



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Accreditation Report for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

**Southeast European Studies: Politics, History, Economics (formerly
Southeast European Studies)**

**Department: Political Science and Public Administration
Institution: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens**

Date: 21 November 2023

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Postgraduate Study Programme of **Southeast European Studies: Politics, History, Economics (formerly Southeast European Studies)** of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens** for the purposes of granting accreditation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part A: Background and Context of the Review	5
I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel	5
II. Review Procedure and Documentation.....	6
III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile	8
Part B: Compliance with the Principles	9
PRINCIPLE 1: QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND QUALITY GOAL SETTING FOR THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT	9
PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES	12
PRINCIPLE 3: STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT	15
PRINCIPLE 4: STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AND CERTIFICATION	18
PRINCIPLE 5: TEACHING STAFF OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES.....	22
PRINCIPLE 6: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT	25
PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT.....	29
PRINCIPLE 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES.....	32
PRINCIPLE 9: ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC INTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES	34
PRINCIPLE 10: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES.....	37
Part C: Conclusions.....	38
I. Features of Good Practice	38
II. Areas of Weakness	39
III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions	39
IV. Summary & Overall Assessment.....	40

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 **Southeast European Studies: Politics, History, Economics (formerly Southeast European Studies)** of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens** comprised the following five

(5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. JOSEPH JOSEPH (Chair)

University of Cyprus (Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου)

2. HATZIMIHAIL

NIKITAS University
of Cyprus

3. LEKAKI EVA

University of
Piraeus

4. PAPAETHYMIΟΥ SOPHIE

Sciences Po Lyon

5. TSAROUHAS

DIMITRIS
Georgetown
University

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In reviewing the Postgraduate Study Programme of Southeast European Studies: Politics, History, Economics of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, the objectives of the Panel, as described in the Guidelines for the Members of the EEAP, are, among others:

- 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, Webex and Zoom platforms) meetings and visits for two days as follows:

On Monday, 06/11/2023, 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, 07/11/2023, 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 at 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

This is a one-year intensive interdisciplinary M.Sc. Programme taught in English. It was the first postgraduate programme in the English language at the University of Athens. It aims to provide in-depth knowledge of the political, economic, social, and cultural realities of the region. Originally it was founded as an MA programme in Southeast European Studies during the Kosovo crisis in 1999, at a time of violent upheaval in Southeastern Europe. It was initially created as part of the Royaumont Process with the aim of contributing to the promotion of peace, democracy, and reconciliation in the region. In its first years it was supported by the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe. Today it is an autonomous Programme of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens which is the oldest University in Greece and the Balkans. The Programme offers courses which are consistent with its interdisciplinary nature and the University's and the Department's overall objectives. Basically, it aims to provide a thorough and multi-disciplinary understanding of the key historical, social, political, economic, and cultural issues of Southeastern Europe. It is primarily addressed to graduates in the social sciences and humanities (politics, sociology, economics, social anthropology, political and social history, Balkan studies, journalism, etc.).

In addition to its academic goals, the Programme aims to promote discussion about and awareness of the Southeast European region, as well as mutual understanding and good neighbourly relations. Throughout its existence, the Programme has maintained a strong international character as it aims to facilitate cross-border academic and scientific cooperation by bringing together students from the region and beyond. Thirty students are admitted each year. The Programme currently charges tuition fees of € 3,600. Fee waivers and internships are available. During the period 1999-2023, 579 students from 43 countries have attended the Programme. For the completion of the Programme, 75 ECTS are required, which are distributed as follows: 60 ECTS equally distributed between the Winter and Spring semester (30 for each semester). In each semester, students choose 3 optional courses from the 5 offered. Each course counts for 10 ECTS. During the Summer period, students are required to write and submit a thesis which counts for 15 ECTS. 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 their fields.

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

The material supplied outlines a comprehensive and detailed Quality Assurance Policy for the Programme. It aligns with the broader Quality Policy of EKPA. The policy details the structure and organization of the Programme,

emphasizing its alignment with institutional goals. The Programme aims to align learning outcomes with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education - level 7.

