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Accreditation Report for the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)

Institution Name: Hellenic Air Force Academy

Date: 12 December 2020





Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the **Internal Quality Assurance System** (IQAS) of the **Hellenic Air Force Academy** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of the **Hellenic Air Force Academy (HAFA)** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. Prof. Fragkiskos Filippaios (Chair)

Norwich Business School, University of East Anglia, United Kingdom

2. Dr. Fivos Andritsos

European Commission Joint Research Center, Italy

3. Prof. George Goussetis

Heriot-Watt University, United Kingdom

4. Prof. Costas Iliopoulos

King's College London (KCL), United Kingdom

5. Prof. George Angelos Papadopoulos

University of Cyprus, Cyprus

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The Hellenic Air Force Academy (HAFA) visit took place virtually due to Covid-19 pandemic and the different national lockdown procedures. All the meetings between the Panel and HAFA representatives took place by teleconference using Zoom. From a technical point of view, everything worked well, and all the attendees were able to participate in the discussions without any interruption. Despite the difficulties on an online visit, the Panel was satisfied by how the visit was managed and supported by HAFA and HAHE. All meetings took place between 11AM and 6PM (Greek time) to accommodate the time difference with four members of the Panel located in Italy and the United Kingdom. The Panel received excellent technical support. On Thursday 26th of November, an official briefing took place, organised by HAHE. The briefing covered all the relevant procedures and requirements of the visit and offered useful background on accreditations' overall process.

On the morning of Monday 7th of December, the Panel had an initial private meeting to discuss the submitted documentation, allocate individual tasks and raise any questions on additional documentation necessary for the visit. In the afternoon, the Panel had its first meeting with the HAFA Commander, Major General Bompolis, and the HAFA Dean, Professor Kotsiopoulos. The Dean introduced the School and welcomed the Panel members who also introduced themselves. The Chair of the Panel provided an overview of the process and thanked HAFA for all documentation preparation.

On the morning of Tuesday 8^{th} of December, the Panel met with Commander Bompolis, Dean Kotsiopoulos and members of the HAFA QAU (MO Δ I Π). During the meeting, several documents were presented and delivered to the Panel members providing information on the curriculum, Cadets, teaching methods, and research activities. Further, the meeting with the Faculty covered various teaching and research issues related to the programme and other matters and on-goings of HAFA. In the late afternoon of the same day, the Panel met with Cadets, without HAFA representatives' presence. Cadets revealed their experiences and the discussion with the Panel members was very informative. Cadets were open and frank about their experiences and views, and overall, extremely positive.

On the morning of Wednesday 9^{th} of December, the Panel met with HAFA's Chief Administration Officers. The meeting explored strategic issues related to implementing the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) and ways forward in strengthening the overall process. Afterwards, the Panel also met with former Cadets as representatives of the alumni of HAFA. Next, the Panel met with external stakeholders and partners. They similarly provided useful insights and discussed their input into the IQAS of HAFA. A virtual tour of HAFA's facilities was scheduled for the late afternoon of the same day, and a video was prepared for the session. The Panel felt that they had already sufficiently explored the issue of physical infrastructure in previous sessions and decided to cancel the session and spend time on the deliberations around the preliminary feedback to HAFA. The day and visit were concluded with a meeting with Commander Bompolis, Dean Kotsiopoulos and members of the HAFA QAU (MOΔIΠ). The Panel offered preliminary feedback on their findings.

All meetings with teaching, technical and administrative staff, Cadets, alumni and external stakeholders, were beneficial and informative. They were conducted in a very open and constructive manner, and all Panel questions were answered sincerely and with transparency. The staff of HAFA have provided the Panel with detailed and comprehensive documentation as required for the accreditation process. All attendees were very helpful and have understood and accepted the requirements, the principles and objectives of the external accreditation process.

The Panel felt that accreditation of IQAS should take place at least after a couple of cycles of the implementation of the IQAS. Accreditation visits that occur immediately after the establishment of an IQAS cannot evaluate the system's effectiveness in place and the Institution's ability to implement changes and 'close the loop'.

III. Institution Profile

The Hellenic Air Force School (as it was the original name of HAFA), one of the first Air Force Academies worldwide, was established on September 6th 1931 and commenced operations in December of the same year by applying a unified education programme for both the army and the navy air forces. In 1938, the first department of engineers was established while in 1970 an additional department of air defence controllers was introduced.

HAFA admitted female Cadets for the first time in 1991 under the engineer specialisation and in 2002 under the pilots' specialisation. HAFA's education status is equivalent to a university one, and the Academy is governed by legislation (Law 3187/2003 as amended). The internal operational framework is governed by Presidential Decree 151/2013 (p.d.151/2013 as amended).

The purpose of the Academy is to provide the Hellenic Air Force (HAF) with officers possessing knowledge and expertise suitable for its needs and demands, to advance research on aviation and aerospace science and technology, and to support the operational tasks of the HAF using the means and personnel available. The mission of the Academy is; to produce and to impart to its Cadets knowledge and expertise via research and instruction on aviation science and technology, and the related subjects in the fields of humanities, and natural and applied sciences; to inspire military virtues in HAFA Cadets and to staff the HAF with officers possessing a military and aviation consciousness, high education, advanced social, cultural and political skills, to become competent leaders, professionally and academically qualified to the highest degree; to organise postgraduate programmes in collaboration with other higher education institutions and to conduct research in fields of interest to the HAF and the Hellenic Armed Forces in general.

