

OFFICIAL GAZETTE OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC
FIRST ISSUE - No 189 – AUGUST 2, 2005

LAW No 3374

**Quality Assurance In Higher Education. Credit Transfer And
Accumulation System – Diploma Supplement**

THE PRESIDENT OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC
We hereby issue the following law passed by the Parliament:

CHAPTER A
QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Article 1

Subject-Matter, Content and Scope of Evaluation

1. Tuition, research and other work of higher education institutions is subject to continuous evaluation to the end of assuring and improving the quality of research and tuition, studies and other services provided by them in the framework of their mission.

2. The evaluation consists in the systematic, documented and detailed assessment, marking and recording of the work of higher education institutions, with the use of objective criteria, and the critical analysis and establishment of any existing failings and divergences in connection with their academic profile, objectives and mission as these are specifically set forth in the provisions of the applicable laws. On the basis of the evaluation results, the academic institutions and the State adopt the necessary measures in order to assure and improve the quality of the work performed by higher education institutions

in the framework of their mission to provide high quality higher education. The evaluation results and the quality assurance and improvement measures adopted in connection with the work performed are published in the proper manner so as to secure the widest possible transparency of the national higher education system.

3. Subject to evaluation are the academic units (Faculties or Departments) which consist the higher education institutions, and through them each higher education institution in its entirety. The evaluation may also be focused separately on programmes of graduate or postgraduate studies or other services offered by individual academic units or all the higher education institutions in the framework of their mission. Each higher education institution is evaluated on the basis of the evaluation of its individual academic units and the evaluation of its overall operation as an institution.

4. The evaluation procedures taking place pursuant to the provisions of this law may not be replaced by other forms of quality assurance and improvement which are not anticipated hereby.

Article 2

Evaluation procedure and organs

1. The evaluation of higher education institutions is carried out in two stages: the first stage involves the evaluation of the work performed by the academic units of the higher education institutions themselves in connection with their profile, objectives and mission (self-evaluation). After the completion of the first stage follows the second stage, which consists in the evaluation of the work performed by a committee of independent experts, which also takes into consideration the

results of the self-evaluation report on the academic unit (external evaluation).

2. The internal and external evaluation procedure is repeated at the latest every fourth year following the commencement of the previous evaluation. At the repeat evaluation procedure, the implementation of the findings of the previous evaluation, particularly the proposals, suggestions and recommendations of the external evaluation committee, is also examined. In particular, it is examined whether the failings and discrepancies noted in the course of the previous evaluation have been dealt with, and the course of implementation of the measures adopted towards the assurance and improvement of the quality of research and tuition, studies and other services provided by higher education institutions.

3. Students participate in the evaluation of higher education institutions in accordance with the procedures and in the manner prescribed by the provisions of this law.

4. The evaluation procedures pertaining to higher education institutions are coordinated and supported at a national level by the independent administrative authority entitled 'Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education' (HQAA), which is formed pursuant to the provisions of Article 10.

A 'Quality Assurance Unit' (QAU) is established, by resolution of the relevant supreme administrative body, in every higher education institution in order to coordinate and support the institution evaluation procedures. QAU meetings are presided over by the Deputy Dean or Vice President of Academic Affairs of the relevant institution. Its composition consists furthermore of three members of the Teaching-Research Staff (TRS) or Educational Staff (ES), one joint representative of the remaining scientific and administrative staff, one representative

of the undergraduate students and one representative of the postgraduate students, appointed by the relevant bodies. The organization, operation and responsibilities of the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) are determined by resolution of the relevant supreme administrative body of each institution.

