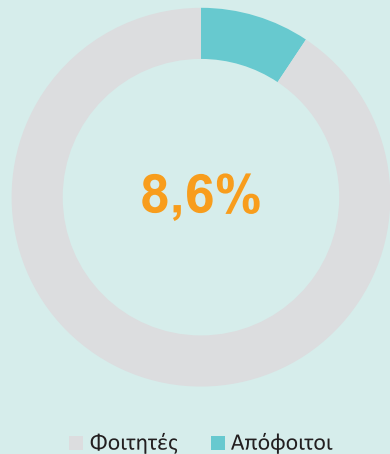
% Students by Field of Study in Greece



% Students by Level of Study

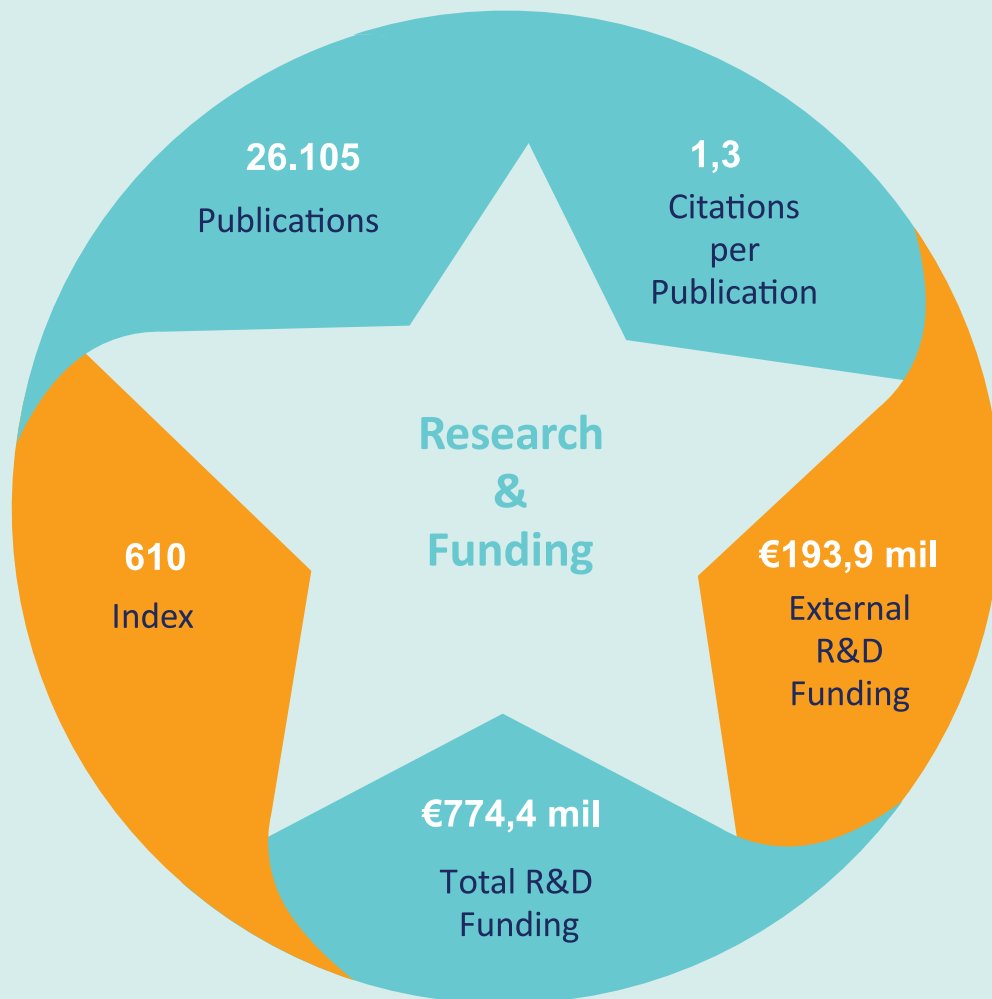
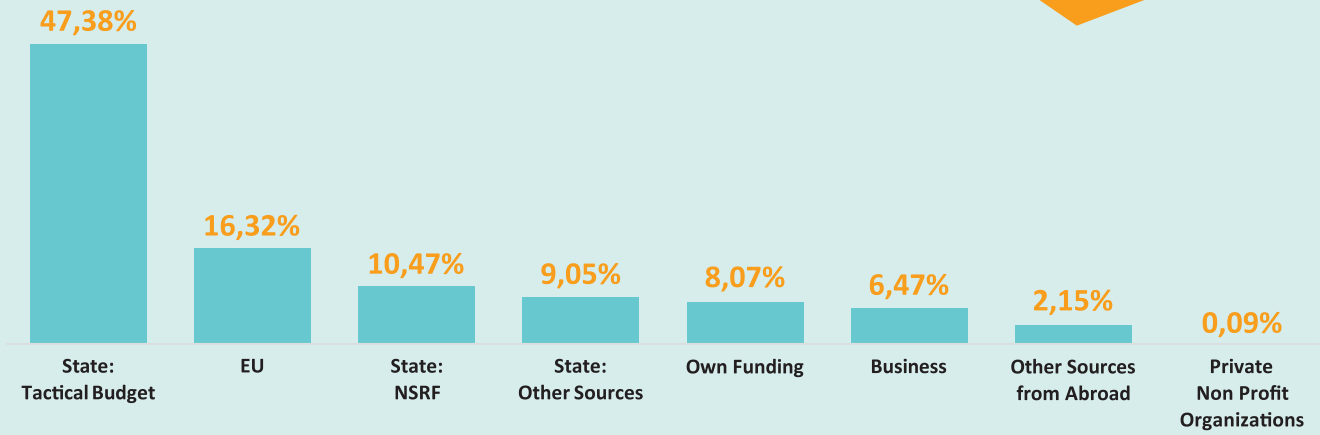