The Cadets' entrance to the Academy is granted following successful participation to the Pan-Hellenic Exams. The entrance requirements to HAFA call for very high- grades and consequently the Cadets are typical of very high academic calibre. HAFA was awarded a university-level status equivalent to other Greek universities with a 2003 law. There are currently 302 Cadets in the Academy, including Cadets from the Republic of Cyprus (29), the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (9), Montenegro (7), Bosnia and Hercegovina (3), Zimbabwe (1) and Tunisia (1). All Cadets, regardless of their nationality and sex, attend the same intensive and demanding Academic and Military Education programme.

The Undergraduate Educational Programme lasts for four years. Each academic year is divided into two semesters. The Winter Semester starts in September and ends in February, while the Spring Semester begins in March and ends in July. Each semester lasts for a minimum of 13 weeks of teaching and 2 weeks of examinations and includes theoretical and practical Academic and Military Education. HAFA graduates Cadets with broad academic education, which both complements and broadens Military education and training. The Undergraduate Educational Programme includes courses from a broad field of sciences. Currently, the approval of Postgraduate programmes is pending.

Military education starts in the first year when each Cadet undergoes Basic Military Training and is trained in individual tactics. The Cadet's training continues in the following years until he/she becomes well-versed in commanding a team and a platoon. Military Education and Training takes place either in the area of Dekeleia or in other locations around Greece. The initial flight training part takes place at the HAFA (Dekeleia Air Force Base – Dekeleia AFB / AB Δ EKE λ E(α C), and the main flight training part takes place in the Kalamata AFB (120 Air Training Wing – 120ATW).

Through its military education programmes and its extensive Erasmus+ educational exchange agreements, HAFA has built a strong network of cooperation with other academic and military institutions in Greece, Europe and worldwide.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Institution Policy for Quality Assurance

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AND ADJUSTED ACCORDING TO THE INSTITUTIONS' AREAS OF ACTIVITY. IT SHOULD ALSO BE MADE PUBLIC AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL PARTIES INVOLVED.

The quality assurance policy is the guiding document which sets the operating principles of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS), the principles for the continuous improvement of the Institution, as well as the Institution's obligation for public accountability. It supports the development of quality culture, according to which, all internal stakeholders assume responsibility for quality and engage in quality assurance. This policy has a formal status and is publicly available.

The policy for quality is implemented through:

- the commitment for compliance with the laws and regulations that govern the Institution;
- the establishment, review, redesign and redefinition of quality assurance objectives, that are fully in line with the institutional strategy.

This policy mainly supports:

- the organisation of the internal quality assurance system;
- the Institution's leadership, departments and other organisational units, individual staff members and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance;
- the integrity of academic principles and ethics, guarding against discriminations, and encouragement of external stakeholders to be involved in quality assurance;
- the continuous improvement of learning and teaching, research and innovation;
- the quality assurance of the programmes and their alignment with the relevant HAHE Standards;
- the effective organisation of services and the development and maintenance of infrastructure;
- the allocation and effective management of the necessary resources for the operation of the Institution;
- the development and rational allocation of human resources.

The way in which this policy is designed, approved, implemented, monitored and revised constitutes one of the processes of the internal quality assurance system.

Institution Compliance

HAFA has a clearly articulated Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS). From the submitted accreditation documentation as well as the meetings with the HAFA's representatives, it was evident that the HAFA Quality Assurance Unit (QAU - MO Δ I Π) is well resourced, meets frequently, functions well and focuses on continuous improvement through the implementation of the IQAS.

There is a transparent annual review process for the evaluation of the individual courses and the programme. The Cadets' evaluation of the individual courses is considered as a prominent feature of IQAS. The results of this evaluation are discussed, together with the Cadets' performance in the course's assessment, in the Educational Council of the Academy and recommendations are being made for adjustments to specific courses. Faculty also review the content of their courses annually integrating new research findings.

The quality assurance process is documented and communicated well to all relevant stakeholders, i.e., Faculty, Cadets and external stakeholders.

Administration services and all other support services operate at a high professional level and support Cadets excellently.

While IQAS incorporates the feedback from internal stakeholders (Cadets, Faculty and staff), it does not provide for any structured feedback from external stakeholders, most notably from the Hellenic Air Force, which is the most important recipient of HAFA's output. Even though informal engagement with external stakeholders, such as Hellenic Air Force General Staff (HAFGS – Γ EA), EU Erasmus+, is high, there is no formalised process to capture their feedback in IQAS.

Panel Judgement

Principle 1: Institution Policy for Quality Assurance	
Fully compliant	Х
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R 1.1 The Panel would like to recommend a revision to the IQAS that would formally recognise the important role of external stakeholders, especially the Hellenic Air Force General Staff (HAFGS - FEA) as the main employer of Cadets and incorporate in a structured way their feedback in the quality assurance system.

Principle 2: Provision and Management of the Necessary Resources

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE APPROPRIATE FUNDING FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES, RESEARCH, AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES IN GENERAL. RELEVANT REGULATIONS SHOULD BE IN PLACE TO ASSURE THAT ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR TEACHING AND RESEARCH ARE AVAILABLE AND READILY ACCESSIBLE (E.G. CLASSROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, IT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROVISION OF FREE MEALS, DORMITORIES, CAREER GUIDANCE AND SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES, ETC.).

Funding

The Institution ensures adequate funding to cover not only the overhead and operational costs (regular budget and public investment budget) but also costs related to research, innovation and development (Special Account for Research Funds, Property Development and Management Company). The financial planning and the operation of an effective financial management system constitute necessary tools for the full exploitation of the resources.

Infrastructure

Based on the requirements and needs arising during its operation, the Institution has determined ways to define, allocate and maintain all the necessary resources to ensure its smooth and proper functioning, i.e. teaching, research and auxiliary facilities, equipment and software, support facilities (cleaning, transportation, communication) etc. The scope of the IQAS should include a suitable managing and monitoring system to safeguard the infrastructure. Compliance to the internal regulations is also necessary.