Concrete quality objectives are set for the Programme's improvement, on an annual basis. The policy provides for regular need assessments to gauge the demand for qualifications in the job market. Support services, including administrative services, are emphasized. The efficient utilization of financial resources is outlined. An annual review and audit are conducted in cooperation with the University's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).

II. Analysis

The policy is well-aligned with the broader institutional quality assurance policy, fulfilling the requirement for strategic coherence and alignment between the University, the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, and the Programme evaluated. Panel interviews revealed a detailed and focus-oriented approach in attempting to reach the said objectives, and a worthy attempt to aim at achievable key performance indicators (KPIs) that flow from the goals of the Programme. This allows for an overall quality assurance policy which adopts and incorporates internationally recognized practices. The fact that the policy allows for annual reviews is important, since it allows for rapid adjustment to shifting demands and the revisiting of set goals according to changing circumstances.

III. Conclusions

The Quality Assurance Policy for the Programme is a robust framework that aligns well with institutional goals. The KPIs set are realistic and based on a pragmatic assessment of the needs and demands of the Programme as well as the institutional environment within which the Programme operates. Moreover, the Quality Assurance Policy covers all essential aspects, from budgetary management to curriculum revision and administrative support. The policy also allows for adaptability, with provisions for annual reviews and

updates.

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	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Transparency: While the policy is publicized online, efforts should be made to ensure that it is easily accessible, perhaps through multiple platforms.
- Communication: student satisfaction levels, as gauged by Panel interviews with alumni, are very high indeed. The views and feedback of alumni, possibly through a relevant survey, could play a role in future version of the Programme's quality assurance policy aims and objectives.

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*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

This development of the PSP's study Programme has followed an organic process. Documentation demonstrates that a well-defined procedure is in place for updating the Programme. The academic profile, orientation of the Programme, research character, scientific objectives, specific subject areas, and specialisations are described in the Programme documents. The expected learning outcomes are determined based on the European and National Qualifications Framework (EQF, NQF), and the Dublin Descriptors for level 7. There are tools in place to measure the expected learning outcomes and the feedback of the learning process. Based on the feedback by students, external stakeholders and alumni, the Programme is found to be oriented towards building and deepening knowledge across various fields and perspectives and acquiring the corresponding skills to apply the said knowledge. The design of the Programme, as illustrated also by its evolution, has taken into account the experience of external stakeholders, notably academia, the policy community and, to a lesser extent, the business sector.

II. Analysis

The Programme was launched in 1999, as part of an EU-funded academic network and relaunched in 2014, and again in 2019, when it acquired its current longer title, which underlines its present-day interdisciplinary ambitions. The Programme is designed in a way that ensures versatility and a significant degree of flexibility to enrolled students, who can choose 3 of 5 courses offered each semester thus achieving a certain level of informal specialisation. The procedure for developing the Programme is well-defined, and the academic profile and orientation of the Programme are clearly outlined in the Programme documentation. The expected learning outcomes are determined based on the EQF, NQF, and the Dublin Descriptors for level 7. The Programme's goals appear to be met by the measurable objectives introduced in the various modules. The Programme has benefited from student feedback including student evaluations, as well as from the alumni survey conducted in 2020. The Programme did benefit also from consultation with external stakeholders and international academic networks with which the Programme and its staff are connected. Such consultation, however, is not yet institutionalised and regularised in a manner that produces tangible and recordable results.

III. Conclusions

The Programme is fully compliant with all standards. Its academic profile and

orientation are clearly described. Appropriate mechanisms are in place to evaluate and design the further development of the Programme, including by measuring the expected learning outcomes and by soliciting and putting to use feedback of the learning process and the Programme's output.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Continue to develop clear, measurable criteria to ensure that reliable tools to measure the extent to which the Programme is attaining its goals are in place.
- Continue to develop measurable criteria and standards for the production of empirical evidence that can measure the goals of deepening knowledge and acquiring the corresponding skills
- Build further on existing informal good practices (and possibly formalise such good practices, if practicable).
- Institutionalise and regularise consultation with external stakeholders and alumni, building on the impressive global network of the Programme.

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 emphasizes in allowing students to tailor their academic path based on their interests through elective course choices and faculty guidance. Additionally, the

Programme values student feedback, as evident through regular course evaluations. The relationships between students and faculty are characterized by functionality and accessibility, both throughout their studies and in the context of thesis preparation. Its unique international character is what makes it exceptional and differentiates it from all other programmes offered in Greece, and it is definitely one of the key factors to its success and maintenance for almost 25 years.