5. The academic units of each higher education institution submit annually to the institution's QAU an internal evaluation report containing cumulative information with quantitative data on the students, Teaching-Research Staff Members, Educational Staff Members, other scientific staff, administrative staff, curriculum, student welfare, administrative services, technical infrastructure and all other issues pertaining to the operation of the academic unit. On the basis of the internal reports of the individual academic units forming each higher education institution, QAU draws up every two years the pertinent internal report of the relevant institution. The contents of the internal reports submitted by the academic units or drawn up by the QAU of the higher education institutions may be further specified and standardized by decision of the Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs issued upon the proposal of HQAA.

Article 3

Evaluation Criteria and Indices

1. In order to assess the quality and effectiveness of the research and teaching, studies and other services provided by higher education institutions, the establishment of any failings and divergences in connection with their academic profile, objectives and mission as well as the comparability of the evaluation results in connection with the objectives of the national higher education system and the international standards,

expertise and practices, generally acknowledged and objective criteria are employed, which are expressed in terms of corresponding quantitative and qualitative indices. The evaluation criteria and indices are, in particular, the following:

a) As to the quality of tuition: the efficiency of the teaching staff, the quality of the teaching process, the organization and implementation of the teaching tasks, teaching aids, media and infrastructures, the use of new technologies, the ratio of students to teachers and cooperation between teachers and students, the level and timeliness of the knowledge provided, the interrelation between research and teaching, the mobility of teaching staff and students.

b) As to the quality of the research work: the fostering of research in the framework of the academic unit, the scientific publications, research infrastructures, research programs, the effectiveness of the research work, the originality of the research, the acknowledgment of the research by third parties, the research partnerships, research distinctions and awards as well as the participation of students in the research.

c) As to the quality of curricula: the degree to which the curriculum meets the academic unit's objectives and the society's demands, the cohesion and applicability of the curriculum, the coordination of the syllabus, the rational organization of the educational institutions, the examination system, the support by available educational infrastructure.

d) As to the quality of the other services: the effectiveness of the administrative services, student welfare services, all kinds of infrastructures, the use of new technologies, the transparency and efficiency in the management of the financial resources as well as in the use of infrastructure and equipment, cooperation with other educational or research institutions, whether Greek or foreign, as well as with the

community.

2. In the course of the evaluation the complementary operation and discrete physiognomies, roles, objective and mission of the two parallel higher education areas, as these are differentiated in accordance with the applicable provisions on the university and the technological education sectors, are taken into consideration.

3. Evaluation criteria and indices are standardized, supplemented and further specified on the basis of the guidelines and standards to be issued by HQAA, at the latest within one year from its establishment, depending on the subject-matter of each academic unit. The revision of evaluation criteria and indices follows the same procedure each time, should this be deemed necessary.

Article 4

Self-evaluation

1. Self-evaluation constitutes the first stage of the evaluation, and consists in the systematic assessment and recording of tuition, research or other work completed by the academic units of the higher education institutions, in connection with their profile, objectives and mission.

2. The self-evaluation is a periodically repeated, participatory procedure, which is jointly performed by the members of the teaching-research or educational and other scientific staff and the students of each academic unit by means of questionnaires, interviews, group talks and any other suitable sources of information. It reaches its completion with the preparation of the self-evaluation report concerning the academic unit in question.

3. The self-evaluation is founded on the analysis of the

cumulative data contained in the last annual internal report of each academic unit indicated in Article 2 paragraph 5, and the results of the procedures referred to in the previous paragraph. The self-evaluation is taken into consideration for the purposes of the external evaluation of the academic unit's tuition, research or other tasks carried out by independent experts.

Article 5

Self-evaluation Procedure

1. The self-evaluation is performed care of each academic unit which is subject to evaluation, in cooperation with the QAU of the higher education institution where such academic unit belongs, and must meet the evaluation criteria and indices of Article 3 paragraph 1, as these are supplemented and specified on the basis of the guidelines and standards issued each time by the HQAA.