Working environment

The Institution ensures -as far as possible- that the working environment has a positive effect on the performance of all members of the academic community (students and staff). Factors that are taken into consideration towards the creation of such a favourable environment are, among others, the sanitary facilities, the lighting/heating/ventilation system, the cleanliness and the overall appearance of the premises, etc. The scope of the IQAS should include an appropriate managing and monitoring system to promote a favourable working environment and to ensure compliance with the existing provisions.

<u>Human resources</u>

The Institution and the academic units are responsible for the human resources development.

The subject areas, as well as the competences and tasks of the staff members are defined by the corresponding job descriptions that are established within the operation scope of each academic or administrative unit. These posts are filled following the requirements set by the law, on the basis of transparent, fair and published processes. The continuous training and evaluation of the staff is considered necessary for the enhancement of the performance, which is recorded and monitored as provided in the context of the IQAS.

The Institution should acknowledge and provide the necessary resources for the implementation of the IQAS, its enhancement and the provision of services that assist the satisfaction of the quality assurance requirements. Moreover, the Institution (Quality Assurance Unit-QAU) should properly organise the administrative structure and staffing of the IQAS, with a clear allocation of competences and tasks to its staff members.

Institution Compliance

Funding

HAFA is committed to ensure funding, to cover indispensable costs for needed infrastructure and an appropriate working environment for Cadets and staff. The primary source of funding is the appropriation from the regular budget of the Hellenic Ministry of National Defence (HMOND – ΥΠΕΘΑ), controlled centrally by the Hellenic Air Force General Staff (HAFGS – ΓΕΑ). Therefore, the Academy does not have direct control of its expenditures as the purchasing process's authority resides with HAFGS in accordance with the HMoND directives and guidelines. This creates a substantial bureaucracy with implications on the implementation of the academic and, especially, the research functions of HAFA. Unfortunately, research funding is not available for the Academy through a HAFA controlled Special Account for Research Funds (EAKE) as is the case for most Higher Education Institutions (AEI) in Greece. Instead, an HMOND Special Account (EA YNEOA) is administratively placed under the control of the Directorate for the Management of European and Developmental Projects of the General Directorate for Financial Planning and Support in the Hellenic Ministry of National Defence (HMoND/GDFPS/DMEDP – ΥΠΕΘΑ/ΓΔΟΣΥ/ΔΙΔΕΑΠ) and does not efficiently support the Academy's needs in efficiently delivering its mission for training, needs for, developing and delivering postgraduate education and participation in research & development but also for training (labs, library etc.) programmes. The procedure for research proposal approval by the HMOND/GDFPS/DMEDP (ΥΠΕΘΑ/ΓΔΟΣΥ/ΔΙΔΕΑΠ) is cumbersome and time-consuming. It discourages the academic staff for exploring research funding opportunities and partnerships with other academic and research institutions with dire implications for the establishment of viable research laboratories and a research culture within the Academy. It should be noted that the establishment of a dedicated Special Account for Research Funds (EAKE) for each of the Hellenic Military Higher Education Institutions (ASEI) had been requested already from all evaluation panels in 2015 but nothing has been done since. The Panel also understands that the lack of access to a dedicated Special Account for Research Funds (ΕΛΚΕ) has had a negative impact primarily on the fulfilment of the HAFA's mission concerning research but also on a range of activities like the collaboration with Academia and Industry, renewal of laboratory equipment and establishing postgraduate courses.

Moreover, HAFA, along with the other two Hellenic Military Higher Education Institutions (A Σ EI), did not have access to the development funds (e.g. Operational Programmes of the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework – PADF – E Π E Σ \PiA) managed by the Hellenic Ministry of Education while the Hellenic Ministry of National Defence (HMoND) cannot, by law, profit from such funds.

HAFA has established rules and procedures for reviewing requests and data from all units and makes recommendations for allocation of resources within the limitations prescribed by the Hellenic Ministry of National Defence / General Directorate for Financial Planning and Support (HMoND/GDFPS), but the dependency on centrally controlled processes and procedures at the HMoND/GDFPS do not contribute to a flexible and efficient operation of the Institution's research and other academic duties or by supporting actions consistent with HAFA's Strategic Development Plan. On top of that, HAFA does not have a dedicated logistics / financial support unit but depends on the HAF logistic support unit of the Dekeleia AFB, on which the Academy is located.

Infrastructure

The campus of the HAFA extends in an extensive and exquisitely beautiful area of the Attica, at the foothills of Parnitha mountain. The site was severely affected by an earthquake in 1999, and many of the HAFA premises were damaged beyond repair. Consequently, a major reconstruction programme has been undertaken by the Hellenic Air Force General Staff (HAFGS – Γ EA) that resulted in the HAFA's present buildings that include prestigious amphitheatres, ample classrooms, physical education spaces, faculty offices, etc.

Both the Institution and the Cadets reported that the existing infrastructure is more than enough to meet current HAFA needs as it was planned for a much larger cohort. It provides the necessary services for smooth functioning, such as: appropriate office facilities for the staff, well-appointed spaces for teaching and other related activities, suitable spaces for lodging and dining, athletic & recreational facilities, etc.

HAFA monitors and maintains the infrastructure, profiting from the Dekeleia AFB specialised air force personnel or outsourced contracts. In terms of communications, HAFA benefits from the HAF communication infrastructure and relates to the National Infrastructures for Research and Technology (GRNET – $E\Delta YTE A.E.$).