II. Analysis

This is an interdisciplinary, English taught Programme, with a multicultural student body. Due to its international character it both attracts and benefits students from a variety of different backgrounds and disciplines resulting in a high rate of international student enrolment. It is remarkable that it does not only target and attract students from the Southeast European region but globally. It respects and embraces diversity experientially and not just in theory. This along with the fact that it also hosts international students, through several other initiatives such as Eurosud and CIVIS further contributes to building a strong network among students on a global scale.

The Programme is offered full-time with the possibility of distance education in exceptional circumstances, following the respective legislation. Although there are many working students and the Programme is quite intensive, from their perspective, there is no need for a part-time option as it is convenient to finish their studies within a year and appeals to foreign students who have to relocate. Anyway, courses start after 4 pm, serving those who have work responsibilities too. In addition, there is concern by the NKUA to include people with disabilities in the learning process. More precisely, it maintains an electronic platform, where it is possible to post educational material per course, which may include notes, presentations, exercises, indicative solutions thereof, as well as recorded lectures. The Programme offers five courses per semester, all of which are electives. Students are given a timeframe of two weeks to attend all courses and decide the three ones they will attend. This flexibility enables them to personalize and specialize their studies according to their academic interests and gives them a sense of autonomy and control over their learning.

The faculty effectively combines theoretical knowledge with practical application through the use of examples, promoting critical thinking within the coursework. Many courses are designed in a seminar style, where students are encouraged to actively participate in discussions and are required to prepare and study the material in advance. According to feedback from students and graduates, faculty members are accessible, offering guidance and support not only during the academic year but also throughout the thesis preparation process. Professors also endeavour to keep their courses up to date by actively monitoring ongoing changes and updates. They concentrate their research efforts on these evolving topics to enhance the quality of education and better serve the needs of their students. Assessment criteria are also known and clearly defined to students in advance in the course outline document.

Regulations for addressing student complaints and appeals, as well as the role of Academic Advisors, are firmly established. The Programme places great

importance on gathering student feedback, regularly conducting surveys to assess the quality and effectiveness of teaching. This feedback is taken seriously and plays a pivotal role in shaping the Programme, alongside ongoing updates, and recent developments in the field of Southeast Europe, which also contribute to any necessary adjustments.

III. Conclusions

The Programme displays a strong commitment to delivering a flexible curriculum that caters to the unique interests and academic profiles of its students. Current students and graduates alike praise the exceptional guidance and support provided by their thesis supervisors. Furthermore, the Programme places emphasis on student feedback, regularly conducting course evaluations and implementing surveys for alumni to enhance the feedback collection process. The Programme's well-established academic advising, and student appeals systems are substantiated by relevant documentation. In summary, it wholeheartedly embraces flexibility and a student-centred approach. Notably, students find the Programme's educational experience to be authentic, particularly in comparison to their previous university experiences. Undoubtedly, this Programme is a remarkable and robust educational offering that deserves support to ensure its continued existence and preserve its unique character and competitive edge in the higher education landscape.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Consider introducing a research methodology seminar, offered at the Programme, Department, or institutional level. This course, optionally provided by the University's library, can serve those seeking additional guidance and skill enhancement in research.
- It is recommended that alumni surveys be conducted every three years to better assess

the Programme's effectiveness, which can aid in continuous Programme improvement and alignment with evolving industry demands.

- Consider ways of boosting participation rates for the course evaluation, to gather a more comprehensive understanding of students' views on teaching quality.
- Explore the possibility of offering teaching assistants roles in exchange for fee waivers. This can provide a win-win scenario, with students honing their research skills while helping teachers manage their workload. Additionally, it can give instructors access to valuable resources in the Balkan countries, leveraging the native language proficiency of the students.

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 Programme has a comprehensive study guide and an up-to-date website for prospective applicants. It covers course details, admission procedures, and various aspects, including assignment and thesis guidelines. The Internal Regulation provides even more procedures in detail. Tuition is currently 3600 euros, with exemptions for eligible students. Progress is monitored, and the Programme adheres to ECTS standards. Thesis preparation receives strong guidance and support, with many pursuing Ph.D. opportunities. Graduates are recognized for their expertise in Southeast European matters, and they often continue research in the region. Active participation in conferences and events is encouraged and promoted. Due to limited resources, administrative support for internships and mobility remains unaddressed.