2. By resolution of their General Assemblies, the academic units which are subject to evaluation (Faculties or Departments) appoint Internal Evaluation Groups (IEG), which consist of members of the Teaching-Research Staff or Educational Staff holding the rank of a Professor or Assistant Professor, with internationally recognized scientific work and, preferably, prior experience in quality assurance procedures. The IEG is joined by a representative of the students, nominated by the competent student representation body. The IEG is responsible for carrying out the self-evaluation procedure at the relevant academic unit, monitors the filling out of the questionnaires, informs the academic unit's bodies and members about the responses and results of the dialogue with teachers and students, collects all the necessary relevant data and, on the basis of the above, draws up the academic unit's self-evaluation

report which is then forwarded to the institution's QAU and through the latter to the HQAA.

3. Should the programmes of graduate or postgraduate studies or other services provided by the academic units or higher education institutions be separately evaluated in the framework of their mission, Special Evaluation Groups (SEG) are formed, with the participation of a joint representative of the unit's or institution's other scientific and administrative staff, in addition to the members of the Teaching-Research Staff or Educational Staff and the representative of the students.

4. The responsibility and liability for the overall evaluation of the operation of each higher education institution lie with the QAU of the relevant institution, which operates as that institution's Internal Evaluation Group.

5. The questionnaires filled out in writing by the teaching staff and students pertain mainly to the quality and means of research and tuition, the structure and contents of studies, the students' welfare, the administrative services and the technical infrastructure of the unit or institution and may be in the standard layout allowing for differences arising from the specifications of each academic unit. The replies to the questions provided by the students express their opinions on the quality of tuition, the optimal organization of the courses, their cooperation with the teaching staff and their expectations from their studies. The questionnaires are filled out by the students on a voluntary basis, anonymously and without prior notice in the framework of the compulsory courses offered during the semester, the whole procedure being monitored by the IEG with the cooperation of the teaching staff.

6. The self-evaluation procedure lasts two running semesters.

Article 6

Self-evaluation Report

1. The academic unit's self-evaluation report comprises all of the above data in conjunction with the unit's profile, objectives and mission.
2. The self-evaluation report contains, in particular, a critical-evaluative analysis of the course of implementation of the objectives for the work of the academic unit under assessment, the positive and negative points emerging from the evaluation, the measures which must be adopted in order for the objectives set by the unit itself to be accomplished, for the activities under assessment to be better organized, for the titles of studies awarded by the unit and its scientific activity to be upgraded as well as all other measures of assurance or improvement of the quality of the tuition, research or other work provided by the academic unit.
3. The self-evaluation report is drawn up by the IEG of the relevant academic unit in accordance with the evaluation criteria and indices of Article 3 paragraph 1, as these are supplemented and specified on the basis of the guidelines and standards each time issued by the HQAA. In the cases outlined in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the previous article, the report is drawn up by the relevant SEG or the institution's QAU.
4. The self-evaluation report is taken into consideration, inter alia, for the adoption of resolutions by the competent bodies at all operational levels of the academic unit or institution.

Article 7

External Evaluation

1. External evaluation constitutes the second stage of the evaluation process and consists in the critical-analytical examination of the results of the self-evaluation by a committee of independent experts (External Evaluation Committee).

2. The external evaluation is a periodically repeated procedure, in the course of which the data contained in the self-evaluation report is studied in depth by a committee of independent experts following an in situ visit to the academic unit under evaluation and talks and contacts with members of the teaching-research, educational and other scientific staff, the administrative staff and the students.

3. The external evaluation takes into account an analysis of the information contained in the latest self-evaluation report of each academic unit and the supplementary data arising from the talks and contacts of the external experts with the members of the relevant unit. The external evaluation is completed with the preparation of the academic unit's external evaluation report, which includes the independent experts' analyses, findings, recommendations and suggestions concerning the measures to be adopted to the end of further improving the quality of the tuition, research or other work or dealing with any failings or divergences identified with respect to the profile, objectives and mission of each academic unit.