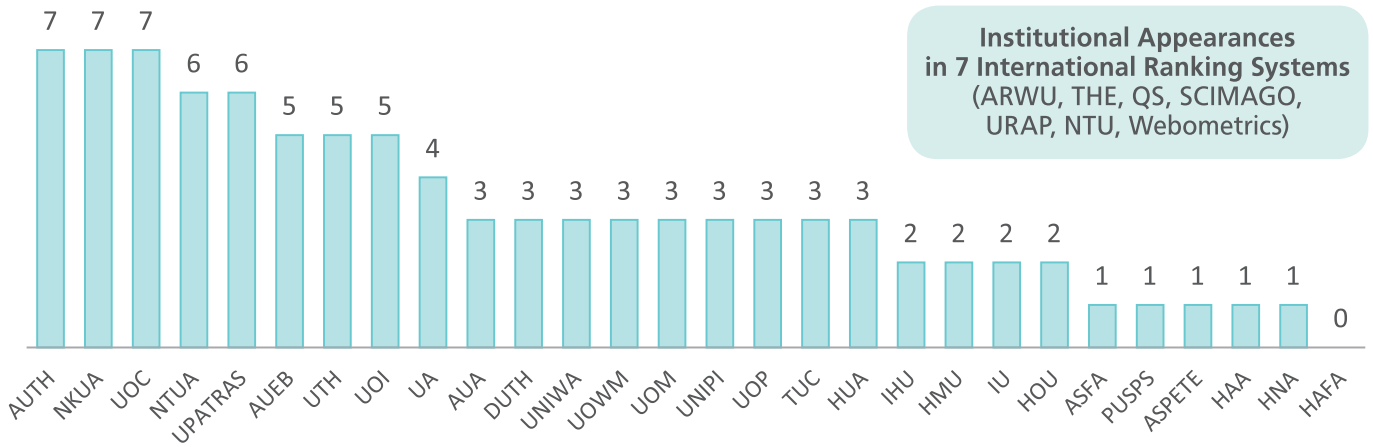
Graduates to Students



The Greek Higher Education in numbers

% of total R&D expenditure, by source in higher education in 2020





A series of legislative interventions that began in 2020 and continued in 2021, attempt to solve chronic problems, such as the implementation of the minimum admission threshold, the strengthening of safety and security in university spaces, but also the establishment of foreign language

undergraduate programmes and international co-operation programmes. In 2021, the last legislation change was accompanied by the call for internationalisation activities of HEIs funded by the NSRF programme, which is expected to change the current structure of University study programmes.

