



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



**Εθνική Αρχή
Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης**
Hellenic Authority
for Higher Education

Αριστείδου 1 & Ευριπίδου 2 • 10559 Αθήνα | 1 Aristidou str. & 2 Evripidou str. • 10559 Athens, Greece
T. +30 210 9220 944 • **F.** +30 210 9220 143 • **E.** secretariat@ethaae.gr • www.ethaae.gr

Accreditation Report for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Business Administration (MBA)

Department: Economics
Institution: Democritus University of Thrace
Date: 2 December 2023

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of
the Postgraduate Study Programme of **Business Administration (MBA)** of
the **Democritus University of Thrace** 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 **Business Administration (MBA)** of the **Democritus University of Thrace** comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Prof. Andreas Efstathiades (Chair)**
European University Cyprus, Cyprus
- 2. Prof. Demetri Kantarelis**
Assumption University, United States of America
- 3. Prof. Dimitris Petmezas**
Durham Business School, Durham University, United Kingdom
- 4. Mr. Konstantinos-Panagiotis Fourkiotis**
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The Panel was put together by HAHE which consisted of the individuals named at the front of this report of which they are the authors. The visit was held remotely on 20th and 21st of November 2023. In preparation for this meeting, EEAP considered all the relevant documents that are required for the accreditation which is uploaded on ETHAE platform. Additional information requested by EEAP has been provided.

Prior to the visit the EEAP read all the provided material. The EEAP met on the evening of the first day to allocate tasks and identify areas that are needed to pay some further attention in. Overall, the information provided, and preparedness of the team was sufficient to conduct a thorough review of the department's and course progress and to provide a fair view on the degree to which it meets the accreditation requirements.

The visit took place remotely over two days during which we met with representatives from the following groups: teaching staff members, students, graduates, and employers & social partners. At the beginning and end of the visit, the EEAP met with the Head of the department, the director of the PSP Programme, the Steering Committee/OMEA members, MODIP members and staff, and the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs / President of MODIP. We were also provided with a video of the main facilities.

Overall, the EEAP were greeted warmly, and found the University team to be knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and well prepared

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The Master in Business Administration Programme of the department of Economics of the Democritus University of Thrace was established in 2006, with subsequent revisions in 2012, 2018 and 2021. The PMS is taught in the Greek language and leads to the award of the MBA degree. It addresses 3 equivalent directions that the student can follow: i.e. (a) Finance, (b) General Management and (c) Transportation

The PSP is of 120 ECTS load and lasts four semesters. During the first three academic semesters, specialized core and orientation courses are taught (totalling to 90 ECTC) and in the 4th semester a postgraduate thesis (30 ECTS) is written and supported. The maximum time allowed to complete the studies is set at eight (8) semesters.

The course curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the industry. Lectures are conducted in weekends. The 40% of the lectures are given on campus while the 40% in a distance learning mode.

Teaching staff includes faculty members from the Economics Department of the university. All faculty members who teach at PMS are active researchers and use their international teaching and research experience in teaching PMS courses as well as in supervising theses work.

Upon successful completion of the Programme, the graduates develop both comprehensive and specialized knowledge on the core concepts, the best practices, and the most recent trends in Business Administration; The employment prospects of the graduates are characterized as good.

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)*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The quality assurance policy of The MBA Programme of the department of Economics of the Democritus University of Thrace is fully compatible with the quality assurance policy of the University and focuses on the continuous improvement of its quality and its educational, research and administrative work.

The aims and objectives of the Department's Quality Policy were formulated considering the guidelines of the ETHAAE, the teaching and research goals of the university, the consultation

of Faculty members and students, as well as the European and international policies concerning higher education.

In particular, the implementation of the PMS quality policy ensures among others:

- the appropriateness of the structure and organization of the Programme
- the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in line with the European and National Higher Education Qualifications Framework level 7
- the promotion of the quality and efficiency of the teaching work in the MBA
- the suitability of the qualifications of the teaching staff for the MBA
- the drafting, implementation, and review of specific annual quality objectives for the improvement of the MBA
- the level of demand for the acquired qualifications of the graduates in the labour market
- the quality of support services such as administrative services, libraries, and student welfare services.
- the efficient utilization of the financial resources of the MBA that may come from tuition fees

The Programme goals are characterized as SMART, and all parties involved are committed for the achievement of those goals.