Article 8

External Evaluation Committee

1. The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) is formed within one month from the submission of the academic unit's self-evaluation report and takes knowledge of its contents at the latest within one month from its formation. The EEC takes into consideration the self-evaluation report and makes an in situ visit to the academic unit under evaluation, of which it is required to facilitate as much as possible the Committee's work with supplementary information, discussions and contacts with the members of the academic unit.

2. The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) consists of five members, summoned from the register of independent experts kept at the HQAA. The register of independent experts is compiled on the basis of the recommendations made by the higher education institutions and the HQAA and is revised every four years. No expert may remain recorded in the register for more than two four-year terms, whether consecutive or not.

3. One of the members of the EEC may be nominated by the academic unit under evaluation, from among the independent experts included in the HQAA register. The remaining members are elected by lot by the HQAA.

HQAA members, as well as the special scientific staff employed by that Agency under any form of contract, may not be included in the register of independent experts or participate as external evaluators in any form of evaluation procedure.

4. EEC members may not belong to or stand in any kind of educational, research or service relationship with the higher education institution whose specific academic unit is under evaluation, and are furthermore prohibited from having had such a relationship in the past five years.

5. EEC members:

a) must meet the following requirements:

(i) the independent experts' field of specialization must be related to the subject-matter of the academic unit under evaluation;

(ii) must be scientists of acknowledged prestige, preferably with experience in issues associated with the evaluation of higher education institutions, as well as with a reputation for unbiased judgment.

b) Moreover, the following are desirable:

(i) the participation of at least one foreign expert or specialist, being a top-rank professor, or distinguished researcher at a corresponding foreign higher educational or research institution, preferably with experience in issues associated with the evaluation of higher education institutions;

(ii) the independent experts' administrative experience in academic units of higher education institutions,

(iii) the participation of one representative from a professional or other scientific union, sharing an interest in the subject-matter of the academic unit under evaluation, capable of assessing the contribution of the studies offered in practising the profession.

6. If a foreign expert or specialist participates in the Committee, then the evaluation may also be carried out in English, French or German.

7. The amount of the emoluments payable to EEC members is determined by joint decision of the Ministers of National Education and Religious Affairs and of Economy and Finance.

Article 9

External Evaluation Report

1. The results of the external evaluation are summarized in the independent experts' evaluation report (external evaluation report), which contains mainly their analyses, establishments, recommendations and suggestions and the measures which must be adopted to the end of further improving the quality of the tuition, research or other work and of dealing with any failings or divergences established in connection with the profile, objectives and mission of each academic unit.

2. The EEC draws up the draft external evaluation report with the secretarial and administrative support of the HQAA. The draft report is then notified to the academic unit under evaluation, which submits its remarks within a fifteen-day time limit from the date of the notification of the draft. If no remarks are submitted within the above-mentioned time-limit, the draft report is considered to have been approved by the academic unit. The final external evaluation report is forwarded to the institution's QAU and through that Unit to the relevant academic unit and the HQAA, which is responsible for its publication.

3. The external evaluation is completed within four months from the date of submission of the self-evaluation report. The external evaluation report must be drawn up within this time limit.

Article 10

Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

1. An independent administrative agency is established under the title 'Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education' (HQAA) with its headquarters in Athens. The HQAA enjoys full administrative independence and is supervised by the Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs who controls the legality of its operations.

The members of this Agency are senior public officials who enjoy while performing their duties personal and operational independence.

Appropriations for the operation of the HQAA are entered in the budget of the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs separately. The budget is submitted to the Minister of Economy and Finance by the Chairman of HQAA, who is also the authorizing officer of its expenditures.

