

UNIVERSITY OF CRETE –  
Department of Computer Science



Quality Policy of the  
Doctoral Studies Program (PhD)

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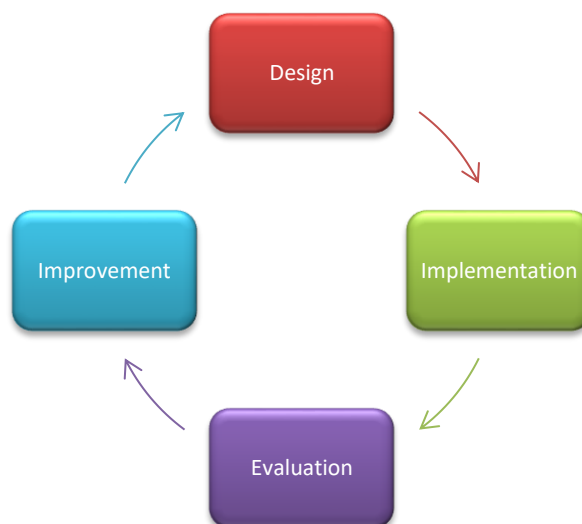
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## 1 Import

The quality policy of the GDS of the Department of Computer Science of the University of Crete is fully harmonized with the quality policy of the Institution, supports the academic profile, orientation and goals of the GDS, and is implemented with the participation of all members of the teaching, administrative, and technical staff of the Department and doctoral candidates. The quality policy includes both principles and goals, as well as quality control procedures in the key parts of the curriculum. The quality policy of the Department begins with the goals of the Department's Curriculum:

- The high level and quality with international criteria for doctoral level studies.
- Their harmonization with modern concepts of Computer Science and Technology, Informatics and Telecommunications, combining appropriate depth and breadth of knowledge.
- The cultivation of investigative and creative thinking and the understanding of principles in basic, both theoretical and experimental areas, in order to achieve the proper education of the researcher and specialized scientist and engineer.
- Specializing in cutting-edge fields and conducting world-class research, in collaboration with the Hellenic Foundation for Technology and Research.



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

The Department of Computer Science has adopted a strategy of continuous improvement that is implemented with the above quality cycle that drives the processes of design, implementation, evaluation, and improvement. Overall, the quality policy of the GDS of the Department of Computer Science takes into account the objectives of the Study Programs, their implementation mechanisms at each time period, continuous measurement and evaluation, and gradual improvement. This continuous improvement process, which has been implemented since the establishment of the Department, has led to a clear and modern curriculum that constitutes a significant advantage of the Department in the international education arena.

Design	Implementation	Evaluation	Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal setting</li> <li>• Strategic and operational planning based on objectives</li> <li>• Development of the GPP, its structure, components, and their flow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the GDP through appropriate lessons and activities</li> <li>• Human Resources Development</li> <li>• Functioning of relevant roles and bodies: lecturers, study committee, Department assembly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection of data and information from course, student, teacher, and external evaluations</li> <li>• Internal and external evaluation of objectives and results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design update</li> <li>• Improving GPP content</li> <li>• Human resource improvement</li> <li>• Improving activities</li> <li>• Improving roles and processes</li> </ul>

## 2 Doctoral Studies Program

Doctoral Studies Program and the Department's quality assurance in general have been designed in accordance with the University's quality assurance policy as well as international practices such as the UK Quality <sup>1</sup>Code for Higher

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

## 2.1 Selection of Doctoral Students

The selection of students is carried out through procedures that ensure the following criteria:

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

To attract doctoral students, the Department additionally carries out the following activities:

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

These actions:

- They provide information to students, enabling them to make an **informed decision** .
- **They remove barriers** (such as geographical distance) to students' access to accurate information.

## 2.2 Study Program

The aim of the Department is to provide **courses, conduct research, and generally provide high-level education** . The important dimensions that ensure this quality at the GDS are:

- The **level of the doctoral studies program (GDS)** is **harmonized with similar international programs** of excellent level.
- The **responsibility for planning the program is assigned to the General Assembly** .
- **Key stakeholders:** The GDS has a structure and content that have been carefully designed and developed over a number of years. The key stakeholders in the structure and content of the GDS are the lecturers, the Graduate Studies Committee, other faculty members relevant to the subject, faculty members from other Universities, alumni of the Department, and student representatives. The different stakeholders are involved in different steps of the process: Research, Application, Study Committee, General Assembly, each category with its role and contribution from their own perspective in the design and development of courses, the definition of research directions, and so on.
- **Research Quality and Scope:** A central element of the Department's GDS is research and training in conducting research. The members and research groups that make up and participate in the Department's GDS conduct high-level research according to international standards: They publish in excellent venues (conferences, journals, etc.), participate in research committees and organize international events, and collaborate with leading research groups in Europe and worldwide. Based on these achievements, the Department's GDS provides training in conducting excellent research, covering all the issues that a young researcher must delve into to achieve a high research footprint: technical, skills, and ethical.
- **Industry Collaboration and Research Relevance:** An important element of the GDS is the significant collaborations of the members and research groups of the GDS with international industry for the design and implementation of future technologies based on basic, theoretical and experimental research. At the same time, GDS members have collaborated and founded spin-offs that have created new products based on the results of the research and/or collaborated with large companies to improve existing technologies based on their specialized knowledge and experience. These achievements constitute the basis for conducting research, not only of high level, but mainly relevant to the real needs of industry and society, thus shaping future technologies.
- **Quality and Update of Courses:** Postgraduate level courses (5 xx and 6 xx ) and selected advanced undergraduate courses are available to doctoral students. The courses provided by the Department are designed to have appropriate content for their purpose: broader for basic knowledge courses in each area and more specialized for students and researchers dealing with specific research subjects. They are accompanied by exercises, assignments, and at the postgraduate level significant student participation throughout the semester. The creation of new courses is a flexible process that can easily integrate a new course into the curriculum. The creation can come from a lecturer or from the Graduate Studies Committee. In the first case, the lecturer makes an application to the Graduate Studies Committee (there is a special form) where he analyzes the necessity of the course, the learning objectives, the content, the examination method, similar courses at other good Universities . The Graduate Studies Committee examines it and in case of a positive response, the request is forwarded to the General Assembly. The process can be completed within a few weeks. After the course is approved, all course descriptions are available in the course catalog <sup>2</sup>and on the individual course websites.
- **Evaluation:** The GDS includes regular evaluations of courses and teaching staff as well as doctoral candidates. After teaching the course, feedback is collected from the students who enrolled (via questionnaires), from the teachers

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.csd.uoc.gr/index.jsp?content=pg\\_courses\\_catalog&openmenu=demoAcc4&lang=gr](https://www.csd.uoc.gr/index.jsp?content=pg_courses_catalog&openmenu=demoAcc4&lang=gr)

and from older graduates (in the 30- year check - up ) . feedback is evaluated. Small changes can be incorporated immediately. Large changes need to go through the same approval process.

- **Harmonization:** The GDS is harmonized with the University's regulations on ethics and conduct, researchers and visitors in research matters.

### 2.3 Conducting Research

The Department maintains a very high level of research (and teaching of conducting research) in the GDS, as follows:

- The ***Department's professors are selected in such a way that they are internationally renowned researchers*** . This means that they are very likely to have conducted and are conducting research in collaboration with leading research groups in Europe and worldwide. In this way, young researchers trained within the GDS come into contact with research problems, methods, and results of significant impact.
- The Department provides lecturers with opportunities for sabbatical leave for research purposes.
- The Department, in collaboration with collaborating institutions, provides an environment and infrastructure of an exceptional level for conducting research: new rooms, laboratories, reading room, access to the University library, equipment, etc. This environment helps in the effective conduct of research and in the acquisition of international-level research experiences.
- The research process includes extensive collaborations within the framework of research projects with other research groups and important industrial players in Europe and worldwide.

### 2.4 Teaching

The Department maintains a very high level of teaching (and learning) in the GDS as follows:

- The ***professors of the Department are selected in such a way that they are internationally renowned researchers*** . This means that they are very likely to conduct research in the exact field they teach in the classroom. In this way, they know what they teach firsthand and to a large extent participate in its development through research.
- The Department provides teachers with access to teaching seminars such as “ ***Train the Trainers*** .
- The Department provides a high-quality teaching environment: new classrooms, laboratories, reading room, access to the University library, etc. This environment aids in meaningful learning and academic experience.
- The educational process can also be completed outside the University through participation in practical exercises ( internships ) in cutting-edge technology companies with a global reach.

### 2.5 Student evaluation

The Department's main goal is for the evaluation process to be ***fair, consistent, and reliable*** . To achieve this, the key dimensions of the evaluation are as follows:

- The evaluation process (e.g. final exam, project , exercises, etc.) is published on the course website ***in a clear and transparent manner*** . The process is accessible to all students and any other interested parties.
- Evaluation takes place in examination periods immediately after the completion of the courses.
- Students ***prepare for the assessment*** with a series of activities that include tutorials, lectures, and exercises/laboratories.
- Assessment encourages ***academic integrity*** and discourages un-academic behavior, e.g. instances of plagiarism.
- The Department informs its students about issues ***of ethics and plagiarism*** <sup>3</sup>.
- The evaluation process takes into account the specificities of students by following different procedures (e.g. oral examination, extra time) for students with specificities (e.g. ***learning difficulties*** ) according to the instructions of the University's Counseling Center.
- The evaluation process ***is aligned with the learning objectives***, emphasizing the theoretical or practical component accordingly.
- After completing the exam, students have the opportunity to review their writing and ask questions to learn from their mistakes, since the exam itself is nothing more than a part of the learning process.
- Course instructors are selected through strict procedures (elections for permanent staff) in which both their research and teaching work are evaluated.
- The Department takes the necessary measures to ensure that the ***assessment process is secure*** . For example, exams (competitions) are held in the Department's classrooms, grading is done as soon as possible after the exam, invigilators during the exam ensure that there is no copying, and the identity of the examinees is checked.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.csd.uoc.gr/uploaded\\_files/antigrafi\\_logoklopi-1.pdf](https://www.csd.uoc.gr/uploaded_files/antigrafi_logoklopi-1.pdf)

## 2.6 Doctoral Program Evaluation

The Doctoral Studies Program is evaluated on an ongoing basis through a series of actions as follows:

- Students enrolled in a GDS course complete **a questionnaire** in which they provide comments and a grade for the course. They comment on the course, the instructor, the assistants, the lectures, the tutorials/laboratories (if any), and can provide comments as free text.
- Graduates **of the Department of Political Science complete a questionnaire** regarding their studies at the Department.
- The Department collects **statistical data** regarding the actual **duration of studies**, course success rate, research results, etc.
- The Department undergoes periodic evaluations and certifications by committees of external experts who provide feedback on the curriculum.

## 2.7 Complaints

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

- **Complaints about ratings** – evaluation
  - At the first level, students express their complaints to the professor of the relevant course.
  - If the problem is not resolved there, they address it to the Department Chair.
  - The University is developing a central complaints system which will be available soon.
- **Complaints unrelated to grading**
  - Students can follow the published procedure <sup>4</sup>and/or contact the student advocate <sup>5</sup>.

We should also emphasize the following:

- The entire process is published, clear and **transparent** in terms of the steps and their outcome.
- The process is **accessible** to all students without exceptions.
- All complaints are treated accordingly, with the most serious of them receiving **a protocol number**.
- Confidentiality and anonymity are maintained in accordance with the procedure.
- The response time is as short as possible, with the simplest complaints being resolved within a few days.

## 3 External Contribution

The Department requests and receives assistance from external <sup>6</sup>stakeholders as follows:

- The Department undergoes periodic **evaluations** and **certifications** by **expert committees** who provide their advice on the program and procedures. The advice is evaluated, and an action plan with clear responsibilities is drawn up. The plan is checked by OMEA and MODIP periodically to ensure that progress is being made. The evaluations/certifications last several days during which the committees receive information and speak with all stakeholders involved.
- Students of the IPS provide feedback through the bodies in which they participate institutionally and through questionnaires. Finally, they speak privately with the evaluation/monitoring committees.

## 4 Teacher recruitment

It should be noted that the Department has very little control over the number of professor positions it can advertise and the time period in which this advertisement can be made. Nevertheless, the Department has managed to attract **specialized professors of international reputation**, who can provide a **high-quality education and academic experience** to students. These professors have given it a lead in Greece. There are two main criteria that play an important role in recruitment:

- Significant research activity at an international level.
- Significant educational work such as creation of new courses, significant reform of old courses, etc. (mainly for higher levels).

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

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.uoc.gr/studies-at-uni/tutor/synigoros.html>

<sup>6</sup>External collaborators can be (1) outside the University, or (2) within the University but external to a process – e.g. students who do not take a course are external to that course.

## 5 General meeting

The General Assembly has an institutional role that gives it the ultimate responsibility for the Doctoral Studies Program and most Department procedures. The assembly is attended by faculty members, student representatives (undergraduate and graduate) as well as representatives of the Department's employees.

## 6 Doctoral Studies Secretariat

The Department operates a doctoral studies secretariat which handles procedural matters of registration, grades, degrees, etc.

- Information about the studies is described in the doctoral program regulations <sup>7</sup>.
- The Department provides the full course catalog each year <sup>8</sup>.

## 7 Buildings

The Department has a recent building infrastructure <sup>9</sup>(2013), which allows it to provide ***a comfortable and high-quality academic experience*** to its students.

## 8 Other infrastructure

### 8.1 Library

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

### 8.2 Gym

All students have access to the University's Gymnasium-Swimming Pool, which is located very close to the Department building. This way, students have easy access to sports infrastructure and programs, without significantly disrupting their daily schedule within the context of their studies.

### 8.3 Counseling center

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

## 9 Quality Assurance Policy – monitoring

This quality assurance policy is drafted and updated by OMEA once a year at the beginning of the academic year.

## 10 Link leading to the published quality policy of the GDP.

The link leading to the published quality policy of the GDS is below:

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.csd.uoc.gr/index.jsp?content=phd&openmenu=demoAcc4&lang=gr>

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.csd.uoc.gr/index.jsp?content=pg\\_courses\\_catalog&openmenu=demoAcc4&lang=gr](https://www.csd.uoc.gr/index.jsp?content=pg_courses_catalog&openmenu=demoAcc4&lang=gr)

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.csd.uoc.gr/CSD/index.jsp?content=contact\\_and\\_location](https://www.csd.uoc.gr/CSD/index.jsp?content=contact_and_location)

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