The quality goals are paired with appropriate KPIs which are updated and communicated to all parties involved.

II. Analysis

The quality assurance procedures are subject to periodic evaluation, which is carried out by the Steering Programme Committee and OMEA, in collaboration with MODIP of the University. The final decisions are made by the General Assembly of the Department.

The Steering Programme committee monitors the Programme delivery and develops proposals to the General Assembly related to the Programme content and delivery process.

For continuous improvement the Programme benefits from informal feedback received from external stakeholders. This feedback is characterized as ad – hoc and informal. The Steering committee takes the necessary steps to ensure the proper link and integration of the academic staff research activities in the curriculum. An additional source of feedback for monitoring and improving quality are the students' courses evaluations.

The programs quality policy is available on the website. Printed material is also distributed to the students and other participants in all academic events of the MBA as well as in the scientific events of the student association. All the printed material is also available digitized on the website of the MBA and is available at the department's secretariat.

The quality policy is also presented to the newly admitted students at the beginning of each academic year. Social partners and organizations with which the PMS cooperates are also informed.

III. Conclusions

Based on the documentation provided, feedback from interviews of all the stakeholders, students, academic and administrative staff, employers and other social groups, the Panel reached the conclusion that the Programme has in place an effective quality assurance policy and related procedures.

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

R1.1 The PSP should consider formalizing the process of collecting information from external stakeholders through the establishment of an Advisory Board.

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)

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The 2-year Master in Business Administration (MBA) Programme is offered under the auspices of the Economics Department at the Democritus University of Thrace. The Programme was founded in 2006 as Masters in International Economics and Business, renamed MBA in 2012, revamped in 2018, and with 65% new and more relevant courses evolved to its current state in 2021. The founders considered several factors such as research and professional background of teaching staff, benchmarks of quality of similar programs in Greece and other countries, input from local stakeholders (inclusive of profit-making and nonprofit-making entities) and feedback

from previous Master's Programme graduates. Current MBA instructors (14 in total) frequently and informally meet with graduates and prominent representatives of the regional private and public sectors who advise on the Programme's development regarding usefulness of courses (14 in total or 120 ECTS – inclusive of thesis writing), topics for research (relevant for the Master's thesis) and possible future knowledgecreation paths.

The Programme attracted over 30 students in 2010 and 2019 while in 2023 the number dropped to over 20. These low numbers may be due to the fact that the Programme is relatively new. The teaching staff and their representatives are making every effort to proactively advertise the Programme (through formal and informal means such as the local press, internet, and personal connections with local business entities). Additionally, they offer three concentrations of studies, convenience, and flexibility in teaching (courses are taught from Friday to Sunday, 40% in-person and 60% online), charge reasonable tuition fees (Euros 2500 per year), and recruit high quality students by setting high standards of student selection. Moreover, they offer scholarships to best students, funded by local business firms, and they organize various activities ranging from invited lectures (delivered by scholars and business leaders) to field trips abroad.

The structure of the Programme is strong and clear and reflects existing research strengths of the faculty and the needs of local profit-making as well as nonprofit-making entities. Two possible questions raised are about the absence of an alumni network-type club and that the Programme is not offered, alternatively, in other languages (e.g., English) to attract more domestic students and foreign students from neighbouring countries.

II. Analysis

The Programme has addressed well the balance between the teaching of mostly a contemporary set of post-graduate master's level curriculum and the need to equip students with theoretical and practical skills, as evidenced by testimonials of various stakeholders, current students, and alumni.

However, given the prominence of location in Thrace, the Programme does not fully reflect the needs of the region. This is an opportunity for the Programme to recruit more students from domestic (north Greece) and foreign (nearby countries) populations and ensure that the existing excellent links with stakeholders are maintained and developed further.

It is also unclear how "in-person" or "online" courses equally contribute to the quality of learning, despite the obvious advantages of flexibility and convenience attributed to the "online" process. The streamlining of "in-person" and "online" offerings to reflect the same quality of learning could help further the integration of research with teaching and enhance the competitive advantage of the Programme.

III. Conclusions

The Programme substantially complies with Principle 2. While there is always scope for improvement (reflected in the recommendations below), considerable effort has been put in the development and continuous improvement of the 2-year MBA

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R2.1 The EEAP encourages that the Programme should seek to establish a parallel English-speaking MBA, and effectively advertise about it, with the objective to attract students from Greece and nearby foreign countries.

R2.2 The EEAP recommends that the Programme should enhance networking among graduates by setting-up an Alumni Club with the purpose of facilitating employment efforts among graduates.

R2.3 The EEAP recommends that Programme should leverage further the existing connections with graduates and stakeholders to tailor course offerings and research to the needs of the local economy.

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.*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The MBA Programme at the Democritus University of Thrace garners high praise from its graduates, stakeholders, and society, reflecting a robust student-centered approach. Graduates and students, commend the contemporary curriculum, which is comprehensive and well-aligned with the demands of the business sector. Also, it is being highlighted the Programme's effectiveness in equipping the graduates with the necessary skills for success in various professional paths.

II. Analysis

The curriculum's relevance to the current business landscape, coupled with specialized tracks, suggests a deliberate effort to cater to student interests and career aspirations. Graduates and students feedback emphasizes the Programme's practical engagement with the business community, enhancing theoretical studies with real-world applications. The faculty's dedication to student growth, both academically and personally, underscores a commitment to student-centered pedagogy. There is also a sophisticated hybrid method of distance and face-to-face learning, which greatly helps students. However, it was mentioned by the students that there are some technical issues associated with the e-class platform.

III. Conclusions

The PSP MBA Programme exhibits strong compliance with Principle 3, showcasing a clear focus on student-centered learning methodologies. The curriculum, coupled with the faculty's expertise and dedication to student engagement, fosters a learning environment conducive to active participation and personal development.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R3.1 Initiate a comprehensive technical audit of the current e-learning platform to identify and resolve issues causing system downtime and user difficulties.

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*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

Based on the documents provided to the Panel, there are well outlined procedures with respect to all phases of studies (admission, progression, recognition of studies and certification).

Throughout the 2-year study period, the student progression is monitored by the academic advisor as well as the academic staff that teaches the courses. The course sequence ensures that the students acquire the necessary knowledge to take the more advanced courses in subsequent semesters. There are individual assignments, group assignments and exams in place. The student assessment allows the students to demonstrate what they have learnt. Several meetings with students are conducted to ensure that the progression is smooth and to resolve any potential problems faced by the students. Finally, the Panel was able to confirm that a formal procedure for student appeals is in place.

To facilitate students to write a dissertation at the end of their master's studies, the Programme also offers seminars on researching and writing the master's thesis. There is also a well-defined set of quality requirements for the implementation of the thesis and a Thesis handbook available. There is also a well-defined code of research ethics.

Currently, there is not an established External Business Advisory Board. There are scholarship opportunities up to 30% of the total number of students.

With regards to progression, 100% of the registered students graduate within the expected study tenure. With regards to marking distribution, the average score was

over 8 (out of 10) for the last two student cohorts that have completed their master's degree studies.

The master's degree applies and recognizes the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) consistently across the curriculum and is in line and harmonized with international guidelines. The students should receive, in total, 120 ECTS to obtain their master's degree.

Furthermore, the Department provides the diploma supplement in both Greek and English language that officially recognizes and certifies the skills and knowledge acquired, the context within which the culmination of knowledge took place as well as the status of the studies.

Apart from the Erasmus+ Programme opportunities the department has not signed any MOU with a foreign institution, which could further facilitate students' mobility.

II. Analysis

The Department has established well-defined admission criteria. There is a highly structured process for newly admitted students from the point of entry (welcome week) where students are welcomed and provided with guidance and activities related to the question of managing their transition from their bachelor's studies to the Master's studies.

The students become aware of the facilities provided by the University which is communicated by both the academic and administrative staff. This procedure ensures that new students have a smooth transition.

In addition, the Department has institutionalized the role of academic advisors as a supplementary contact point. The academic advisor informs, discusses, and advises students regarding the structure and curriculum of the Programme in order to optimize performance in the Programme's examinations, the syllabus/student guide and outlines of the elective courses, the job placement opportunities, and available liaisons with the labour markets.