2. The HQAA guarantees the transparency of the evaluation procedures and its mission is to support higher education institutions in the implementation of the procedures which aim at safeguarding and improving the quality of higher education, to keep the State and higher education institutions informed on current international developments and trends in the relevant issues and to promote research in this area. In particular, the HQAA has the following responsibilities:

a) Plans, coordinates and supports the higher education institutions' evaluation procedures;

b) Employs guidelines and standards to specify and review the form of the higher education institutions' evaluation reports, as well as the evaluation criteria and indices in accordance with Article 3 paragraph 1, concerning the work of the academic units under evaluation, the curricula and other

services provided by higher education institutions;

c) Compiles, keeps and revises the register of independent experts and specialists in the area of quality assurance and improvement in higher education, both from Greece and abroad, which is open to all Greek higher education institutions;

d) Collects information and maintains a database with the data from the evaluation reports of all the Greek higher education institutions;

e) Keeps the competent bodies of the State and the Greek higher education institutions up to date concerning the current situation in Greece and the current international trends and developments in the area of quality assurance and improvement in higher education;

f) Maintains mutual cooperation with corresponding foreign organizations;

g) Performs studies and carries out research in order to develop the methodology, techniques and applications of quality assurance and improvement in higher education;

h) Publishes the evaluation results and the measures adopted for quality assurance and improvement in higher education;

i) Represents the country in the institutional bodies and organizations which are formed by the corresponding national agencies of the EU Member-States and of third countries;

j) Formulates proposals for the adoption of measures and the application of quality assurance and improvement practices in relation to the objectives of the national higher education system and the international specifications, experience and practices.

3. The by-laws of the HQAA, drawn up by the Agency itself within six months from its formation and regulating

internal operation issues, are ratified by presidential decree, issued upon the proposal of the Ministers of National Education and Religious Affairs, of the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization, and of Economy and Finance.

4. The information gathered in the framework of the evaluation procedures, if of personal nature, is subject to processing only to the extent this is necessary for the accomplishment of the goal of the evaluation, in compliance with the requirements of the principle of proportionality and the provisions on the protection of personal data. The further processing of personal data for other purposes is not permitted.

5. The HQAA may evaluate, in accordance with the provisions of its by-laws, its own operation and work, charging prestigious and internationally recognized evaluators or organizations or other agencies pursuing similar activities on a global level with the task of its external evaluation.

Article 11

HQAA Formation and Members

1. The HQAA consists of fifteen members, appointed by decision of the Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs.

The HQAA consists of the following:

a) One scientist with internationally acknowledged authority and significant research work, preferably with experience in issues of quality assurance and improvement in higher education, who is appointed as Chairman by decision of the Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs, upon the recommendation of the Parliamentary Committee of Educational Affairs, which is issued pursuant to the procedure prescribed by the Parliament Regulations.

b) Six active professors serving at institutions of the university sector of higher education, qualified in the following disciplines: i) humanities, ii) legal, political and social sciences, iii) health sciences, iv) finance and business administration, v) engineering and geotechnical sciences, and vi) exact sciences and computer science, who are nominated by the Deans of all the Universities.

c) Four active professors coming from institutions of the technological sector of higher education, qualified in the following disciplines: i) administration and finance, ii) health and welfare professions, iii) technological engineering sciences, and iv) technological geotechnical sciences and food science, who are nominated by the Presidents of all the Technological Education Institutes.

d) One representative of the University students, appointed by resolution of the National Students' Association of Greece.

e) One representative of the Technological Education Institutes' students, appointed by resolution of the National TEI Students Association of Greece.

f) One top-rank researcher from a non-academic research institution, appointed by joint decision of the Ministers of National Education and Religious Affairs and of Development.

g) One representative of the Central Union of Chambers.

The professors who are nominated for HQAA membership must provide evidence for internationally recognized scientific work and, preferably, as well as experience in issues of quality assurance and improvement in higher education.

HQAA meets for the first time within one month from the publication in the Official Gazette of the decision for the appointment of its members.