II. Analysis

Prospective applicants and interested parties can access comprehensive information about the Programme through the study guide and the Programme's website. The study guide not only offers insights into course outlines, thesis preparation, and the application process but also provides practical information about studying at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA). It is a valuable resource that ensures individuals have access to all the necessary information from the beginning of their

studies to graduation. The Internal Regulation for the operation of the Programme outlines examination processes, grading methods, admission details, student rights and obligations, and the procedure for thesis preparation in great detail.

When it comes to internships and mobility, the Internal Internship Regulation of the Department and the Erasmus Student Charter of the University can be used accordingly. Unfortunately, due to Programme under-funding and resource limitations, there is currently not enough administrative staff to fully support these activities, although all involved parties recognize their added value to the Programme.

The tuition fees for the Programme currently amounts to 3600 euros, but fee waivers are available for students from the Western Balkans, Romania, and Bulgaria. Fee waivers are also possible for those who meet socio-economic criteria as defined by legislation, with the overall amount not exceeding 30% of the Programme's student body.

The Faculty diligently monitors students' progress throughout all semesters, maintaining attendance records with allowances for up to two absences. The Programme's adherence to the principles and rules of the European Credit Accumulation and Transfer Systems (ECTS) is integrated into the curriculum, ensuring a standardized credit system across the Programme's offerings. Upon successful completion of the Programme (75 ECTS), students receive a diploma issued in English, a validation of which is confirmed through the degree award template.

In terms of thesis preparation, participants receive strong support from their professors. Many choose to pursue a Ph.D. after completing the Programme. Stakeholders and partners recognize the Programme's effectiveness in enhancing research skills and preparing graduates for both the job market and academic research.

Feedback from graduates and external stakeholders, including employers and social partners, affirms graduates' expertise in the field and their ability to address Southeast European issues. Notably, a majority of graduates continue to conduct region-focused research in their careers. Additionally, active participation in conferences and events is strongly encouraged and supported by both the faculty and the Programme, diligently disseminated throughout the Programme's website too.

III. Conclusions

Conclusively, the Programme stands as a testament to its resilience and progress over the past 24 years, boasting a well-established and structured foundation. With all the essential documents and regulations firmly in place, it ensures comprehensive information and unwavering support for students across every phase and aspect of their academic journey.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Ensure the accuracy of the fee amount in the studyguide.
- Utilize the Programme's active alumni network within the same field of study to enhance the learning experience by potentially offering practical lectures and valuable insights.
- Seek ways and means to support the Programme so that it can facilitate student mobility and internship opportunities, further improving the overall quality of education and enhancing their practical skills, thereby better preparing them for the competitive job market and contributing to economic growth and innovation.

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 of Political Science and Public Administration in which the Programme is offered, 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. All of them are Ph.D. holders, active researchers, productive scholars, and dedicated teachers. Visiting professors from other countries and institutions, as well as guest speakers, deliver lectures and participate in teaching and other academic activities of the Programme and the Department. 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 that meet international standards. There is enthusiasm

and skills 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 and Programme culture, and the learning environment. They confirmed that their teachers are committed, accessible, understanding, and ready to provide support and guidance. Overall, the teaching, encouragement and advising provided by faculty members are 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 their 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 and the University cannot be blamed. It is pointed out that there is a collaborative climate in the Department and the Programme 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 collegiate atmosphere in the Department and the Programme 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 and duty of the State to address the general systemic problem of an

inadequately funded public university system.

PRINCIPLE 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

Teaching and research activities take place at the Programme's premises, downtown Athens. The classroom and the Programme's own Library and reading spaces are located in the same building, near the city's historical centre. The Administrative building is nearby. Pictures and videos provided to the Panel show the classroom and the surrounding area. No virtual visit of the library was presented. Relying on the submitted Accreditation Proposal, the Panel confirms the library's wealth in books (including books dating from the 19th century) and reviews, as well as its adequate equipment in computers and other facilities for the students, with special consideration for those with visual and higher limb mobility disabilities. Access to digital libraries and databases is ensured by the connection of the students with several international resources: IT rooms, as well as an electronic account, V.P.N., Webex and Unitron are among the services provided to students.