In sharp contrast to the above stated, more than adequate buildings/spaces, laboratory equipment and library facilities are inadequate for either teaching/training or research. It is the result of the funding deficiencies mentioned above, combined with the recent severe economic crisis. This fact has been pointed out by the school management, the staff and the Cadets, who claimed insufficient practical training. This weakness is acknowledged by HAFA in the IQAS report of HAFA, among the stated goals of which is the gradual upgrading of the laboratory equipment. It is also one of the recommendations of the 2015 evaluation report. The Panel cannot but underline the importance of these issues and recommend the urgent upgrade of the teaching/training and library equipment (HW and SW) up to the most modern standards. Concerning the research equipment and infrastructure, especially the large and expensive installations (i.e., wind tunnels, engine test beds, etc.), the Panel believes that they should be the object of a Strategic National Defence RTD plan to fill the gaps and complement existing armed forces, university or industrial installations. Nowadays, such a Strategic National Defence RTD plan is of the utmost urgency and importance.

Working environment

It is praiseworthy that HAFA manages to maintain a clean and beautiful physical environment. This is true both in what concerns the health & safety of the Cadets and personnel and the preservation of the natural environment. The Academy and personnel, past and present, should be congratulated for their continued efforts to steward their physical environment.

From the conversations with staff, Cadets, alumni, and stakeholders, the Panel can confirm that HAFA is an environment characterised by proximity, familiarity and respectful relationships for all, enabling a culture of "quality".

Human resources

The Leadership of the HAFA recognises the importance of the development of its human resources for the qualitative enhancement of teaching and research. It tries encouraging and offering everyone opportunities to grow in their professional role, despite the severe regulatory limitations stated in the sections above relating to funding and infrastructure. HAFA should be commended for its recent international actions/initiatives in the Erasmus+ and the European Military Universities frame.

The continuous training and evaluation of the staff should be safeguarded/enhanced through the recently introduced QA processes and standing orders of the military. However, the regulatory framework of the Hellenic Military Higher Education Institutions (A Σ EI) and bureaucratic difficulties mentioned above severely limit the opportunities for the academic staff to expand their research opportunities and progress in their academic career.

HAFA is distinguished for its small size but succeeds in affording a very satisfactory ratio of approximately 11 Cadets per faculty member. The low cadet rate to academic Faculty at HAFA is beneficial to both the Cadets and Faculty and allows for a unique and productive work environment. However, the Panel is concerned that the excessive time and bureaucracy required to advertise and fill an academic vacancy could adversely affect the Cadets per Faculty ratio when the number of Cadets will be substantially increased.

The Faculty and Cadets of the HAFA have an adequate international experience. A fair percentage of Cadets have participated in Erasmus+ and other international programmes. Academic staff members have carried out postgraduate studies abroad while some participate in academic networks and international scientific conferences. Notable are the limitations placed upon academic staff based on the lack of research funding (e.g. Special Account for Research Funds – EAKE) and support by the centralised management of resources [HMoND Special Account (EA YNEOA) under the control of the Directorate for the Management of European and Developmental Projects of the General Directorate for Financial Planning and Support in the Hellenic Ministry of National Defence (HMoND/GDFPS/DMEDP – YNEOA/ΓΔΟΣΥ/ΔΙΔΕΑΠ)], which in turn limits opportunities for furthering of their continued growth as scholars.

Finally, the Panel must point-out that the lower salaries of the HAFA academic staff, as compared to the standard salaries of the other Greek Higher Education Institutions (AEI), creates an undesirable inequality and is a threat to the continuing success of the academy, particularly concerning its ability to attract highly qualified academic staff.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2: Provision & Management of the Necessary Resources	
2.1 Funding	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	Х
Non-compliant	

Principle 2: Provision & Management of the Necessary Resources	
2.2 Infrastructure	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	х
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
2.3 Working Environment	
Fully compliant	х
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
2.4 Human Resources	·
Fully compliant	х
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Principle 2: Provision & Management of the Necessary Resources (overall)	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- R 2.1 A Special Account for Research Funds (EAKE) should be placed within the HAFA and be administered by the HAFA via a Research Committee, in line with most Higher Education Institutions (AEI) in Greece and abroad.
- R 2.2 HAFA, along with the other two Hellenic Military Higher Education Institutions (A Σ EI), must have access and profit from development funds (e.g., Operational Programmes of the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework PADF E Π E $\Sigma\Pi$ A) managed by the Hellenic Ministry of Education.

- R 2.3 HAFA should have direct control of the expenditures and authority of its purchasing process, at least in what concerns the academic procedures, teaching and laboratories. To this end, a dedicated accounting / logistic support unit should be created within HAFA.
- R 2.4 It is strongly recommended that HAFA prioritises the update and replacement of the existing outdated laboratory equipment.
- R 2.5 HAFA should provide for IT facilities and library access, suitable for research and teaching/training purposes
- R 2.6 Efforts should be made to normalise the salaries of the HAFA academic staff to that of the overall academic community of Greek Higher Education Institutions (AEI).

Principle 3: Establishing Goals for Quality Assurance

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE CLEAR AND EXPLICIT GOALS REGARDING THE ASSURANCE AND CONTINUOUS UPGRADE OF THE QUALITY OF THE OFFERED PROGRAMMES, THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION ACTIVITIES, AS WELL AS THE SCIENTIFIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES. THESE GOALS MAY BE QUALITATIVE OR QUANTITATIVE AND REFLECT THE INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY.

The Institution's strategy on quality assurance should be translated into time-specific, qualitative and quantitative goals which are regularly monitored, measured and reviewed in the context of the IQAS operation, and following an appropriate procedure.

Examples of quality goals:

- rise of the average annual graduation rate of the Institution's Undergraduate Programmes to x%;
- upgrade of the learning environment through the introduction of digital applications on;
- improvement of the ratio of scientific publications to teaching staff members to;
- rise of the total research funding to y%

The goals are accompanied by a specific action plan for their achievement, and entail the participation of all stakeholders.

Institution Compliance

The Panel observed that HAFA has adapted the standard military QA procedures and culture, with clear and documented assignments and tasks, to the QA procedures and culture imposed by the HAHE. It has set up and systematically supported the Institution's Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) trying to involve, despite the lack of appropriate IT tools, as many staff and cadets as possible. The available structures and associated personnel of HAFA QAU ($MO\Delta I\Pi$) are published in the Greek version of the HAFA website.

HAFA has a set of clear and adequate strategic (high-level) goals, which map well stated goals and all the means to achieve such goals, like the scientific excellence, the capacity to perform research, the quality of teaching, training and infrastructure, the networking at international level and advancement of academic personnel. These are highlighted in a short but concise document [A7 Strategic Planning – A7 Στρατηγικός Σχεδιασμός] and further refined on the document [A6 Quality Objectives and Indices – A6 Στοχοθεσία Ποιότητας]. Each quality goal is broken down in measurable indices with base values set as per mid-2020 and targets as per mid-2021. Unfortunately, no planning is provided after that date (i.e., long-term targets).

Based on the HAHE template, the Quality Manual is quite generic and not adapted to the nature of HAFA. Although benchmarking with similar institutions across the country is facilitated when adopting the generic quality goals and KPIs suggested by HAHE, each Institution's specificities and, possibly, the ownership of the IQAS procedures by the key players, are lost.

The fact that the Institution was constrained to follow the HAHE templates is counterproductive. In the Military Academies case, the QA system fails to map critical parameters like the satisfaction of the academies' 'clients', i.e., the Hellenic Armed Forces.

Panel Judgement

Principle 3: Establishing Goals for Quality Assurance	
3.1 Study Programmes/ education activities	
Fully compliant	Х
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
3.2 Research & Innovation	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	Х
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
3.3 Administration (funding, human resources, infrastructure management)	
Fully compliant	Х
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
3.4 Resources (funding, human resources, infrastructure)	•
Fully compliant	Х
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Principle 3: Establishing Goals for Quality Assurance (overall)	
Fully compliant	Х
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R 3.1 HAFA should be encouraged to adapt the HAHE provided QA scheme to reflect their specificities better and, at least, include feedback from their 'clients', from the Hellenic Air Force General Staff (HAFGS – ΓΕΑ).

R 3.2	Extend the planning for a period longer than one year, possibly five, incorporating a procedure for a yearly annual update of the indexes and goals.

Principle 4: Structure, Organisation and Operation of the IQAS

INSTITUTIONS SET UP AND ESTABLISH AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM, WHICH INCLUDES PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES COVERING ALL AREAS OF ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES AND FUNCTIONS. SPECIAL FOCUS IS GIVEN ON THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING, INCLUDING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND GOVERNANCE.

The key goal of the internal quality assurance system (IQAS) is the development, effective operation and continuous improvement of the whole range of the Institution's activities, and particularly, of teaching, research, innovation, governance and relevant services, according to the international practices - especially those of the European Higher Education Area - and the HAHE principles and quidelines described in these Standards.

Structure and organisation

In each Institution, the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) holds the responsibility for the administration and management of the IQAS. The QAU is set up according to the existing legislative framework and is responsible for:

- the development of specialised policy, strategy and relevant processes towards the continuous improvement of the quality of the Institution's work and provisions;
- the organisation, operation and continuous improvement of the Institution's internal quality assurance system;
- the coordination and support of the evaluation process of the Institution's academic units and other services, and;
- the support of the external evaluation and accreditation process of the Institution's programmes and internal quality assurance system in the context of the HAHE principles and guidelines.

The Institution's IQAS and its implementation processes are determined by the decisions of the competent bodies, as provided by the law, and are published in the Government Gazette, as well as on the Institution's website. The above are reviewed every six years, at the latest.

To achieve the above goals, the QAU collaborates with HAHE, develops and maintains a management information system to store the evaluation data, which are periodically submitted to HAHE, according to the latter's instructions. The QAU is responsible for the systematic monitoring of the evaluation process and for the publication of evaluation-related procedures and their results on the Institution's website.

The QAU structure has been approved by the Institution's competent bodies, as provided by the law, while all competences and tasks accruing from this structure are clearly defined.

Operation

The Institution takes action for the design, establishment, implementation, audit and maintenance of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS), taking into account the Standards' requirements, while making any necessary amendments to ensure fitness to achieve its aims.

The above actions include:

- provision of all necessary processes and procedures for the successful operation of the IQAS, as well
 as implementation of the above processes and procedures on all of the Institution's parties involved
 ;the Institution's areas of activity can constitute the IQAS processes, e.g. teaching, research and
 innovation, governance, services etc. An IQAS process is an area of activity including data input,
 data processing and outputs. A procedure defines the way an action is implemented and includes
 a course of stages or steps, e.g. the curriculum design procedure;
- determination of how the IQAS procedures / processes are audited, measured and assessed, and how they interact;
- provision of all necessary resources to enable the IQAS function.

Documentation

The IQAS documentation includes, among other things, a series of key documents demonstrating its structure and organisation, such as the Quality Manual, which describes how the Standards' requirements are met.

The Annexes of the Quality Manual include:

- the Quality Policy and the Quality Assurance Objectives;
- the necessary written Procedures, along with the entailed forms;
- the necessary Guides, External Documents (e.g. pertinent legislation), as well as any other supporting data;
- the standing organisational structure of the QAU, with a detailed description of the competences, the required qualifications and the goals for each post. The organisational chart is structured in a manner that ensures that the IQAS organisational requirements are fully and properly met.