III. Conclusions

Very good procedures with respect to all phases of studies (admission, progression, recognition of studies and certification).

Lack of an external advisory board.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R4.1 The EEAP encourages the Programme team to seek the opportunity of creating an External Advisory Board consisting of business leaders from a variety of organizations from the local area or other areas in Greece and a distinguished alumni body.

R4.2 The EEAP encourages the Programme team to seek collaborations with foreign institutions by signing MoUs, which can further facilitate students' and staff mobility.

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.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The EEAP feels that the Department's policy on the recruitment of new academic staff as well as with progression of existing ones complies with the National Laws. There are in total 14 members of academic staff who are all faculty members. Additionally, there is an excellent staff to student ratio (i.e., approximately 1 member of teaching staff for 2 students) which facilitates interaction between students and teaching staff.

A good practice is that there is a teaching award given to a member of teaching staff every 2 years at the University level, however the PSP could also create such an award to further incentivize staff.

We note that only 2 out of the 14 members of teaching staff are female.

There is a high quality of academic staff teaching in the Master's Programme with a good research record and very good scores in teaching questionnaires. There are about 30 publications by each teaching staff (13.5 publications over the last 4 years). According to Scopus, there are about 7.4 cross-citations for each publication which provides evidence of high quality of research for staff teaching in the Programme.

There are two mechanisms in place for the evaluation of teaching staff. First, there are student questionnaires and surveys. Second, there is an Internal Evaluation by the University for the teaching staff and the Programme overall. It is also worth noting that students mentioned that they were particularly satisfied by the quick answers they receive from teaching staff to their

questions via emails, and the easy access they have to the academic staff for queries during consultation hours. In terms of teaching delivery, students have also given credit to the interaction they have with the teaching staff during the lectures.

II. Analysis

First, there is good evidence that academic members of staff are encouraged to attend international academic conferences and present their research outputs.

The workload is created based on the quality assurance processes of the University. There is a well-structured allocation of teaching hours which is also monitored by the Head of the Department. The daily teaching staff workload is about 2 hours. In general, the workload is considered appropriate allowing staff for engagement in research activities.

To enhance the quality assurance processes in terms of staff development, it is encouraged the Department to run a staff members survey. This could bring to light areas of excellence but also areas which need further improvement.

There is a Sabbatical opportunity for academic staff (half year every 3 years or 1 year every 6 years) to enhance their research profile. Additionally, there is extra funding offered for research purposes. The Department has not set up any MOU with international academic institutions which could promote research collaboration but offers the opportunity to the academic staff to further their knowledge by participating in the Erasmus + Programme.

The use of case studies and real-life examples provide evidence of good practice in teaching methods. Indicative of encouragement for linking research to teaching is the evidence that module coordinators are responsible for modules of direct relevance to their research interests. Moreover, there is evidence that academic members of staff encourage students to engage with academic articles in internationally acclaimed journals. In fact, students do get exposed to teaching staffs' publications.

The Department should devise ways to encourage and reward research activity and set goals for journal publications for each Faculty member.

III. Conclusions

There is a high-quality teaching staff in the Programme.

The department efficiently manages its human capital and measures the performance of each faculty member.

More emphasis should be placed on publishing in highly ranked journals.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R5.1 The EEAP members would like to encourage the faculty to put more emphasis on participating at high quality conferences and targeting high quality publications, e.g., ABS list, EIGENFACTOR.org.

R5.2 The EEAP recommends that the Department should consider the gender imbalance in the teach staff.

R5.3 The EEAP recommends that the Programme could offer Research and Teaching awards annually to further incentivize faculty members.

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.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Panel had a virtual tour at the Campus. The Panel also virtually observed the classrooms used, a big amphitheatre with capacity of 220 students (fitted with reasonably modern teaching equipment) as well as the University library. Most of the students informed us that they mostly make use of the online resources of the library. The Panel also virtually visited the offices of the student support services.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that student needs are also served online.

Additionally, students have the facility to request books which are in the library of a different city which can be delivered to them.

Apart from the virtual tour, we have also asked for the opinion of the students about the facilities and infrastructure, and they were, generally, happy with them apart from the admin support which needs to be improved.

