

Major Changes in Greece's Higher Education Landscape

On March 8, 2024, the Parliament of Greece passed Law 5094/2024, marking a significant change in the country's higher education system. This new Law introduces a framework for non-state universities for the first time, aiming to position Greece as a regional education center that offers broader opportunities for local students and academics and attracts international students and investments.

Key features of the law include:

1. **Establishment of University-Legal Entities (ULEs):** Starting from the 2025-2026 academic year, ULEs can be established to grant higher education degrees, provided they are either owned by or have entered into an educational agreement with a recognized higher education institution ("Parent Institution") in the EU or certain third countries.
2. **Requirements for Parent Institutions:** Parent Institutions must offer programs across all three higher education cycles and be listed in the National Registry of Greece as recognized foreign higher education institutions.
3. **Operational Control:** ULEs are subject to control and supervision by the Parent Institutions which are in charge of the academic administration/management and safeguard the academic standards of the ULEs.
4. **Licensing and Fees:** ULEs are non-profit entities and must obtain a license, which involves significant documentation and financial guarantees, including a €2,000,000 guarantee and a €600,000 application fee. It should be noted that, in an effort to incentivize Parent Institutions to establish ULEs out of the two biggest city centers of the country (i.e. Athens and Thessaloniki), the above guarantee and fee are reduced by 50% for ULEs planning to be established in the periphery.
5. **Degrees:** Degrees granted by ULEs are equivalent to the degrees of the Greek State Universities.

Implementing Ministerial Decisions regulating details of the new Law were issued earlier this month while the remaining ones, in order for the Law to be fully implemented, are anticipated to be issued before the end of this year.

This reform in higher education aligns Greece with other EU countries that permit the operation of both public and private universities. The establishment of branch campuses is anticipated to attract foreign students to Greece, decrease the number of young Greeks studying overseas, and promote research and innovation, turning Greece into a hub of educational services in the EMEA.

Athens, October 16, 2024

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