Besides the Programme's own library, students have access to those of other programmes located in the same building, as well as that of the School of Economics and Political Science. Inter-library loans are also ensured. The ISO Centre of the Institution is located in the same building.

It is clear from the Accreditation Proposal and the discussions with the students that the Programme, the Department and the Institution provide all kinds of support services. There is a career counselling office and a student welfare office, as well as a University restaurant, sport facilities, medical care etc.; services are located either within walking distance from the Programme's premises or at the premises of the Institution, all of them being serviced by public transport. Special services are offered to international students. Adequate information is provided by the students' guide and the SEE Handbook. A student advisor is appointed for each student, who may also have access to the services of the Synigoros tou Foititi. No information was provided about the students' use of the different advisory Services.

A complete and comprehensive student guide, special guides for each course and a SEE Handbook are provided each year, containing information about the Programme, the available services, and life in Athens.

It appears from the discussions during the meetings that the Director spends her own research time searching for funds in order to cope with the scarcity of financial means. The Programme reports serious understaffing of the Secretariat. There is only one person employed under a part time contract, assuming all the different tasks. The Panel was informed during the meetings that the Programme functions properly thanks to the Secretary's high qualification, commitment, and professionalism, as well as excessive workload. The Programme's accreditation Proposal does not contain information regarding the extent to which physical access to all teaching and reading spaces is available to disabled students. The Panel urges the Programme to pay attention to all kinds of disabilities (e.g. lower limb mobility problems, hearing problems) and make available to the concerned persons all necessary help.

II. Analysis

The Panel is satisfied with the infrastructure and functioning of the various services. Pictures of a World Atlas on the classroom walls are characteristic of the Programme's international identity. Discussions with the students during the meeting revealed their enthusiasm with the smooth functioning of all services and with the commitment and professionalism of both the academic and administrative staff. The Programme confirmed that the Secretary is highly qualified and professional, experienced in European Programmes and mastering perfectly the English language. However, it is not easy for the Secretary to assume the numerous tasks alone under a part-time contract. The educational needs of the Programme as well as the multiplicity of demands and the heterogeneity of the international students' needs (from visa and degree recognition formalities to housing and to finding work for the students who

cannot afford the cost of living in Athens) cannot be fully served by a part time Secretary.

The Programme has provided a detailed description of the infrastructure and services which have been made available by the Institution to the Department for the Programme, to support learning and academic activity (human resources, infrastructure, services, etc.). The Institution is meant to cover the cost of the infrastructure services from state resources; however, student fees are the Programme's main income; 30% of the fees' entire amount is wired to the Institution.

Used for covering the Programme's needs and the salaries of visiting professors and external advisors, these fees are insufficient but should not be further increased. The Programme needs generous financing from the State in order to attract more Greek and international students and to offer more scholarships on social criteria, so that no student has to work while studying. Competition with other Programmes offering similar training is very high and will be aggravated by the future creation of a Collège d' Europe Annex in Tirana, Albania which will offer scholarships to enrolled students.

III. Conclusions

The Panel recommends that the State pays attention to the administrative staff needs and provide necessary funds to remedy it. The Programme needs additional staffing in order to alleviate the workload of the Director and the Secretary. The Director should not sacrifice her research to management in order to cope with the various needs of the Programme. It is regrettable that there is only one single part-time contracted person who assumes the various administrative tasks. It is critical for the State to acknowledge the Secretary's competence, professionalism and workload and offer her a permanent full-time appointment, as well as assistance by hiring additional staff.

The Library's opening hours should be extended during the week and Saturdays. The traditionally restricted opening hours of the various University departmental libraries as well as of the Hellenic National Library, the optional attendance of classes in human and social sciences and smoking habits of previous generations of students are at the origin of this lack of awareness about the benefit of the library facilities. Nowadays, the weekly overload of students by the high number of teaching hours and the online information and accesses to resources keep the students away from the Library. This lack of culture frustrates the international students and gives them a negative image of the Hellenic academic system. The Panel understands that the extension of the opening hours requires additional library and security staff, it therefore urges the State to make the Library opening hours a priority and provide adequate funds.