2. The Chairman of HQAA is responsible for the

Agency's operation. In particular:

- a) S/he represents HQAA in and out of court.
- b) S/he coordinates and directs its services.
- c) S/he convenes and chairs the Agency's meetings, determines the daily agenda and monitors the application of the resolutions, guidelines and any other acts of the Agency.
- d) S/he is the administrative head of the administrative staff and the special scientific staff and exercises disciplinary powers. The Chairman of HQAA may, by own decision, authorize members or other bodies of the Agency to sign 'by order of the Chairman' documents or other acts.

3. The Chairman and other members of HQAA serve a four-year term of office. HQAA members may not be appointed for more than two terms, whether consecutive or not. Student representatives must be elected among students in their last two years of study and are appointed to only one two-year term of office. The terms of office of the Chairman and members of the Agency are renewed so as to secure continuity in its operation. For that reason, half of the Agency's members, nominated respectively by the University Deans Assembly and the Technological Education Institutes' Presidents' Assembly, are initially appointed to a two-year term, following the drawing of lots which takes place immediately after the adoption of their appointment decision, while the remaining half of these members are appointed to a four-year term. The Chairman and the other members of the Agency are also initially appointed to a four-year term and the representatives of the University and Technological Education Institutes students to a two-year term. The subsequent appointments and renewals of the terms of office of the Chairman and members of the HQAA are made according to standard procedure and involve full terms. The Chairman of the HQAA notifies each time in writing to the Minister of

National Education and Religious Affairs the names of the Agency's members whose term is about to expire. This notification takes place two months prior to the expiration of their term. In the event of death, withdrawal or disqualification of a member of HQAA, a new member is appointed for the remainder of the term. The term of the Agency's Chairman and members is automatically extended until the appointment of new members, for no more than three months following the expiration of their term.

4. HQAA members are prohibited, during their term of office, from exercising any public function as well as from exercising duties in any post in the State, legal entities under public law and legal entities of the broader public sector. HQAA members, with the exception of its Chairman who is employed on a full-time, exclusive basis, may exercise on a part-time basis the duties of a teaching-research or educational staff member.

The emoluments of the Agency's members are determined by joint decision of the Ministers of National Education and Religious Affairs and of Economy and Finance, upon the opinion of the Agency. The members' full- or part-time employment is taken under consideration for the determination of their emoluments.

The insurance policy of the HQAA members is regulated pursuant to the provisions of Article 6, Law 2703/1999.

5. Conviction for offences against property or against property rights or offences involving documents or the service or offences against public morals, as well as conviction for any felony constitute impediment for the qualification as HQAA members. In the event of a final conviction decision for one of the above-mentioned offences, any members of the Agency who are involved will be disqualified from membership. The approval of the resignation as well as the disqualification of an HQAA

member following a final conviction takes place by virtue of a confirming decision of the Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs, issued within a time limit of fifteen days from the date of submission of the resignation or the notification to the member of their final conviction decision. The disciplinary liability of HQAA members is regulated by the Agency's by-laws.

6. The Agency's resolutions are notified, care of HQAA, to the Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs, while at the end of each year a higher education quality report is submitted to the Speaker of Parliament and the Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs.

Article 12

Administrative and Scientific Support to HQAA

1. In its operation, HQAA is supported by a Secretariat operating at a Directorate level, which consists of three Departments:

- a) the Administration and Finance Department;
- b) the Quality Assurance Department;
- c) the Documentation and Research Department.

The authorities of each Department and the Head of the Directorate are determined in the Agency's by-laws.

2. For the administrative and scientific support of the Agency, fifteen special scientific staff posts and ten permanent administrative staff posts are established. The scientific staff posts cover the following disciplines: humanities, legal-political-social sciences, theology, philosophy, economic sciences-business administration, exact sciences, health sciences, engineering, geotechnical sciences and fine arts. The distribution of the above posts among the Departments,

depending on the branch and specialization, as well as all other relevant details is regulated by the Agency's by-laws.

3. Scientific and administrative staff posts may be filled by way of transferring or seconding permanent personnel from Ministries or other public services or public entities under public law, or by way of transferring primary or secondary education teachers.