Part B2

The emerging issues in Higher Education

In the second part of the report, HAHE highlights some of the recent developments in the international and European field of higher education that affect issues of national strategy of higher education, such as the establishment of a new system of skills recognition, i.e. micro-credentials, the new approach to the use and dissemination of new knowledge through “Open Science” as well as the establishment and operation of “innovation ecosystems” with the participation of HEIs. More particularly:

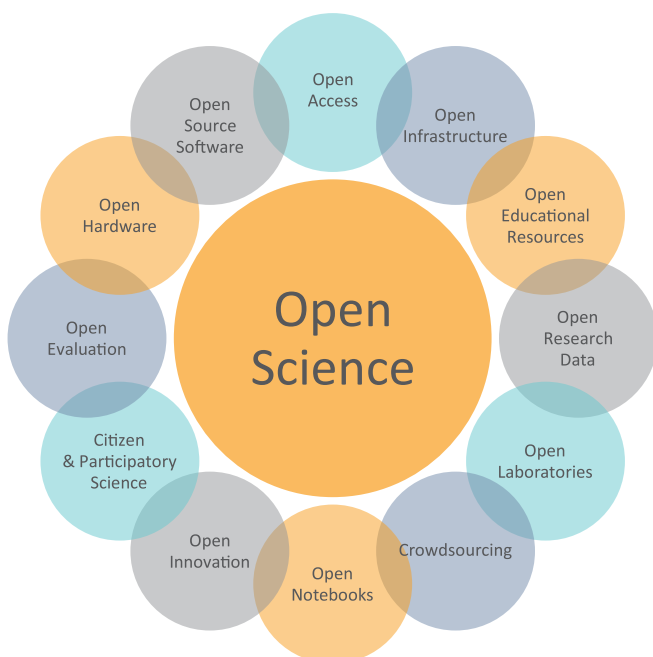
- In the European Higher Education Area, the undertaking of new institutional initiatives is noticeable, such as the introduction of micro-credentials in the process of skills recognition and in the learning outcomes of short-term programmes. This report presents the background of micro-credentials, the reasons for their establishment, their use and the programmes from which they are granted. The main structural features of the European approach to micro-credentials refer to their common definition and description, their alignment with the European and national qualifications frameworks, their quality assur-

ance requirements, their translation in ECTS credits and their portability, as well as the way of their recognition in studies and employment.

- *Open Science* is one of the emerging issues in the area of science and technology. It is the field which combines activities and practices aiming at a) making scientific knowledge freely available, accessible and reusable for all, b) expanding scientific collaborations and information sharing for the benefit of science and society, and c) opening up the creation processes of scientific knowledge, evaluation and communication with social bodies beyond the traditional scientific community. Open Science includes all scientific disciplines and aspects of academic practices, including basic and applied sciences, natural and social sciences, humanities, and is based on the following key pillars: open scientific knowledge (code, data, ideas, information, scientific results and publications), open scientific infrastructures, scientific communication, open participation of social bodies and open dialogue with other knowledge systems. The

European Union has already formulated its own open science policy, which includes all phases of the research process, from scientific discovery and scientific review to research evaluation, publication and dissemination of its results. Its cornerstone is the open access to publications and research data. In Greece, in the context of digital transformation in medium term, projects have been planned such as a) the strengthening of national infrastructures and digital research services, b) the development and availability of research software, c) the free availability and reuse of research data that is produced by state funds, d) the adoption of a national strategy of open science for Greece and e) the open access of research infrastructures. The second and fourth of these five projects are already in progress.