The Programme is international and multicultural. Language courses, including Greek, are offered to the students. Well-known international practices (e-

classes in both Greek and English, Orientation meetings, orientation weeks for the choice of classes, farewell parties in the city's historic places and institutions) are part of the Programme, proving its seriousness, openness, and cosmopolitanism. The Programme functions thanks to human investment, in spite of the lack of funds. All services function properly so as to satisfy the students' needs.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Funding by the State is necessary for the proper functioning of the administration and the improvement of the staff's working conditions. Both the Director and the Secretary should be assisted by additional staff.
- Extension of the Library's opening hours during the working week and on Saturdays.
- The Programme's cosmopolitan profile and multicultural character are highly regarded by the students. The Panel shares the students' enthusiasm and recommends further development of the academic activities with the creation of Summer schools, open to new candidates having a broader spectrum of interests.
- Distance learning by short term workshops on topics of contemporary interest is also recommended. This requires additional assistance for the academic and administrative staff.
- The Panel recommends the organisation of special career events for students, in which representatives of the public and private sectors, and distinguished alumni are participating. It also recommends that the Programme cooperates with the Diplomatic Missions of the students' countries of origin (mainly with the Embassy's Educational and Cultural Advisor) and the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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

The information system of the Programme is supported by UniTron, the centralized IT system of the University. The system manages all data relating to the student's academic status and performance, course scheduling and registration, and necessary logistical services for the delivery of the study Programme, such as classroom scheduling, electronic syllabi, grade recording, exam scheduling, and course evaluations.

Subsequently, data regarding the detailed student profile, completion and dropout rates is disaggregated and fed into the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) of HAHE annually. The annual report of HAHE is immediately accessible through the Programme's website. The Programme engages in systematic data gathering through the available student questionnaire and seeks to facilitate student participation in the Programme's annual internal evaluation.

II. Analysis

A large amount of data is aggregated by the Programme and its use could assist the process of improving teaching performance, research output and the timely graduation of students. The Programme uses existing data to improve and sets realistic goals based on existing data sources and as discussed above. There is little evidence of systematic data use pertaining to the Programme, whose feedback could be used to plan follow-up activities and improve its current structure and operation. It could also help disseminate activities and function as an "Ambassador" of a very successful, high value-added Programme. This is especially important in a highly competitive higher education environment.

III. Conclusions

The Programme is fully compliant with the Principle's expectations in terms of data collection and performance monitoring. It makes appropriate use of University-wide data information systems but also utilizes internal mechanisms.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Student questionnaire participation rates are relatively low. Acknowledging the inherent limitations that such questionnaires entail; Faculty could make an extra effort to encourage students to offer written anonymous feedback both midterm as well as at the end of term. This would allow Faculty to adjust their teaching mode and enhance the accountability of teaching.

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 Programme provides full opportunities to all interested parties to be informed, accurately and up to date, about the Programme itself, the course of study and activities relevant to the Programme.

II. Analysis

The Programme's website (<https://see.pspa.uoa.gr/>) is well-designed, kept up-to-date and includes all requisite and important information. The website includes information concerning the structure, organisation and operation of the Programme, the courses offered during each term and each course's instructor, basic information about the Programme's teaching staff and administrators (albeit no faculty contact information or office hours) and other information. The home page is fully bilingual, in Greek and English, and includes the last two Handbooks and all requisite documents on quality assurance. It is regularly updated, including the section on announcements and events (especially the English section), with a division into an "Announcements" and "Events" subsection and an additional subsection on "top picks". The Programme also links to very active -- and professional -- social media feeds, on LinkedIn and Facebook.

III. Conclusions

The publication of all requisite and useful information is immediate, complete, and regularly updated. It enables prospective students to learn about the Programme and make an informed decision, ongoing students to quickly look up vital information throughout the duration of the Programme and third parties (such as members of the policy community, prospective

employers, and alumni) to be informed about the Programme and make a reasonable decision.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Department should endeavour to maintain the high-quality standards of the Programme's bilingual home page.
- The web pages of individual teaching staff members should be expanded, including contact information (e-mail, office information) and perhaps additional academic information such as representative scholarship, research interests, areas of potential supervision of graduate research. If needed, links could be made to the Departmental home page in this regard.
- The Programme's home page might benefit from rearranging some of the material under the existing tabs: for example, some of the sub-sections under the "Home" tab could benefit from moving under "About" or into a second layer of tabs.
- More information on individual courses, while not strictly necessary, might benefit prospective and especially ongoing students.