4. Special scientific staff is employed under private law, open-ended employment contracts. The qualifications and procedures for the filling of these posts are determined in the Agency's by-laws, in accordance with the provisions of Article 19, Law 2190/1994.

5. The emoluments of the special scientific staff are determined in accordance with the provisions of Law 3205/2003. This personnel is also paid a special extra fee, whose amount and conditions are determined by joint decision of the Ministers of National Education and Religious Affairs and of Economy and Finance.

Article 13

Transitional Provisions

1. The internal and external evaluation procedures of higher education institutions are applied upon the preparation of each academic unit's first internal reports referred to in Article 2 paragraph 5.

2. Evaluation procedures are applied to newly-established academic units of higher education institutions six years after commencement of their operation. This time limit may be extended by one additional year or cut short upon the submission of a documented application of the higher education institution concerned to HQAA.

CHAPTER B
CREDIT TRANSFER AND ACCUMULATION SYSTEM
DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT

Article 14

Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

1. The graduate and postgraduate study programmes of higher education institutions are organized on the basis of the credit transfer and accumulation system.
2. The credit transfer and accumulation system is a systematic way of describing the study programmes of higher education institutions by attaching credits to their components. Credits express the student workload required to achieve the objectives of an academic programme by each student.
3. Student workload consists of the time required to complete all planned learning activities within the framework of an academic programme of study, such as attending lectures, seminars, independent study, preparation of projects, participation in workshops and examinations, completion of dissertations.
4. The workload of a full-time student during one academic year is measured at sixty credits. The workload per semester is assessed at thirty credits and per quarter at twenty credits. The administration bodies of the higher education institutions are responsible for the workload per course, in accordance with the provisions in effect.
5. The provisions of this Article do not affect the provisions in effect on course credits nor the minimum number of credits required for the award of a degree, in accordance with the study programme.

6. Issues pertaining to the application of the credit transfer and accumulation system are regulated by decision of the Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs.

Article 15

Diploma Supplement

1. The diploma supplement is an explanatory document, which does not substitute the official qualification or transcript awarded by higher education institutions.

The supplement is attached to the titles of studies awarded by higher education institutions and provides information about the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which this supplement is appended.

The supplement contains no value judgments and no equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition abroad.

2. The diploma supplement is issued automatically and free of charge in Greek and in English.

The original of the supplement must meet the authenticity conditions required for the qualification awarded.

The date of issue of the supplement need not coincide with the date of award of the qualification; however it may never be earlier than that date.

3. The basic content of the diploma supplement is common to all higher education institutions and is printed on a special standard sheet (membrane) in accordance with the form, format and size determined by decision of the Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs. The sections included in the supplement and the information recorded therein are also determined by the same decision.

Article 16

Transitional Provisions

The provisions of this chapter will become applicable as of the publication in the Official Gazette of the Hellenic Republic of the ministerial decisions set forth herein and, in any event, as of the commencement of the academic year 2005-2006.

CHAPTER C

FINAL PROVISION

Article 17

Commencement of Effect

The present law will come into effect as of its publication in the Official Gazette of the Hellenic Republic, unless otherwise provided in its individual provisions.

We hereby order the publication of the present in the Official Gazette of the Hellenic Republic and its enforcement as a law of the State.

Athens, July 29, 2005

THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
KARLOS GR.PAPOULIAS

THE MINISTERS

OF THE INTERIOR, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DECENTRALIZATION –
P.PAVLOPOULOS

OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE – G.ALOGOSKOUFIS

OF DEVELOPMENT – D.SIOUFAS

OF NATIONAL EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS – M.YIANNAKOU

Confirmed and stamped with the Official Stamp of the State.

Athens, August 1, 2005

THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE – A.PAPALIGOURAS

True translation from Greek to English.

V.VOUTSELA, Translator for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs