



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης**
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Accreditation Report for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Analysis and Implementation of Social Policy

Department of Social Policy
Institution: Panteion University
Date: 16 September 2023



Επιχειρησιακό Πρόγραμμα
Ανάπτυξη Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού,
Εκπαίδευση και Διά Βίου Μάθηση
Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Postgraduate Study Programme of **Analysis and Implementation of Social Policy** of **Panteion University** 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 postgraduate study programme of **Analysis and Implementation of Social Policy of Panteion University** comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. Professor Emeritus Joseph Joseph (Chair)

University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

2. Professor Apostolis Papakostas

Södertörn University, Stockholm, Sweden

3. Professor Dimitris Michailakis

University of Linköping, Linköping, Sweden

4. Ms. Evangelia Lekaki

Student, Department of International and European Studies, University of Piraeus, Piraeus, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In reviewing the Postgraduate Study Programme of Analysis and Implementation of Social Policy of Panteion University (hereafter the “Programme”), the objectives of the Panel, as described in the Guidelines for the Members of EEAP, are:

- to establish whether the data provided from the various resources is consistent among one another and reflect the actual situation
- identify strengths and areas of weakness
- engage in a constructive dialogue with the Institution, leading to reflection and continuous enhancement of the study programme

Following a well-prepared schedule provided by HAHE, the Panel held several separate interactive virtual (by electronic means, ZOOM platform) meetings and visits for two days as follows:

On Monday, 04/09/2023, 2023, the following virtual meetings took place:

- with the Director of the Programme, the Head of the Department, MODIP members and staff, and Steering Committees/OMEA members
- on-line tour of classrooms, lecture halls, libraries, laboratories and other facilities related to the Programme. The on-line tour was followed by a discussion about the facilities in which teaching and administrative staff participated.

On Tuesday, 05/09/2023, the following virtual meetings took place:

- with teaching staff of the Programme
- with current students of the Programme
- with graduates who have successfully completed the Programme
- with employers and social partners of the private and the public sector
- meeting with the Director of the Programme, the Head of the Department, members and staff of MODIP, and members of Steering Committees/OMEA members.

During the above virtual meetings, the Panel had the opportunity to meet, talk, and interact with all the participants of all meetings. All the participants were encouraged to express their views and they did so. It is worth pointing out that the students were especially encouraged to talk freely about their overall learning experience. They welcomed the opportunity to talk to the Panel and to voice their views. The discussions were very constructive and fruitful and were conducted in a cooperative manner and attitude. All the meetings included presentations, discussions, and question and answer sessions. During the last meeting, some clarifications were provided, and the Panel made an informal presentation of some initial key findings.

The internal evaluation report and other extensive material were made available to the Panel electronically in advance through HAHE. More information and material were made available during the meetings. The Department worked diligently in preparing the internal evaluation report and other relevant materials, as well as in organizing and hosting the virtual meetings. It is the feeling of the Panel that the Department has performed an excellent job throughout the internal evaluation process and the objectives of the process have been fully met. The

efficiency and eagerness of the Department to answer questions and provide additional information and clarifications during the meetings are worth noting. The Panel wishes to express its thanks and appreciation to the Department and the University administration for their co-operation and professionalism.

This Accreditation Report is based on information collected and views expressed during the virtual meetings as well as on information contained in the internal evaluation report and other documents submitted before and during the virtual meetings.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The Postgraduate Study Programme “Analysis and Implementation of Social Policy” has been offered since the academic year 2018-19. It has replaced a similar programme (“Methodology and Applications of Social Policy”) which was offered until 2018. It has an interdisciplinary nature and its structure and courses offered are consistent with the Department’s overall objectives. Basically, it aims at familiarizing students with complex theoretical and empirical social issues, and research tools for analysing and understanding the role of social policy in modern societies. It awards a Master's Degree in "Analysis and Implementation of Social Policy" with two specializations: I. Analysis of Social Policy and II. Social Problems and Social Policy.

Twenty students are admitted each year. Studies are free of charge and their duration is three academic semesters. For the completion of the Programme, 90 ECTS are required which are equally distributed over three semesters (30 ECTS per semester). During the first two semesters, students take compulsory and elective courses, and during the third semester they write a thesis which is a requirement. There are required and elective courses, which allow, to some extent, students to form their individual programme of study from a range of courses offered and selected in cooperation with their adviser.

The Programme is supported by the academic staff of the Department as well as academic staff from other Departments and other Universities. All teaching staff are Ph.D. holders who are active scholars and researchers in diverse areas such as social theory, social and economic development, social history of Greece and Europe, sociology of change, demography, social geography, labour and social relations, social movements, social rights, social exclusion, migration etc.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 1: QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND QUALITY GOAL SETTING FOR THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT. THIS POLICY SHOULD EXPAND AND BE AIMED (WITH THE COLLABORATION OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS) AT THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

The quality assurance policy of the academic unit should be in line with the quality assurance policy of the Institution and must be formulated in the form of a public statement, which is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study programmes offered by the academic unit.

Indicatively, the quality policy statement of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement a quality policy that will promote the academic profile and orientation of the postgraduate study programme (PSP), its purpose and field of study; it will realise the programme's goals and it will determine the means and ways for attaining them; it will implement appropriate quality procedures, aiming at the programme's improvement.

In particular, in order to implement this policy, the academic unit commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate:

- a) the suitability of the structure and organisation of postgraduate study programmes*
- b) the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education - level 7*
- c) the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching at the PSP*
- d) the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff for the PSP*
- e) the drafting, implementation, and review of specific annual quality goals for the improvement of the PSP*
- f) the level of demand for the graduates' qualifications in the labour market*
- g) the quality of support services, such as the administrative services, the libraries and the student welfare office for the PSP*
- h) the efficient utilisation of the financial resources of the PSP that may be drawn from tuition fees*
- i) the conduct of an annual review and audit of the quality assurance system of the PSP through the cooperation of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU)*

Documentation

- *Quality Assurance Policy of the PSP*
- *Quality goal setting of the PSP*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

There is in place a Quality Assurance Policy which has been approved by the Department and the University and is posted on the website. The quality assurance procedures of the Programme are coordinated and carried out under the supervision of the Department's

Internal Evaluation Team. This Team cooperates with the Steering Committee of the Programme, the Chair, faculty members and the University Quality Assurance Unit for the formulation and implementation of the policy.

The Quality Assurance Policy of the Department aims to develop and improve the Programme in line with the overall Quality Policy of the Department and the University. In doing so, it ensures that high quality standards and widely accepted practices in teaching and research are followed. Such principles and practices include:

- academic freedom in the educational process and research, as well as the free expression and circulation of ideas,
- the methodologies and tools for the formation of scientific discourse,
- the promotion of quality and the implementation of quality procedures by means of annual internal evaluation
- the promotion of excellence in research and education,
- academic ethics, the regulatory obligations, and standards of the Single Higher Education Area,
- Meritocracy, impartiality, transparency, and accountability,
- dialogue as a means of building consensus and respect for freedom and democratic ideals,
- a student-centred pedagogical approach to teaching and learning,
- respect for diversity, the removal of barriers that create exclusion or reduced learning opportunities
- the promotion of graduates' acquired skills in the labour market.

The Panel, however, noticed some inconsistencies between what is stated in the documents provided and what is actually done, as evidenced by the presentations and interviews conducted during the meetings.

II. Analysis

It is the impression of the Panel that the Programme provides a much-needed educational service in the Greek context and for that reason it is a highly sought-after Programme. It is supported by departmental and university infrastructure and services which are of good quality and adequate for graduate studies. The Panel, however, noticed some inconsistencies and exaggerations in the formal design and implementation of the Programme, which deserve some attention by the internal quality control units and mechanisms.

III. Conclusions

Quality policy controls are institutionalized at all levels of the university (Department, OMEA, MODIP etc.). There is no doubt that this is a popular Programme, attracting excellent students with different academic backgrounds. The social partners and external stakeholders who participated in the meetings praised the Programme and the quality of its graduates. They were also very satisfied with the cooperation they have with the Department. The Panel, however, feels that there is room for improvement, especially concerning the economic rationality of the resources used for the implementation of the Programme (for example, the number of courses offered) and some apparent inconsistencies and exaggerations (for example, there are lists of readings containing nearly 70 items for a course).

Panel Judgement

Principle 1: Quality assurance policy and quality goal setting for the postgraduate study programmes of the institution and the academic unit	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Improve the substance of quality controls, having in mind that the parsimonious use of resources is a virtue in academic practice.
- Follow widely accepted international academic blueprints and practices in the design of the Programme and courses.

PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP THEIR POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES FOLLOWING A DEFINED WRITTEN PROCESS WHICH WILL INVOLVE THE PARTICIPANTS, INFORMATION SOURCES AND THE APPROVAL COMMITTEES FOR THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES. THE OBJECTIVES, THE EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND THE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS ARE SET OUT IN THE PROGRAMME DESIGN. DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES, THE DEGREE OF ACHIEVEMENT OF THE LEARNING OUTCOMES SHOULD BE ASSESSED. THE ABOVE DETAILS, AS WELL AS INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME'S STRUCTURE ARE PUBLISHED IN THE STUDENT GUIDE.

The academic units develop their postgraduate study programmes following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile and orientation of the programme, the research character, the scientific objectives, the specific subject areas, and specialisations are described at this stage.

The structure, content and organisation of courses and teaching methods should be oriented towards deepening knowledge and acquiring the corresponding skills to apply the said knowledge (e.g. course on research methodology, participation in research projects, thesis with a research component).

The expected learning outcomes must be determined based on the European and National Qualifications Framework (EQF, NQF), and the Dublin Descriptors for level 7. During the implementation of the programme, the degree of achievement of the expected learning outcomes and the feedback of the learning process must be assessed with the appropriate tools. For each learning outcome that is designed and made public, it is necessary that its evaluation criteria are also designed and made public.

In addition, the design of PSP must consider:

- *the Institutional strategy*
- *the active involvement of students*
- *the experience of external stakeholders from the labour market*
- *the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) for level 7*
- *the option of providing work experience to students*
- *the linking of teaching and research*
- *the relevant regulatory framework and the official procedure for the approval of the PSP by the Institution*

The procedure of approval or revision of the programmes provides for the verification of compliance with the basic requirements of the Standards by the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).

Documentation

- *Senate decision for the establishment of the PSP*
- *PSP curriculum structure: courses, course categories, ECTS awarded, expected learning outcomes according to the EQF, internship, mobility opportunities*
- *Labour market data regarding the employment of graduates, international experience in a relevant scientific field*
- *PSP Student Guide*
- *Course and thesis outlines*
- *Teaching staff (name list including of areas of specialisation, its relation to the courses taught, employment relationship, and teaching assignment in hours as well as other teaching commitments in hours)*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The curriculum focuses on active participation of students, alignment with institutional strategies and European standards, engagement of guest speakers and external stakeholders. Additionally, there is evidence on intertwining teaching and research, providing work experience opportunities, and continuous assessment of learning outcomes. The duration of the Programme is three semesters. Two semesters are devoted to elective courses and one semester for the thesis. The Programme offers two areas of specialization, (a) Social Policy Analysis and (b) Social Problems and Social Policy. With the exception of one required course, the Programme allows flexibility for students and free choice of courses. Within each specialization, there is a broad range of courses giving students the opportunity to choose courses within and among thematic areas. In total 20 courses are offered. Students can also choose courses from other disciplines. Eight courses correspond to 10 ECTS and the rest to 5 ECTS. The duration of each semester is 13 weeks plus two weeks for the examination period. The workload is estimated to 250 hours per course (10 ECTS). Reading lists in the course syllabi are often extensive, in some cases including about 70 items. The Panel noticed some discrepancies between the description of the Programme in the accreditation proposal and the one presented during meetings with the faculty.

II. Analysis

In general, course syllabi do not follow usual international blueprints when it comes to lists of readings. Reading lists are extensive and not categorised in terms of “required reading”, “suggested reading” etc. Meanwhile, during the discussion with the faculty, the Panel noticed that in practice there is a reduction of items on the reading lists, but it is not clear with what criteria this is done. The Programme design highlights the institution's student-centred approach offering a broad range of courses among which (with the exception of one required course) students can freely choose courses corresponding to 60 ECTS. There is only one course that constitutes the common core of the Programme. As there are very few restrictions in the choices that students can make, the Programme bears resemblance more to individually designed study programmes than to a coherent programme. Given the duration of the semester (13 weeks) the workload equals to approximately 57 hours per week, which is rather high compared to usual standards.

III. Conclusions

The popularity of the Programme is undeniable as it has successfully managed to attract excellent students. It is an ambitious and resource-demanding Programme including many elective courses. Reading lists in certain courses include too many titles. From this wide array of courses and the long reading lists selections (and reductions) are made by students and faculty. From this wide array of courses offered and the rather large reading lists several selections and reductions are made both by students and faculty. In the area of Social Policy qualitative and quantitative research methods are elective meaning that a student can take a diploma without courses in methods. While in formal documents there is a long list of courses along with impressive reading lists, when it comes to what students actually study, it looks like each student has his/her individually designed programme in Social Policy. This presents a dilemma for the evaluation of the Programme compared to international standards and practices. It also seems that this results in an increase of workload for faculty, as a considerable

amount of time is expected to be consumed in orientation to individual supervision of students, orientation in literature etc.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2: Design and approval of postgraduate study programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- For rational, practical, academic, and pedagogic reasons the number of elective courses could be reduced while consolidating courses into two coherent thematic areas. Electivity can still be an option but at the level of thematic areas and not at the level of individual courses. In any case, there is still plenty of room left for more individual specialization for each student during the preparation of his/her thesis.
- Reading lists should be prepared by following more conventional international practices and distinguish “required readings” from “recommended further reading” etc.
- The expected workload for students could be presented in more clear terms in the Programme.
- Avoid discrepancies between what is stated in official documents and what is actually practiced.

PRINCIPLE 3: STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE THAT POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES PROVIDE THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE LEARNING PROCESS. THE ASSESSMENT METHODS SHOULD REFLECT THIS APPROACH.

Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in enhancing students' motivation, their self-evaluation, and their active participation in the learning process. The above entail continuous consideration of the programme's delivery and the assessment of the related outcomes.

The student-centred learning and teaching process

- *respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs by adopting flexible learning paths*
- *considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate*
- *flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods*
- *regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods aiming at improvement*
- *regularly evaluates the quality and effectiveness of teaching, as documented especially through student surveys*
- *strengthens the student's sense of autonomy, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teaching staff*
- *promotes mutual respect in the student-teacher relationship*
- *applies appropriate procedures for dealing with the students' complaints*
- *provides counselling and guidance for the preparation of the thesis*

In addition

- *The academic staff are familiar with the existing examination system and methods and are supported in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The assessment criteria and methods are published in advance. The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Student assessment is conducted by more than one examiner, where possible.*
- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and conducted in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *The function of the academic advisor runs smoothly.*

Documentation

- *Sample of a fully completed questionnaire for the evaluation of the PSP by the students*
- *Regulations for dealing with students' complaints and appeals*
- *Regulation for the function of academic advisor*
- *Reference to the teaching modes and assessment methods*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

Overall, the Programme complies with this Principle by its dedication to providing a flexible and student-centred educational experience. It places emphasis on allowing students to tailor their academic paths based on their interests through elective course choices and faculty

guidance. Additionally, the Programme benefits from student feedback, as evident through regular course and teaching evaluations. The relationships between students and faculty are characterized by functionality and accessibility, particularly in the context of thesis preparation. The Programme also demonstrates a robust infrastructure for academic advising and student appeals.

II. Analysis

The Programme displays a strong commitment to delivering a flexible curriculum that caters to the unique interests and academic profiles of its students. It grants students the privilege of selecting elective courses from a diverse range of options, ensuring that they can hone their skills according to their preferences. Furthermore, alumni have provided compelling evidence of the Programme's proactive commitment to fostering an inclusive educational environment. The Programme and its faculty actively support and initiate measures to ensure that students with special needs receive an educational experience that is on par with that of their peers, thus upholding principles of equity and inclusivity. The interactions between students and faculty members are highly effective, with professors highly inspiring their students and readily accessible to provide support. Moreover, the teaching faculty actively guides and counsels students at all stages of their academic journey, although there is room for further improvement in adopting a more student-centric approach to instructional methods. A student-centred approach is evidently integral to the Programme, particularly in the context of academic content. However, it is recommended to augment the focus on student-centred teaching methods and expressly incorporate them into the study guide and course outlines to provide enhanced clarity and guidance for all stakeholders. Both current students and graduates attest to the exceptional guidance and counselling they received from their mentors during the thesis preparation process. Additionally, the Programme consistently conducts course evaluations, underscoring the significance of gathering student input, and has recently introduced surveys for alumni to enhance feedback collection. However, the response rate is relatively low considering the number of students attending each course. The Programme boasts well-established systems for academic advising and student appeals, substantiated by pertinent documentation.

III. Conclusions

The Programme strongly aligns with the principle of flexibility and student-centred education. It excels in offering diverse elective choices, maintaining functional student-faculty relationships, and emphasizing student feedback. However, there is room for improvement, as indicated in the recommendations below.

Panel Judgement

Principle 3: Student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Consider re-evaluating the teaching approaches to further enrich student-centred methods.
- Consider specifying assessment criteria in the outline of the courses and tailor them to match directly with course-specific learning outcomes.
- Explore the possibility of providing some later time schedules to accommodate the demanding lives of working students.
- Consider ways of boosting participation rates for the course evaluation, to gather a more comprehensive understanding of students' views on the course and the teaching.

PRINCIPLE 4: STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AND CERTIFICATION.

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP AND APPLY PUBLISHED REGULATIONS COVERING ALL ASPECTS AND PHASES OF STUDIES (ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, THESIS DRAFTING, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION).

All the issues from the beginning to the end of studies should be governed by the internal regulations of the academic units. Indicatively:

- *the student admission procedures and the required supporting documents*
- *student rights and obligations, and monitoring of student progression*
- *internship issues, if applicable, and granting of scholarships*
- *the procedures and terms for the drafting of assignments and the thesis*
- *the procedure of award and recognition of degrees, the duration of studies, the conditions for progression and for the assurance of the progress of students in their studies*
- *the terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility*

All the above must be made public in the context of the Student Guide.

Documentation

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the Postgraduate Study Programme*
- *Research Ethics Regulation*
- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility, and student assignments*
- *Degree certificate template*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department provides all necessary documents of evidence covering all aspects and phases of the Programme. It also follows the practice of academic advisors (AA) who assist students and help them with their decisions concerning their interests from the very beginning of their studies. During the meeting with the students, they stressed that AA are very cooperative and always available to provide guidance and answer to their questions, e.g., about the courses on offer and the choices they can make in order to get most of out the Programme. The AA may also be the supervisor of the student's thesis.

Faculty members monitor students' progress in the learning and research process during the semester. At the level of the Departmental Secretariat, the monitoring of student progress is carried out through the electronic application of the Student Register, which can provide detailed information on the characteristics of the student population.

The Diploma Supplement is issued without any charge in Greek and English. It bears information on the identity of the holder of the Programme, the type and level of the degree, the specialization, the content of the studies, the requirements of the Programme and the results achieved.

The six courses students take are equally distributed in two semesters (Winter and Spring). Each semester, the evaluation and grading of students are based on the oral presentation of papers, written exams and assignments, participation in research seminars, and their performance in related research or educational activities. There is an examination period at

the end of each semester and an annual re-examination period (for students who failed a course) in September for the courses of the two immediately preceding semesters.

The thesis is written during the third semester. The student has six calendar months to write it, but if he/she cannot complete it on time, he/she can ask for an extension of up to six months after consulting his/her advisor.

There are clearly defined terms and conditions for student mobility. Opportunities for student mobility are publicized by the Department and University as well as by external organizations such as the European Union.

II. Analysis

There is a clear and well-elaborated procedure to support newly enrolled students. They are informed by announcements posted on the website of the Department with brief practical instructions for the first steps, which include the student's access codes to a variety of services including academic identity card, electronic course registration and individual electronic student account, from which they are informed about the results of examinations and grades. After the completion of the registration of the new students, an informative reception event is organized during which the director and faculty members give detailed presentation of the Programme. The briefing covers the organization of studies, academic activities, and the best method of selecting courses in a coherent way to create the "individual curriculum".

Transparency in the process of assigning and examining a thesis is ensured by relevant Programme regulations. These regulations, which are posted on the website of the Department, describe step-by-step the procedure for the preparation of the thesis.

III. Conclusions

There is a Departmental strategy encouraging and ensuring that students complete the Programme on time. The Study Guide provides detailed information about the Programme, including the duration of studies, admission procedures, thesis guidelines, student support services, rights and obligations of students, tuition fees, scholarships, and opportunities for international mobility. Overall, the Programme demonstrates a commitment to providing clear guidelines, support, and resources to monitor students' progression. It also encourages mobility, ensures compliance with quality requirements for the thesis, and offers comprehensive information for students.

Panel Judgement

Principle 4: Student admission, progression, recognition of postgraduate studies and certification	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Consider developing an alumni-student mentor Programme.
- Seek ways and means to improve the Erasmus participation rate.

PRINCIPLE 5: TEACHING STAFF OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ASSURE THEMSELVES OF THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF THEIR TEACHING STAFF, AND APPLY FAIR AND TRANSPARENT PROCESSES FOR THEIR RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.

The Institution should attend to the adequacy of the teaching staff of the academic unit teaching at the PSP, the appropriate staff-student ratio, the appropriate staff categories, the appropriate subject areas, the fair and objective recruitment process, the high research performance, the training- development, the staff development policy (including participation in mobility schemes, conferences, and educational leaves-as mandated by law).

More specifically, the academic unit should set up and follow clear, transparent and fair processes for the recruitment of properly qualified staff for the PSP and offer them conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching and research; offer opportunities and promote the professional development of the teaching staff; encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research; encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies; promote the increase of the volume and quality of the research output within the academic unit; follow quality assurance processes for all staff (with respect to attendance requirements, performance, self-assessment, training, etc.); develop policies to attract highly qualified academic staff.

Documentation

- *Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment*
- *Employment regulations or contracts, and obligations of the teaching staff*
- *Policy for staff support and development*
- *Individual performance of the teaching staff in scientific-research and teaching work, based on internationally recognised systems of scientific evaluation (e.g. Google Scholar, Scopus, etc.)*
- *List of teaching staff including subject areas, employment relationship, Institution of origin, Department of origin*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department, recognising the importance of teaching and research, follows a clear, transparent, and fair process for the recruitment of qualified staff. Their expertise, international background, high qualifications, and enthusiasm enhance the quality of classroom teaching and research output. As this is an interdisciplinary Programme, the teaching staff comes from different disciplines. All of them are Ph.D. holders, active researchers, productive scholars, and dedicated teachers. New technologies are widely used in the classroom and in communicating with students. The staff-student ratio is very good.

II. Analysis

The teaching staff follow innovative and widely used pedagogical practices and instructional methods. There is enthusiasm and skill in utilizing new technologies, both in the classroom and in interaction among faculty and students. The Panel had the opportunity to interact with students and received the impression that they think very highly of their teachers. Current students, as well as graduates, talked with respect, gratitude and admiration about their

professors, the departmental culture, and the learning environment. They confirmed that their teachers are committed, accessible, understanding, and ready to provide support and guidance. Overall, the high level of teaching, encouragement, and advising provided by faculty members is evident and highly appreciated by the students.

III. Conclusions

The Department and the University provide encouragement and adequate opportunities for the professional development of the faculty, although there is room for improvement. All teaching staff should be commended for the firm commitment, concentrated effort, and enthusiasm in maintaining high-quality teaching and research despite the obstacles and difficulties created by limited resources and other external factors for which the Department cannot be blamed. It is pointed out that there is a collaborative climate in the Department built on, and reflecting, mutual respect and collegial spirit, not only among faculty members, but also between students and teaching staff.

Panel Judgement

Principle 5: Teaching staff of postgraduate study programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- The excellent collegial atmosphere in the Department and accessibility of faculty by the students should be maintained and further enhanced, as it is instrumental in sharing experiences and getting feedback.
- Faculty members could intensify their efforts and enhance their high-quality research output, especially by publishing in international peer-reviewed journals and publishing houses.
- The Department and the University could seek ways and means to provide further support to faculty members to enhance research and intensify their efforts for attracting external funding, especially through international and European projects. This is in line with the broader need to address the general systemic problem of an inadequately funded public university system.

PRINICPLE 6: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER THE TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS OF THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMME. THEY SHOULD –ON THE ONE HAND- PROVIDE SATISFACTORY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORT, AND – ON THE OTHER HAND- FACILITATE DIRECT ACCESS TO THEM BY ESTABLISHING INTERNAL RULES TO THIS END (E.G. LECTURE ROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, NETWORKS, NETWORKS, CAREER AND SOCIAL POLICY SERVICES ETC.).

Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient resources and means, on a planned and long-term basis, to support learning and academic activity in general, so as to offer PSP students the best possible level of studies. The above means include facilities such as the necessary general and more specialised libraries and possibilities for access to electronic databases, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, IT and communication services, support and counselling services.

When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed students, students with disabilities), in addition to the shift towards student-centred learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the institutional context. However, the internal quality assurance proves -on the one hand- the quantity and quality of the available facilities and services, and -on the other hand- that students are aware of all available services.

In delivering support services, the role of support and administration staff is crucial and therefore this segment of staff needs to be qualified and have opportunities to develop its competences.

Documentation

- *Detailed description of the infrastructure and services made available by the Institution to the academic unit for the PSP, to support learning and academic activity (human resources, infrastructure, services, etc.) and the corresponding firm commitment of the Institution to financially cover these infrastructure-services from state or other resources*
- *Administrative support staff of the PSP (job descriptions, qualifications and responsibilities)*
- *Informative / promotional material given to students with reference to the available services*
- *Tuition utilisation plan (if applicable)*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Programme effectively aligns with this Principle, possessing the essential infrastructure and an adequate staff complement for seamless operations. Additionally, services are readily accessible and well-communicated, both during the new student orientation ceremony and through various other communication channels.

II. Analysis

The University provides the necessary infrastructure to support the Programme, encompassing lecture rooms, laboratories, a library, and study areas, ensuring convenient access to all essential services for students. Notably, the infrastructure has become more accommodating to individuals with special needs due to recent construction improvement in classrooms and restrooms. This improvement has substantially elevated the overall experience and fosters inclusivity. Ongoing endeavours are in place to further cater to individuals with special needs, including blueprints to extend accessibility features like elevators. It is worth mentioning that lecture rooms are equipped with essential IT equipment, although not all consistently maintain technological readiness, occasionally requiring faculty members to provide their laptops and projectors as needed. Information about the Programme's services is efficiently communicated through multiple channels, including the website, the Study Guide, orientation activities for new students, and the ongoing guidance and support from the academic advisor. The University library stands out as one of Greece's top-tier academic repositories, boasting an extensive collection of printed and electronic books, journals, and seamless access to numerous other libraries and electronic databases. This wealth of resources significantly enriches the study materials available to students and even attracts scholars from other universities. Additionally, students have access to one of the three available laboratories to support their academic growth. Administrative and support staff are highly responsive to student needs, maintaining efficient communication channels. Remarkably, the Programme is free of charge for all students. The operating costs are covered by the regular budget of the University. The Programme accepts donations and sponsorships from external entities, resources from research projects funded by the European Union and other international organizations.

III. Conclusions

The Programme effectively fulfils the requirements of this Principle by offering a well-equipped infrastructure and ample staff support. The Institution's commitment to enhancing facilities through recent renovations and plans for improved accessibility demonstrates a dedication to student welfare. While lecture rooms promote interactive learning, considerations for larger spaces and consistent IT equipment are warranted. Communication channels are robust, and the University's exceptional library and laboratory resources enhance the academic experience. The Programme's tuition-free nature, sustained through diverse funding sources, is commendable.

Panel Judgement

Principle 6: Learning resources and student support	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Enhance proactive communication of available student services.
- Install permanent electronic equipment in lecture rooms to streamline class preparation and minimize technical issues.
- Explore the utilization of more spacious rooms already at the Programme's disposal.
- Explore opportunities to simplify and accelerate the process of acquiring new books for the library.
- Enhance or renew existing facilities to create a more functional, attractive, and high-quality learning environment and experience for students.

PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

INSTITUTIONS BEAR FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTING, ANALYSING AND USING INFORMATION, AIMED AT THE EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED ACTIVITIES, IN AN INTEGRATED, EFFECTIVE AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE WAY.

Institutions are expected to establish and operate an information system for the management and monitoring of data concerning students, teaching staff, course structure and organisation, teaching and provision of services to students.

Reliable data is essential for accurate information and decision-making, as well as for identifying areas of smooth operation and areas for improvement. Effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on postgraduate study programmes and other activities feed data into the internal system of quality assurance.

The information collected depends, to some extent, on the type and mission of the Institution. The following are of interest:

- *key performance indicators*
- *student population profile*
- *student progression, success, and drop-out rates*
- *student satisfaction with their programmes*
- *availability of learning resources and student support*

A number of methods may be used to collect information. It is important that students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.

Documentation

- *Report from the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) at the level of the Institution, the department, and the PSP*
- *Operation of an information management system for the collection of administrative data for the implementation of the PSP (Students' Record)*
- *Other tools and procedures designed to collect data on the academic and administrative functions of the academic unit and the PSP*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

Through the online application students can make course registrations per semester, they can also receive a detailed list of their grades. The Student Registry enables the collection of a large amount of statistical information concerning the structure of the Postgraduate Studies Programme, the staff and students (indicatively: number, grade, gender, faculty members, at any time intervals, number of registered students by gender and age, etc.). In addition, information from the students themselves is obtained through the relevant course evaluation questionnaires, which they complete during the 8th week of each semester.

The data resulting from the information flows described above are considered in the formulation of the Annual Internal Evaluation of the MSc. Finally, from the academic year 2022-23, a questionnaire was sent to the graduates of the MSc to collect and analyse data on

their professional career and the role of postgraduate studies in it, with the aim of a possible review of the choices regarding the curriculum and the methods and practices of teaching.