The constituents of open science



- The term innovation ecosystem describes a network of universities, cooperating companies and other organizations (research institutions, government bodies), which aim at technological development and innovation, in terms of new products, services and/or processes. Within an innovation ecosystem, the creation of value exceeds what each body could create on its own. An innovation ecosystem has some distinct characteristics, such as heterogeneity of participants (public or private bodies, from different sectors), who act in order to produce innovative products and services that result from the network's activity. Over time, universities make efforts to support the third pillar of their mission, which includes activities and practices for the commercial exploitation of their results. These efforts include strengthening applied research, entrepreneurship education, technology transfer, business incubators, business competitions, etc. EUA, in its recent study, made recommendations to HEIs regarding the strategic focus on innovation, the provision of incentives, rewards and support mechanisms for the innovation activities of academic staff, the cooperation with other stakeholders from the European innovation ecosystem and the enhancement of entrepreneurship education in all study programmes.

Other new features are added to the profile of Greek HEIs, mainly concerning the upgraded role they play in the country's economic, development and social path, as well as their faster pace towards international developments. These new characteristics result from the activities they develop in open science, their participation in innovation ecosystems and the expansion of forms of education provision and its recognition for gaining additional skills.

Part C HAHE' s quality assurance activities and the improvement of quality in universities

The conclusions of external evaluation and accreditation

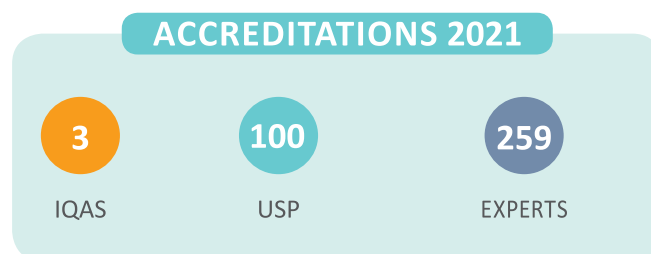
The conclusions from the external evaluation and accreditation of Internal Quality Assurance Systems (IQAS) unveil, for one more year, significant improvements in the operation of the relevant Institutions. These improvements concern mainly the systematic monitoring of academic operations through institutionalized quality procedures, the development of quality culture and the overwhelming acceptance by the entire academic community of the external evaluation procedures.

Positive transformations are noted after the first attempts to implement internal evaluation of study programmes in the context of the operation of Quality Assurance Units (QAUs) and the attempt to organize internal communication between QAU and the Departments.

In addition to the above improvements, certain weaknesses were also identified, which led EEAPs to formulate the necessary recommendations, such as: the deficiency of institutions to integrate all their operations in quality assurance procedures and to involve all interested parties, as it is obvious from the occasional collaboration of QAUs with students, the Internal Evaluation Groups (OMEA) of the academic units and with professional associations and employers.

Among the weaknesses is the implementation of the planning and monitoring of human and material resources, which support the quality of the HEIs operation and its improvement, as there is a lack of evidence based decision-making. The shortage of teaching staff tends to be a permanent issue while the inadequacies in infrastructure and digital systems are recorded as occasional weaknesses. With regard to IQAS, the main weaknesses remain, i.e. the staffing of Quality Assurance Units, their internal organisation, the insufficient technical and administrative support in the implementation of internal evaluation, as well as the insufficient communication and cooperation with all parties involved in quality assurance.

During external evaluation and accreditation of Undergraduate Study Programmes, significant improvements were observed mainly concerning the application of the student-centered approach to teaching and learning through the implementation of various teaching methods and to student assessment.



HEIs adjusted promptly and efficiently to the conditions of the pandemic and developed various forms of e-learning. The implementation of recommendations from the previous external evaluation led to the restructuring of many study programmes, mainly regarding courses in terms of their subject and the use of good practices from other national and international relevant study programmes.

However, weaknesses were also identified, which led to the formulation of relevant recommendations by EEAP. The three areas that received most comments concern the design and structure of programmes, the learning context in terms of infrastructure adequacy, security and services for students, as well as the quality and the number of teaching staff.