During the Panel's virtual visit, it was noted that provisions have been taken to serve individuals with special mobility needs (e.g., existence of elevators and stair rails). Panel discussions revealed

that students with other physical and/or learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia) have access to special examination provisions.

The Panel has been informed by students about other services offered by the University: for instance, student international mobility services (ERASMUS). Additionally, there are career events organized for the students. Moreover, the administrative team regularly informs students about job offerings, which are made by companies in Greece that are interested in students with the background of those who attend the MSc Programme.

II. Analysis

Students receive the relevant material of the courses via an online platform (e- class).

The Panel also virtually observed computer labs in which the computers are fitted with reasonably good software. Postgraduate students have access to commonly used software (such as Microsoft Office, GRETL, WEKA, ORANGE), databases (such Thomson Reuters, though the subscription has expired) as well as statistical/econometrics/textual analysis packages (e.g., MATLAB and Python).

Students become aware of the services and available facilities from the beginning of their studies and these services are functional and easily accessed by the students.

III. Conclusions

Overall, the Panel believes that the Programme's students have access to satisfactory infrastructure and services for learning and student support.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R6.1 The EEAP recommends that more emphasis should be put to strengthen the administrative support offered to the 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.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The MBA Programme at Democritus University of Thrace showcases a comprehensive information management system that effectively collects, monitors and utilizes data on students, faculty and course structure. The presence of key detailed records on student demographics, progression and satisfaction levels, indicates a strategic and integrated approach to data usage.

II. Analysis

A thorough analysis of the PSP's information management reveals a strategic utilization of data for enhancing internal quality assurance and informed decision-making. The incorporation of diverse data collection methodologies, which includes the active participation of both students and staff, reflects the Programme's commitment to creating an inclusive educational environment. Moreover, the application of technology in managing and analysing data aligns the Programme with contemporary educational practices and supports ongoing improvement.

III. Conclusions

The PSP demonstrates a high level of adherence to Information Management, indicating a systematic and efficient approach. The proactive engagement of stakeholders in the process ensures that data collection and analysis are both transparent and relevant. The system's dynamic nature, capable of adapting to the changing demands of postgraduate education, highlights its effectiveness and future readiness.

It is also important to tell that there is good knowledge about students' needs from the professors, as they know and have initiated processes for further improvements of the PSP, such as for example the outreach of the department to the local community.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

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.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Programme has enlisted in its periodically updated publicly available webpage detailed information about each course (plus the thesis course) in the curriculum, inclusive of description, number of credits, intended learning objectives, instructor names, semester offered, assessment procedures applied, and possible employment opportunities for graduates.

The Programme has established an information system (that is evaluation system) for the collection, analysis, and use of data. This system builds on an effective process to support a variety of activities and feed into proposals for improvements in quality assurance.

The process of collection and analysis of data takes place periodically and systematically at the end of each semester for every individual course and focuses on the content of the course, the teaching methods, the evaluation of teaching staff, students' satisfaction, and quality of facilities.

Also, the Programme has a clear system collecting and analysing the data concerning the percentage of students' population and profiles, number of active students, the progress and participation in the evaluation, the library use, eating and recreation facilities, etc.

II. Analysis

By an appropriate statistical analysis of data, various key performance indicators and statistical tables are produced which facilitate monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the overall Programme, instructors, facilities, and existing infrastructure services.

Key performance indicators are also utilized for the Programme's goal setting. All members of the teaching staff are informed and participate in the end of semester /

academic year monitoring and improvement process. At the end of this process, the Programme's Chair discusses the results with instructors, administrators, and various other constituents (athletic facilities, eating facilities, etc.)

For the collection and processing of the data IT technologies are used through an electronic questionnaire that the students complete, subject to monitoring and managing by the Quality Assurance Unit of the University.

Finally, the Programme develops and implements an annual action plan with key performance indicators regularly monitored and evaluated.

III. Conclusions

The EEAP concludes that the systems of the Programme for the collection, analysis, use, and dissemination of information data are objective and fully compliant.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R8.1 The EEAP recommends that the Programme continues this process of collecting and analysing data through digital technologies subject to, primarily, more protection for all involved against theft of private information.