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 Programme complies with the requirements as to its annual self-assessment process, handled at Unit level, and the provision of all relevant information to the QAU/MODIP for the Institution's own report to the Authority. The MODIP report confirms that the outcomes of the self-assessment are properly recorded and submitted to it. It also confirms that the findings of the self-assessment of the Programme have been shared within the academic unit. The teaching staff consists of ten faculty members as well as visiting professors/external advisors. The infrastructure and the teaching and administrative services are adequate, thanks to the staff's devotion and professionalism, and in spite of insufficient funding.

II. Analysis

The Programme fully meets the requirements of Principle 9 as to on-going monitoring and periodic internal evaluation. All procedures take place in due time, following the Institution's rules and according to the HAHE model. Self-assessment takes place regularly. The results are submitted to MODIP, which examines all relevant data, from course Syllabi to student questionnaires and to the Programme's self-assessment and aims. MODIP's annual examination is included in a report which is transmitted to the Institution's authorities. Special attention is paid to the teaching Programme as well as to the participation of all concerned persons in the procedures. In its latest annual evaluation MODIP has examined all relevant data, considered the Programme's achievements, especially the revision and updating of the curriculum by the creation of new courses; it has observed the weak points, determined the required preventive and corrective actions, and reflected on the Programme's initiatives for further and continuous improvement. Synergy between the Unit and the Institution is obvious in both the MODIP's report's conclusions and the achievements of the Programme.

III. Conclusions

All procedures comply with the rules and principles of the Internal System of Quality Insurance of the Institution. The Modip report is comprehensive, objective, and sharp. It adequately describes the Programme's strong points, mainly interdisciplinarity and openness, as well as the teaching and administrative staff's commitment to continuous improvement and students' success. It also sheds light on the weak points, mainly insufficient administrative staff and funding. The self-assessment leads to action plans that are communicated to the interested parties. This is the Panel's conclusion on the basis of the MODIP report. The Panel, however, is not informed about the implementation of the action plans.

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 Panel recommends the Programme communicates all reports to all stakeholders.

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 Programme, 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 at 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 and the staff supporting the Programme 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 Department and the Programme 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 faculty 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

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 and the University cannot be blamed. It is pointed out that there is a collaborative climate in the Department and the Programme built on, and reflecting, mutual respect and collegial spirit, not only among faculty members, but also between students and teaching staff.

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

- Positive attitude toward the internal and external review process.
- Student-centred pedagogical approach to teaching and learning.
- Excellent collegial atmosphere in the Programme and the Department.
- High quality of faculty.
- Transparency, meritocracy, impartiality, and accountability.
- 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.
- The Programme's cosmopolitan profile and multicultural character.
- Interdisciplinary Programme taught in English.

II. Areas of Weakness

- The Programme needs additional administrative staff. The Panel recommends that the State pays attention to the administrative staff needs and provide necessary funds to remedy them, especially by offering a permanent full-time appointment to the only secretary.
- Limited sources to support research, which is in line with the broader need and duty of the State to address the general systemic problem of an inadequately funded public university system.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Consider conducting regular surveys for collecting views and feedback from alumni that could play a role in updating and improving the Programme.
- Consider institutionalizing contacts and consultation with external stake holders and alumni and benefiting from the impressive global network of the Programme.
- Explore options for further improving, modernizing, and updating the website.
- Intensify efforts to attract external funding, especially through international and European projects.
- Consider ways of boosting participation rates for the course evaluation to gather a more comprehensive understanding of students' views on course and teaching quality.
- Ensure updating the annual Study Guide, especially the accuracy of figures such as the fee amount.
- Faculty members could possibly intensify their efforts to enhance their high-

quality research output, especially by publishing in international peer-reviewed journals and publishing houses.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.**

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

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

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University of Cyprus (Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου)

2. **HATZIMIHAIL
NIKITAS** University
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3. **LEKAKI EVA**
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4. **PAPAEFTHYMIΟΥ SOPHIE**
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