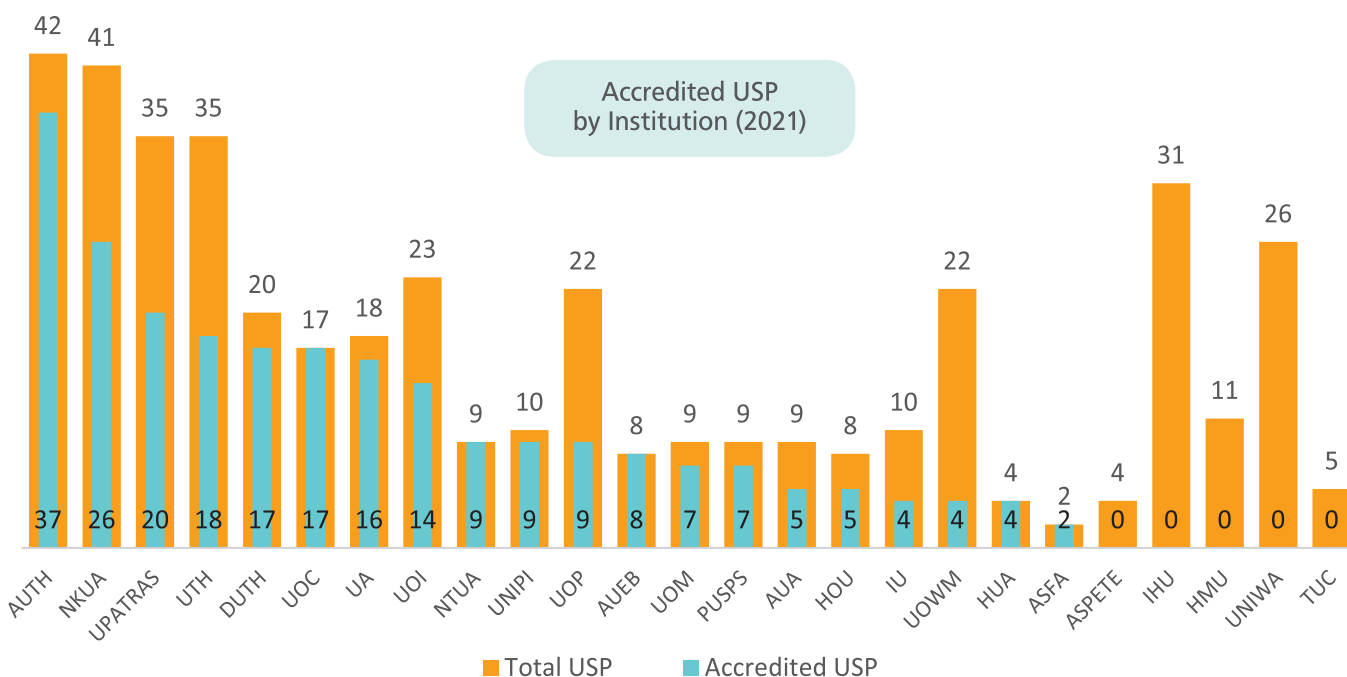
In particular, the most frequently cited weaknesses of the programmes include outdated content in courses with a large number of overlaps, lack of recognition of excellence, isolation from social partners, lack of extroversion and an incomplete network of partnerships, a severe deficit of courses offered in English and sometimes a dysfunctional study guide.

The weaknesses related to the teaching staff include the small number of academic staff and their heavy workload, the lack of motivation for development and the insufficient training and support framework through guidance, the insufficient strengthening of research and its connection with teaching, the gender imbalance, the lack of attracting prestigious scientists from abroad.

The most frequent weaknesses regarding the learning context are related to infrastructure that should be improved/expanded and maintained, the insufficient number of support staff, the lack of utilization of new technologies, the reduced funding, hygiene and safety issues of facilities and the interaction with the labour market.

Of particular importance is the improvement of HEIs and of study programmes, as they try to meet the relevant quality requirements. However, the distance that must be covered in order to deal with weaknesses, mainly longstanding, is also a point of atten-

tion. The weaknesses of HEIs appear as symptoms of the long-term absence of quality systems which now can work in the direction of problem solving and prevention.



HAHE, by focusing on the interaction of studies with the labour market, carried out a relevant study, which aimed at highlighting the academic and professional

prospects of graduates of the existing Departments, after the mergers of Technological Education Institutions (TEIs) and Universities.