Institution Compliance

HAFA maintains an effective Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS). It is managed by the Academy's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), which comprises civilian and military personnel from the Academy's management and other permanent and fixed-term staff and representation from the Cadets. The QAU co-ordinates four Internal Evaluation Teams (IET), each focusing on a dedicated area of the Academy's operations (Programme of Studies, Teaching and Learning activities, Research and Development activities, Administrative & support structures and infrastructures). Each TIE produces a report relating to the associated area of operations and submits this to the QAU, who then compiles the internal evaluation report. Overall, the QAU and TIEs deliver the competencies required for IQAS and a well-defined and efficient process.

The Panel reviewed the most recent internal evaluation report, which is comprehensive and overall, well structured. The report is based on statistical data (e.g., on the Cadet's academic record and other data kept with the Deanery) as well as questionnaires distributed across the academic community (i.e., the Cadets and the teaching staff) prompting evaluation of courses and infrastructure. In addition to the stated sources, the report includes evidence of additional information within the report, although the source of this data is not explicitly described. The questionnaire responses are automated using an IT platform, which however is only accessible in a specific laboratory and limits the flexibility of participants in providing their responses. There is evidence of a good record of the IQAS data, although the associated management information system is not explicitly described. Overall, there is margin to improve the IT infrastructure associated with the IQAS process.

The Panel further felt that a formal route for providing feedback from the Academy's stakeholders and more specifically, the agencies and units where the Cadets are deployed would be beneficial for IQAS. It is understood that informal paths to get this feedback to exist, but they seem to be ad hoc rather than structured.

Panel Judgement

Principle 4: Structure, Organization and Operation of the IQAS	
Fully compliant	Х
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- R 4.1 We would recommend the creation of a structured and formalised pathway for receiving feedback from the Academy's stakeholders to inform the IQAS process
- R 4.2 We would recommend the creation of a more integrated IT support to facilitate collection and management of data related to the IQAS process

Principle 5: Self-Assessment

THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM COMPRISES PROCEDURES PROVIDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE INSTITUTION'S ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS, ADDRESSING AREAS OF OVERSIGHTS OR SHORTCOMINGS, AND DEFINING REMEDIAL ACTIONS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SET GOALS, AND EVENTUAL IMPROVEMENT.

The QAU conducts, on an annual basis, a self-assessment of the IQAS, following the written procedure provided for each area of activity, which is implemented by a certain academic or administrative unit, as appropriate. The procedure determines the timing, the participants, the data under consideration, and the expected outcomes. The self-assessment aims at a final estimation of the suitability of the IQAS in force, as well as at basing decisions concerning the necessary remedial or precautionary actions for improvement.

The data considered in the context of the self-assessment of a programme may, for example, include:

- students performance;
- feedback from students / teaching staff;
- assessment of learning outcomes;
- graduation rates;
- feedback from the evaluation of the facilities / learning environment;
- report of any remedial or precautionary actions undertaken;
- suggestions for improvement.

The outcomes of the self-assessment are recorded in internal reports drawn up by the QAU. The reports identify any areas of deviation or non-compliance with the Standards, and are communicated to the interested parties (if appropriate). The Institution's resolutions concerning any modification, compliance, or enhancement of the IQAS operation might include actions related to:

- the upgrade of the IQAS and the pertinent processes;
- the upgrade of the services offered to the students;
- the reallocation of resources;
- the introduction of new quality goals, etc.

The outcomes of the self-assessment are recorded and, along with the source data, are archived as quality files.

A special procedure is followed for the compliance check of newly launched programmes (of all three cycles), or programmes that are to be reviewed shortly, prior to the institutional approval of the programme.

Institution Compliance

HAFA broadly follows the directives of HAHE and the self-assessment procedures of IQAS are founded on the principles set up by HAHE. All required documentation and clarifications related to the procedures for the annual quality assessments for the academic activity of HAFA were established in the period 2018-19. The self-assessment report for the period 2018-19 identifies several strengths, weaknesses and improvement opportunities.

The main weak points of the Institution: Lack of postgraduate programmes. Out of date lab equipment, Limited/inadequate budget, Low volume of competitive research publications, non-existent opportunities for the development of staff, lack of international research collaborations, inadequate/fragmented and out of date IT infrastructure.

The strong points of the Institution: Modern and good quality building infrastructure, high level of care of the Academy for the Cadets, the high quality of the undergraduate programme, the low student-staff ratio, increased recognition and attractiveness by the prospective Cadets, high quality of the Cadets and outstanding military training.

Furthermore, the report suggests the following improvements: Establishing and running an Academic Development Strategy committee; Acquisition, installation and operation of an integrated information system; Strategic planning of the School, Revision of the School Organization with the establishment of a Finance Department; Attract funding for research projects; Attract funding for modernisation and upgrade of laboratory equipment.

The findings and recommendations of the self-assessment report for period 2018-2019 were sufficiently outlined, but the details of the action methods were not identified. The strategic planning is also not adequately elaborated. It was not clear how the teaching staff, admin staff, Cadets and military personnel will tackle the problematic issues and achieve the proposed goals.

Panel Judgement

Principle 5: Self-Assessment	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	Х
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R 5.1 The self-assessment process should be extended to include specific plans of achieving the findings of the internal evaluation report into strategic and operational goals.

Principle 6: Collection of Quality Data: Measuring, Analysis and Improvement

INSTITUTIONS ARE FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND USE OF INFORMATION IN AN INTEGRATED, FUNCTIONAL AND READILY ACCESSIBLE MANNER, AIMING AT THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE QUALITY DATA RELATED TO TEACHING, RESEARCH AND OTHER ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES, AS WELL AS OF THOSE RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATION.

The QAU should establish and operate an information system to manage the data required for the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System.