R8.2 The EEAP recommends that color-coded dashboards can be used by the Programme to facilitate effective communications with prospective students, and funding organizations /stakeholders when they attempt to evaluate the Programme's value and progress.

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.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The annual internal evaluation of the PMS is done in collaboration with the MODIP of the university in the context of the internal evaluation of the Department of Economics to which it belongs.

The annual report includes, in the form of tables, aggregated data on the study Programme, educational and research work, as well as on the other services offered by the academic and administrative units during the academic year. The data is collected by ETHAAE and by the information system of MO.DI.P. The latter is connected to the corresponding information system of the Secretariats of the Department and draws data from there. Through the information system, the evaluations of the educational process by the students and the recording of the work of the members of the department are also carried out.

II. Analysis

There is in place a process for the periodic internal review of the PSP. MODIP and OMEA collect a significant volume of relevant data from different sources to assist the evaluation of the Programme. This information is evaluated according to principles and criteria that are consistent with internationally recognized standards of good practice. The outcome of the self-evaluation is properly recorded and shared within the academic unit.

The PSP has performed only one self - evaluation in January 2023. The self- assessment process

has developed an action plan that is communicated to the interested parties.

The steering Programme committee met to discuss potential revisions/updates to the PSP or specific courses. Suggestions are forwarded to the General Assembly of the department for decisions. It is noted that there is an absence of the formal participation of external stakeholders in the process.

III. Conclusions

The PSP has in place appropriate processes for the periodic internal review of the PSP. These processes are transparent and benefit from the involvement of relevant parties. There is an absence of the formal participation of external stakeholders in the process.

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

R9.1 The PSP should consider formalizing the process of collecting information from external stakeholders through the establishment of an Advisory Board.

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 administering 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.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

This is the first External Evaluation of the Programme under consideration. The 2- year Master in Business Administration (MBA) Programme is offered under the auspices of the Economics Department at the Democritus University of Thrace. The Programme was founded in 2006 as Master in International Economics and Business, renamed MBA in 2012, revamped in 2018, and with 65% new and more relevant courses evolved to its current state in 2021.

To comment on Principle 10, the Committee examined the following documents (and corresponding links with more detailed information):

- Proposal for Accreditation
- Report by the Programme Chair (progress of transition from the old to the new Programme that started in 2021, overview of the Programme so far)
- MODIP's presentation.

II. Analysis

Typically, the External Evaluation Report of the results is a set of recommendations for improvements, adjustments, and revisions of the Programme, as outlined in Principles 1 to 9 above. It is expected that the recommendations are implemented with the support of faculty, administrators, and other constituents such as managers of various facilities and supporting organizations. A Progress Report document ought to be created in a tabular form which displays, for each recommendation, its Description, the actions taken, the responsible bodies involved in the implementation, the percent completion to date and the expected date of full completion.

III. Conclusions

The EEAP recognizes that an earlier External Evaluation does not exist and believes that the MBA Programme has the ability and the needed information to generate a Progress Report that meets

the requirements of this first External Review, so that, thereafter, it is made available to the next External Evaluation.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

Part C: Conclusions

I. Features of Good Practice

- The PSP has a well-defined market, and the Programme is adjusted to serve the market needs.
- Faculty members are easily accessible to current and former students and passionate about their subject areas
- The combination of theory with practice makes the PSP a strong attraction for prospective students.

II. Areas of Weakness

- The international mobility of faculty is relatively low and the participation of students in the Erasmus and Erasmus+ exchange programs is absent.
- There is an absence of the formal participation of external stakeholders in the quality assurance process.
- Lack of collaboration with foreign institutions.
- Limited evidence of publications in highly ranked academic journals.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- The PSP should consider formalizing the process of collecting information from external stakeholders through the establishment of an Advisor Board.
- Create a list with highly ranked journals and encourage the faculty to make an effort to publish in those journals.
- Develop an institutionalized alumni strategy.
- Seek collaborations with foreign institutions.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

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

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **2, 5**

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

- 1. Prof. Andreas Efstathiades (Chair)**
- 2. Prof. Demetri Kantarelis**
- 3. Prof. Dimitris Petmezas**
- 4. Mr. Konstantinos Panagiotis Fourkiotis**