HAHE's study on the academic map and employment prospects of graduates

HAHE's study, based on the analysis of data from its information system (NISQA) and ELSTAT, reached the following conclusions:

- (a) There is a positive employment prospect for graduates of ICT, business administration, health sciences and engineering.
- (b) There are relatively positive or neutral employment prospects for graduates regarding professions such as veterinarians, nurses and midwives, teachers and kindergarten teachers, doctors, finan-

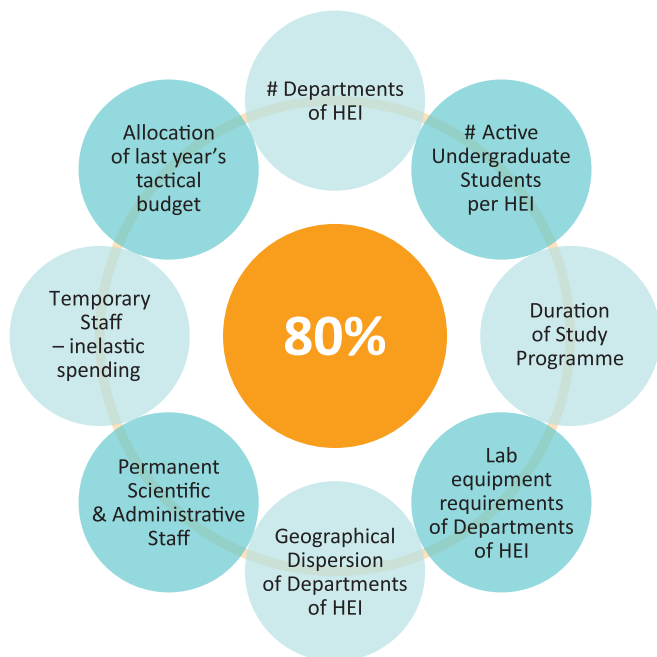
cial professionals, life science professionals, natural science professionals and writers, journalists, language professionals and social and religious professionals.

- (c) There are less positive or even unfavorable prospects for graduates related to professions such as librarians, archivists and curators of antiquities and museums, lawyers, vocational education teachers, secondary education teachers, architects, surveyors, town planners, designers, artists.

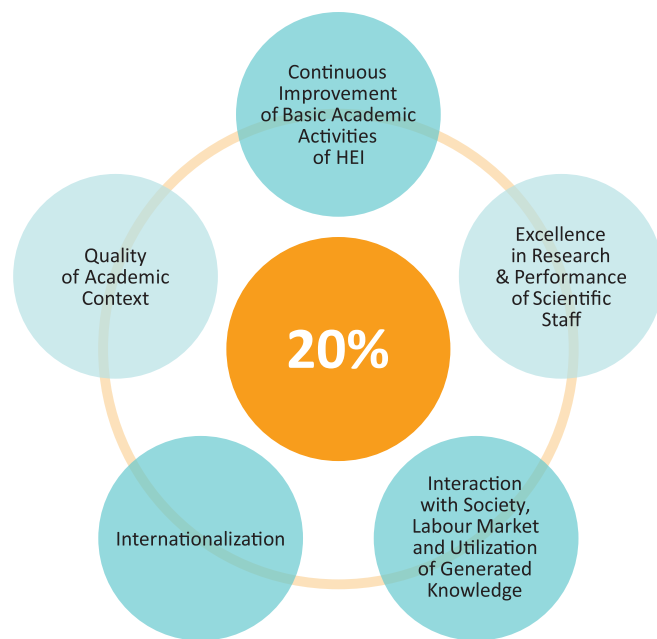
HAHE's proposal for the allocation of annual state funding of HEIs

In 2021, HAHE carried out, for the first time, a study in order to define criteria for the allocation of the annual state funding from the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs to HEIs. Pursuant to the new relevant legislation, 80% of the funds are allocated based on objective criteria of HEIs, such as the number of Departments, students, years of study, etc., while 20% of the funds are allocated based on last year's perfor-

mance or achievements of HEIs. These achievements are evaluated with the use of a scoring system of indicators, which refer to five axes of the activity of HEIs: a) basic indicators of education and operation of the HEI, b) excellence in research, c) interaction with society and economy, d) internationalization, and e) quality of academic environment.