The QAU measures and monitors the performance of the various activities of the Institution, through appropriate procedures established in the context of the IQAS structure, and assesses their level of effectiveness. The measuring and monitoring is conducted on a basis of indices and data provided by HAHE in the pertinent guidelines and forms, which are part of the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA). These measurements may concern: the size of the student body, the size of the teaching and administrative staff, the infrastructure, the structural components of the curricula, students' performance, research activity performance, financial data, feedback on student and faculty satisfaction surveys, data related to the teaching and research activity, services, infrastructure, etc.

The QAU makes use of the figures and presents the results for consideration using statistical analysis. Outcomes are displayed through histograms and charts. This sort of information is used by the Institution for decision making, at all levels, pursuing improvement, as well as for setting, monitoring, assessing and reviewing the Institution's strategic and operational goals.

Institution Compliance

Information concerning the evaluation of Faculty and strategies and individual courses, are gathered from the Cadets. The survey covers the quality of the course materials as well as the educator's way to deal with the course. The evaluation for the Faculty is done electronically and anonymously. The Accreditation Panel has confirmed with staff, Cadets and graduates, that this process is satisfactory. Participation is relatively low, around 40%.

The precision and quality of gathered information are confirmed via assortment, the untraceability of the identity of partaking Cadets in the assessment of individual courses and projects, just as by the volume of information gathered as the years progressed, that take into consideration factual correlations and observing of the advancement of specific projects, courses, or teachers.

The Panel accepts that there is research culture among the faculty staff individually, yet this isn't convincingly shown for the Academy in its entirety. The Panel also acknowledges that there are no financial data as the Directorate controls the account for the Management of European and Developmental Projects of the General Directorate for Financial Planning and Support in the Hellenic Ministry of National Defence (HMoND/GDFPS/DMEDP – $Y\Pi E\Theta A/\Gamma \Delta O \Sigma Y/\Delta I \Delta EA\Pi$). This hinders efficient planning in all operational areas.

The admin office manages salaries, course and project grades, etc., efficiently despite inadequate IT equipment and software.

The Self-evaluation Report contains information introduction in charts to effectively exhibit drifts that permit direct understanding and examinations with comparable institutions. There were no external reviews for the Institution to adhere to.

The information assembled permits to build up quantitative indices to be overseen by the HAFA QAU ($MO\Delta I\Pi$). This information is conceivably exceptionally helpful as they guide strategy choices in the educational programme and elsewhere. It appears to be the case that most of these indices were driven by the recommendations of HAHE and do not translate to the immediate requirements and particularities of the Institution.

There is a gap in the statistical analysis of the findings. While evidence exists in charts and histograms, there is no statistical analysis on the significance of the differences observed.

Panel Judgement

Principle 6: Collection of Data: Measuring, Analysis & Improvement	
6.1 Study Programmes / education activities	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
6.2 Research & Innovation	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	Х
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
6.3 Activities related to the administration (funding, human resonant infrastructure management)	ources,
Fully compliant	Х
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
6.4 Human Resources	
Fully compliant	Х
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Principle 6: Collection of Data: Measuring, Analysis & Improvement (overall)	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R 6.1 The Panel recommends developing a fully integrated Information Technologies System (ITS) for the collection and analysis of data.

Principle 7: Public Information

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES IN A DIRECT AND ACCESSIBLE MANNER. ALL PERTINENT INFORMATION SHOULD BE UP-TO-DATE, CLEAR AND OBJECTIVE.

The QAU publishes data related to IQAS structure, organisation and operation. Furthermore, the QAU publishes data pertinent to the institutional quality policy and objectives, as well as information and data relevant to the Institution's internal and external evaluation. In the context of the self-assessment process, the QAU verifies that adequate information regarding the teaching activities and, particularly, the programmes' profile and the overall institutional activity is publicly available. QAU makes recommendations for improvement, where appropriate.

Institution Compliance

HAFA adheres to this principle, mainly employing its website. The Academy does not have its website, but instead, this is hosted in the central portal of the Hellenic Air Force General Staff (HAFGS – FEA). This does not allow HAFA to have direct access to the contents of the site and, thus, to be able to update it continuously with timely information. Nevertheless, there is an exact internal procedure for who is responsible for the web site's population and updating of information. There are also several KPIs in the strategic plans of the Academy that point towards the improvement of the web site. It is furthermore noted that the site is built using standard state-of-the-art tools, such as WordPress.

Most pertinent information regarding HAFA's educational activities is adequate and the overall presentation of the Academy is well documented, albeit mostly on the Greek version of the site. There is enough information regarding the history, purpose and mission, organisation and infrastructure. Information for the undergraduate programme of study is documented and publicly available in a PDF document, which needs to be accessed in a sequential way (i.e., direct access to specific courses or even specialisation streams is not possible). There are specific links for each specialisation, but they are not used (even though there is some text there inviting visitors to read through the description of courses). All external evaluation reports for HAFA and its QA policy are available on the website and easily accessible. The structure and operation of all the Academy units are readily available online and can be adequately located. The presentation of HAFA's Faculty and researchers and their CVs are adequate and available on the website. The research activities of the Academy are also adequately documented.

However, the contents of parts of the site are not updated regularly. For instance, during this accreditation calendar links were outdated and the link to the Academy's presence on EUAFA points to a previous Commander of the Academy. Some of the web links are broken or outdated.

In general, the presence of the Academy information targeting an international audience is limited and deficient compared to that available in the Greek language. The use of the English language, although overall correct, sometimes uses non-standard terminology (e.g., the term "Academic Faculty Staff" is at least redundant in the sense that just "Faculty" serves the intended purpose).

A further communication medium (which also makes use of the Academy's web site for dissemination purposes) is two newsletters, notably «Ίκαρος» (Ikaros) and «Ικάρου Επιστήμη» (Ikaros Science). Regrettably, both newsletters have not published new issues for a few years.