The website of the Department and the MSc includes updated information about the teaching, administrative, laboratory and research staff. The administrative staff follows the annual evaluation procedure provided for by the relevant legislation, which is carried out through an electronic platform ("e-evaluation").

The analyses of the selected information and the resulting conclusions are used, depending on their subject matter, by the competent committees and bodies of the Department (the Department Assembly, the OMEA, etc.). The committees are obliged to take these reports explicitly into account in order to substantiate their recommendations.

II. Analysis

The institution's data collection and analysis methodologies appear comprehensive, potentially offering valuable insights for decision-making. The practice of involving students and staff in the process adds a layer of authenticity to the collected data, promoting transparency. Using various data sources contributes to an overarching understanding of the Programme's performance. These practices likely assist in highlighting both strengths and areas needing improvement, supporting an evidence-based approach to Programme enhancement.

Students and lecturers are provided with all the information on the operation and activities of the MSc, including the Study Guide, regulations, announcements, etc. Information on the administration of the Department, the structure of the MSc, information on the assessments and accreditations, the units and services, the history, mission and operation of the Department, research that is conducted, etc.

III. Conclusions

The Department's adherence to Principle 7 is evident. The dedication towards collecting, analysing, and utilizing data for the continuous improvement of the Programme is apparent. The comprehensive and inclusive information management system assures quality and informs decisions. The Programme appears to use information management as a critical part of its strategy to maintain standards and support student success.

Panel Judgement

Principle 7: Information management	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

While a feedback loop appears to be in place, the Committee would have liked to see more evidence of how the data collection has impacted on the improvement of the Programme curriculum and teaching practices.

PRINCIPLE 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES IN A DIRECT AND READILY ACCESSIBLE WAY. THE RELEVANT INFORMATION SHOULD BE UP-TO-DATE, OBJECTIVE AND CLEAR.

Information on the Institutions' activities is useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders, and the public.

Therefore, Institutions and their academic units must provide information about their activities, including the PSP they offer, the intended learning outcomes, the degrees awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures applied, the pass rates, and the learning opportunities available to their students. Information is also provided on the employment perspectives of PSP graduates.

Documentation

- *Dedicated segment on the website of the department for the promotion of the PSP*
- *Bilingual version of the PSP website with complete, clear and objective information*
- *Provision for website maintenance and updating*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department maintains a dedicated section on its website specifically for this Programme. This website provides a wealth of information about the Programme, encompassing details regarding its intended learning outcomes, degrees awarded, pass rates, and the career prospects of graduates. The website is bilingual, offering content in both English and Greek, thereby broadening its accessibility to a more diverse audience. However, there is still room for improvement with respect to the bilingual information on the website, as the current version seems to have more extensive content in Greek in comparison to the English version.

II. Analysis

The Programme has successfully managed to address the essential components of Principle 8. Its website provides a clear, objective, and up-to-date overview of the Programme, catering to the informational needs of a diverse audience, including prospective students, graduates, and other interested parties. The bilingual content promotes inclusivity and wider accessibility. However, there are some areas that leave room for improvement. Notably, the English version of the website lacks the "Secretary" section in the menu, which is of high importance as it includes the "Announcements", and in certain instances, the English version falls short in terms of information compared to the Greek counterpart. While acknowledging the importance of financial resources in implementing radical website changes, it is recommended to consider the inclusion of a community section. This section could feature employers, social partners, and alumni testimonials, shedding light on their experiences and career growth, and fostering a stronger sense of community and engagement among Programme stakeholders.

III. Conclusions

The Department's dedicated website section for the Programme effectively addresses the requirements of Principle 8. It provides comprehensive information, including learning

outcomes, degrees, pass rates, and career prospects, with the added benefit of bilingual content for enhanced accessibility. However, there is room for improvement, particularly in achieving better bilingual parity and addressing the absence of the "Secretary" section in the English version. To further enrich the Programme's online presence and community engagement, considering the inclusion of testimonials from employers, social partners, and alumni is recommended.

Panel Judgement

Principle 8: Public information concerning the postgraduate study programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Maintain coherence and consistency in information across all website elements.
- Consider adding a community section with testimonials from employers, social partners, and alumni to enhance engagement and community-building.
- Explore options for modernizing and updating the website.

PRINCIPLE 9: ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC INTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS AND ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR THE AUDIT AND ANNUAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF THEIR POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES, SO AS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES SET FOR THEM, THROUGH MONITORING AND POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS, WITH A VIEW TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

The regular monitoring, review, and revision of postgraduate study programmes aim at maintaining the level of educational provision and creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

The above comprise the evaluation of:

- a) the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the PSP is up to date*
 - b) the changing needs of society*
 - c) the students' workload, progression and completion of the postgraduate studies*
 - d) the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students*
 - e) the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
 - f) the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the PSP in question*
- Postgraduate study programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date.*

Documentation

- *Procedure for the re-evaluation, redefinition and updating of the PSP curriculum*
- *Procedure for mitigating weaknesses and upgrading the structure of the PSP and the learning process*
- *Feedback processes concerning the strategy and quality goal setting of the PSP and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*
- *Results of the annual internal evaluation of the PSP by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), and the relevant minutes*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The most recent internal evaluation of the Programme was carried out in the academic year 2021-2022 under the responsibility of the OMEA. The appropriateness of the structure and overall organization of the Programme is ensured through the application of clearly defined evaluation criteria and review procedures. The General Assembly is responsible for the approval of the Programme. In formulating quality and monitoring policies, input and feedback are taken into account from: internal evaluation reports; student observations, comments and evaluations; input from alumni and external bodies; and developments in the academic field. The self-assessment, the external evaluation, the MODIP indicators, the questionnaires of students and consultation with Departmental committees are key sources of input and feedback for the on-going monitoring and periodic review of the Programme. The outcomes of self-assessment are properly recorded, analysed, shared and utilized, especially in formulating and communicating recommendations and action plans.