Criteria for the allocation of 80% of annual government grant



Criteria for the allocation of 20% of annual government grant

HAHE submitted to the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs its proposal for 2021, after previously holding several meetings with HEIs and a consultation in order to express their opinions. The Minister of Education and

Religious Affairs, in whose discretion is the acceptance or not of the proposal, adopted HAHE’s proposal and issued the final decision on the allocation of the total annual state funding to HEIs.

Part D HAHE’s strategic plan and development

In 2021, HAHE made a series of site visits to HEIs, participated in Rectors’ Synods and organized numerous informative webinars on quality assurance and their performance evaluation.

The Authority also held meetings with bodies of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour regarding the employment of graduates and signed a relevant memorandum of cooperation with the National Institute of Labour and Human Resources. In addition, the Authority cooperated with ELSTAT in the framework of a joint working group that was established aiming at a joint collection of Higher Education data in the country.

The Authority held dozens of informative meetings via video conference with the members of EEAPs as part of their training on accreditation procedures. HAHE exchanged views with the representatives of chambers and professional associations for their participation in accreditation procedures, as well as with students during the publication of the public call for their registration in the Student Register.

Finally, the Authority drew up its self-evaluation report for the time-period 2015 to 2021 and submitted it to ENQA in view of its external evaluation.

Afterword

During 2021, HAHE dealt with major and new issues, as a result of the upgrading and the expansion of its responsibilities. Regarding quality assurance, the Authority elaborated and issued new specialized quality standards for new undergraduate study programmes and for foreign language undergraduate study programmes, as the latter are a new form of undergraduate education offered by Greek HEIs. HAHE adapted its external quality assurance procedures to the conditions of the pandemic, by drawing up relevant special regulations and carried out, without delay, 103 accreditations of Undergraduate Study Programmes and Internal Quality Assurance Systems of HEIs, in accordance with the obligations deriving from its previous institutional framework. In addition, it developed and expanded its cooperation and communication with HEIs by participating in special meetings and Rectors' Synods, receiving feedback on the quality assurance activities and transferring relevant information and know-how.

In 2021, the Authority entered a new era of operation making student participation a key element in its quality assurance endeavors. The Evaluation and Accredi-

tation Council also included an undergraduate student in its composition, while the Student Register was created for the first time, which is the pool for student participation in External Evaluation and Accreditation Panels (EEAP).

The Authority, regarding its advisory role to the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, drew up and submitted proposals on issues that are related to Higher Education strategy, the academic map and the prospects of graduates. In addition, it established and publicized special criteria for a) the evaluation of various requests regarding transformations in HEIs and their academic units, and b) the allocation of annual state funding to HEIs, based on objective and qualitative indicators.

Finally, the Authority, during 2021, in a process of operational upgrading and maturity, further developed its scientific and operational capacity by studying emerging issues for higher education, investigating international developments in Higher Education and gathering experience and opinions from Institutions, as well as other interested parties in order to achieve high quality in our country's Higher Education.

HAHE governance

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Chionis Dionysios (until 4/5/2021)

Professor, Democritus University of Thrace, common representative from Greek chambers

Dr. Georgios Bardakis (from 14/6/2021)

Civil Engineer, common representative from Greek chambers

Filis Asterios (until 4/5/2021)

Student, Harokopio University of Athens
Student representative from HAHE's Student Register

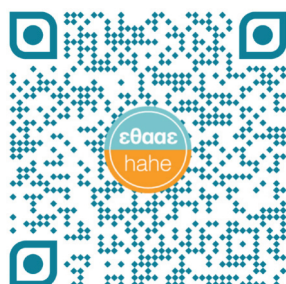
Konstantinos Tsourelis (from 8/7/2021)

Student, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Student representative from HAHE's Student Register

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The annual report is available at:
www.ethaae.gr



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