Panel Judgement

Principle 7: Public Information	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	Х
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- R 7.1 HAFA must take the necessary steps to ensure that the management and maintenance of the HAFA web site and its content resides within the Academy's structure and be able to update the content locally by staff members of the Academy.
- R 7.2 In any case, every effort must be made for the web site to have updated, correct and complete information.
- R 7.3 HAFA should publish their programmes and achievements in English, like that of the Greek version.

Principle 8: External Evaluation and Accreditation of the IQAS

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD BE PERIODICALLY EVALUATED BY COMMITTEES OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HAHE, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACCREDITATION OF THEIR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS (IQAS). THE PERIODICITY OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION IS DETERMINED BY HAHE.

External quality assurance, in the case in point external evaluation aiming at accreditation, may act as a means of verification of the effectiveness of the Institution's internal quality assurance, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives. Additionally, it can provide information with a view to public acknowledgement of the positive course of the Institution's activities.

The Higher Education Institutions engage in periodic external quality assurance which is conducted taking into consideration any special requirements set by the legislation governing the operation of the Institutions and their academic units.

Quality assurance, in this case 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 ensure that the progress made since the last external quality assurance activity is taken into consideration when preparing for the next one.

Institution Compliance

HAFA until now has not undergone an evaluation to accredit their IQAS. However, it has undergone an institutional evaluation in 2015. This external evaluation generated several findings and recommendations. These were acknowledged by HAFA and are explicitly mentioned in their proposal for accreditation. During the presentations that took place, it became apparent to the Panel that although some of the recommendations of the Evaluation Panel had been implemented, several others were still to be realised, not always for reasons within the control of the Academy. Notable examples are the recommendations concerning the limited capacity to perform research, due to procedures and constraints preventing the access to and management of research funding (i.e., lack of Special Account for Research Funds – EAKE). However, it is evident that the Academy is fully aware of these issues and undertakes continuous efforts at improvement. Staff members and teaching and research personnel appreciate the importance of the external review of the IQAS and its contribution to the advancement of the institutional services provided. Furthermore, the IQAS has established a well-defined procedure for processing the Accreditation Panel's findings and recommendations, involving all the relevant stakeholders with clear responsibilities for each such stakeholder.

Panel Judgement

Principle 8: External Evaluation & Accreditation of the IQAS	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R 8.1 In addition to implementing the recommendations of this Panel, the Academy should strengthen its efforts towards implementing the recommendations of the 2015 Evaluation Panel, as there is some considerable overlap between the findings and recommendations of these two Panels.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

The Panel found evidence of good practice in quite a few areas of the IQAS of HAFA:

- A considerable amount of effort has been carried out in a short amount of time to develop and implement an effective IQAS.
- All procedures are well-documented and reflect well the HAHE recommendations for an effective IQAS.
- Both Academic and Military staff are motivated and of high quality.
- Cadets are of very high quality and show an excellent motivation to complete their studies.
- The programme of studies benefits from exposure to international best practice.
- IQAS has been implemented in a way that works side by side with military procedures.

II. Areas of Weakness

The Panel notes a few areas of weakness that should be given attention:

- IQAS has not yet led to tangible changes/evidence to critical areas of the Academy's functioning.
- IQAS leads to high-level strategic outcomes. These require additional refinement for effective implementation and operationalisation. More specifically, IQAS does not provide a roadmap for curriculum changes, creating new programmes and research activities.
- HAFA does not have direct control of its expenditures as the authority of the purchasing process resides with the Hellenic Air Force General Staff (HAFGS ΓΕΑ) and the Directorate for the Management of European and Developmental Projects of the General Directorate for Financial Planning and Support in the Hellenic Ministry of National Defence (HMoND/GDFPS/DMEDP ΥΠΕΘΑ/ΓΔΟΣΥ/ΔΙΔΕΑΠ) with negative implications on its academic and, mainly, its research functions.
- The lack of a dedicated Special Account for Research Funds (EAKE) harms the fulfilment of the HAFA's mission concerning primarily research but also other activities.
- HAFA, along with the other two Hellenic Military Higher Education Institutions (AΣEI), does not have access to the development funds (e.g., Operational Programmes of the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework PADF EΠ ΕΣΠΑ).
- IQAS follows the HAHE template closely thus missing all the specificities of the Academy.
- Key Performance Indicators do exist, but further refinement is necessary to reflect the specificities of the Academy.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

The Panel recommends that the Academy should consider the following actions:

- IQAS should be revised further to reflect better the Academy's specificities and needs.
- IQAS should formally integrate through a structured approach the existing formal or informal feedback channels with external stakeholders and the Hellenic Air Force General Staff (HAFGS FEA).
- A Special Account for Research Funds (EAKE) should be placed within the Academy and be administered by the HAFA via a Research Committee, in line with most Higher Education Institutions (AEI) in Greece and abroad.
- HAFA, along with the other two Hellenic Military Higher Education Institutions (AΣEI), must have access and profit from development funds (e.g., Operational Programmes of the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework PADF EΠ ΕΣΠΑ) managed by the Hellenic Ministry of Education.
- HAFA should have direct control of its purchasing process's expenditures and authority, at least in what concerns the academic procedures, teaching, and laboratories. To this end, a dedicated accounting / logistic support unit should be created within HAFA.
- IQAS should be better communicated externally. Currently, the website is still under development and does not fully reflect the process and the outcomes of the IQAS.
- We would recommend creating and implementing an integrated Information Technology System for the collection and subsequent analysis of data related to quality assurance.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: 1,3,4,8

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: 2,5,6,7

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: **None**

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: None

Overall Judgement	
Fully compliant	Х
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

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