II. Analysis

Constant efforts are made to review and revise the Programme to ensure that it is up-to-date and in line with the latest research and pedagogical approaches. Revisions are also aimed at harmonizing its objectives and content with students' needs and expectations, maintaining international standards and following best practices. They also take into consideration the changing needs of society and the expectations of students who provide evaluations of courses and faculty, as well as the overall learning environment.

III. Conclusions

The Panel is convinced that the commitment of the Department and the on-going internal monitoring and evaluation ensure that high quality teaching and research are firm and clear objectives embedded in the Programme. All actions taken are communicated to all parties and stakeholders concerned. Overall, the internal quality assurance system in place works efficiently in monitoring, updating and promoting the continuous improvement of the Programme.

Panel Judgement

Principle 9: On-going monitoring and periodic internal evaluation of postgraduate study programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP may wish to consider having a more structured procedure – such as scheduled meetings and time-frames – to ensure that on-going monitoring and periodic reviews are sustained and further enhanced.

PRINCIPLE 10: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY PANELS OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HAHE, AIMING AT ACCREDITATION. THE TERM OF VALIDITY OF THE ACCREDITATION IS DETERMINED BY HAHE.

HAHE is responsible for administrating the PSP accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by panels of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, based on the Reports delivered by the panels of external experts, with a specific term of validity, following to which, revision is required. The quality accreditation of the PSP acts as a means for the determination of the degree of compliance of the programme to the Standards, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees. Both academic units and Institutions must consistently consider the conclusions and the recommendations submitted by the panels of experts for the continuous improvement of the programme.

Documentation

- *Progress report of the PSP in question, on the results from the utilisation of possible recommendations included in the External Evaluation Report of the Institution, and in the IQAS Accreditation Report, with relation to the postgraduate study programmes*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

This Programme has not been externally evaluated before. During the current external review, all stakeholders were actively engaged. The Department and the University worked diligently in preparing materials, presentations, as well as in organizing and hosting the virtual meetings with the Panel. All the meetings included presentations, discussions, and question and answer sessions. The Panel had the opportunity to meet, talk, and interact with all the participants of all meetings. The discussions were very constructive and fruitful and were conducted in a cooperative manner and attitude. The efficiency and eagerness of the Department to answer questions and provide additional information and clarifications during the meetings are worth noting.

II. Analysis

Based on the materials submitted and the information gathered during the online presentations and discussions, it appears that all members of staff (teaching and administrative), as well as students, alumni and other stakeholders are aware of the importance of external review, its usefulness and the contribution it can make in improving the Programme. Throughout the current external evaluation process, it was convincingly demonstrated that the University and the Department are committed to the letter, spirit and process of quality assurance and external review. There is already in place a step-by-step action plan for utilizing the findings and recommendations of the external evaluation. As they pointed out during the meetings, it will help them become better by enabling them to identify any problematic areas and find suitable solutions.

III. Conclusions

It is the impression of the Panel that the Department and the University are committed to external evaluation as a key component of a quality assurance system. They worked diligently to facilitate the current review and meet its objectives. Overall, their positive approach toward quality assurance and external review is expected to have a positive impact on the Programme and contribute to its continuous improvement. However, more tangible results and a more meaningful assessment regarding this Principle will be possible when a second external evaluation is carried out.

Panel Judgement

Principle 10: Regular external evaluation of postgraduate study programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Maintain and further enhance the existing positive attitude toward the external review process, its findings, and recommendations.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- The Programme is free of charge; no fees are paid by the students.
- Meritocracy, impartiality, transparency, and accountability.
- Student-centred pedagogical approach to teaching and learning.
- Excellent collegial atmosphere in the Department.
- High quality of faculty.
- Accessibility of faculty by the students which is instrumental in sharing experiences and getting feedback.
- Departmental strategy encouraging and ensuring that students complete the Programme on time.
- Positive attitude toward the internal and external review process.

II. Areas of Weakness

- Lack of specific “required readings,” which are not indicated in the syllabi of some of the courses.
- Rather long list of elective courses.
- Limited sources to support research, which is in line with the broader need to address the general systemic problem of an inadequately funded public university system.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Seek ways and means to improve response rates in course evaluations by students.
- Explore options for improving, modernizing, and updating the website.
- Intensify efforts to attract external funding, especially through international and European projects.
- Enhance or renew existing facilities, including electronic equipment, to create a more functional, attractive, and high-quality learning environment for students.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **1 and 2.**

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

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: **None.**

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

1. Professor Emeritus Joseph Joseph (Chair)

University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

2. Professor Apostolis Papakostas

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