



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



Εθνική Αρχή
Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης
Hellenic Authority
for Higher Education

Αριστέιδου 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:
Environmental Planning and Environmental Education

Department: Forestry and Management of the Environment and Natural Resources

Institution: Democritus University of Thrace

Date: May 2024



Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση
της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



Πρόγραμμα
Ανθρώπινο Δυναμικό και
Κοινωνική Συνοχή



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of
the Postgraduate Study Programme of **Environmental Planning and
Environmental Education** of the **Democritus University of Thrace** for the
purposes of granting accreditation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW	4
I. <i>The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel.....</i>	<i>4</i>
II. <i>Review Procedure and Documentation</i>	<i>5</i>
III. <i>Postgraduate Study Programme Profile.....</i>	<i>7</i>
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.....	20
PRINCIPLE 6: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT	23
PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	25
PRINCIPLE 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES.....	27
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.	27
PRINCIPLE 9: ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC INTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES	29
PRINCIPLE 10: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES	31
PART C: CONCLUSIONS.....	33
I. <i>Features of Good Practice</i>	<i>33</i>
II. <i>Areas of Weakness</i>	<i>33</i>
III. <i>Recommendations for Follow-up Actions.....</i>	<i>33</i>
IV. <i>Summary & Overall Assessment.....</i>	<i>33</i>

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 Environmental Planning and Environmental Education 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. **PAVLOSTATHIS SPYROS** (Chair)
School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology
2. **KADIS CONSTANTINOS**
Frederick University
3. **PANAGOPOULOS THOMAS**
Universidade do Algarve
4. **Γιωτόπουλος Γεώργιος**
University of Patras

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In preparation for the review and assessment of the PSP Environmental Planning and Environmental Education of the Democritus University of Thrace, the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEA Panel) reviewed a multitude of materials provided by the Hellenic Authority of Higher Education (HAHE), which included background information and guidance on the review and accreditation process, detailed material and data related to the programme under evaluation, such as the programme accreditation proposal and associated appendices. The programme review was conducted via teleconference, organized and coordinated by HAHE and the Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH). The schedule and agenda of the review were as stated below.

Monday, 13/05/2024:

- a) Preliminary private meeting of the EEA Panel. Discussion of the programme under review; assignment of writing parts of the draft accreditation report to the members of the EEA Panel.
- b) Welcome meeting and short overview of the two PSPs with the Head of the Department of Forestry and Management of the Environment and Natural Resources Prof. G. Tsantopoulos, the Director of the PSP Inventory and Monitoring of Forests and Forest Lands and Protected Areas (PSP1) Prof. K. Radoglou, the PSP1 Steering Committee member Prof. V. Dimou, the Director of the PSP Environmental Planning and Environmental Education (PSP2) Prof. G. Tsantopoulos, the PSP2 Steering Committee member Prof. Th. Katagis, the President of Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) Prof. M. Grigoriou, the QAU staff Mrs. S. Gkavaki and Mrs. S. Marsidou, the PSP1 Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) members Profs. S. Galatsidas, M. Orfanoudakis, A. Symeonidis, and Special Technical and Laboratory Staff A. Symeonidis: Presentation of DUTH quality assurance policy, current status and future developments, as well as presentations and discussion of PSP1 and PSP2 history, academic profile, current status and future developments, strengths and areas of concern, degree compliance to the quality standards for accreditation, internal procedures, course examinations, review of students' progress, course/instructorevaluations, etc.
- c) Meeting with PSP1 & PSP2 teaching staff and administrative staff members: Discussion of facilities and learning resources.
- d) Private debriefing meeting (EEA Panel members only).

Tuesday, 14/05/2024:

Teleconference meetings related to PSP1 Inventory and Monitoring of Forests and Forest Lands and Protected Areas of the Democritus University of Thrace.

Wednesday, 15/05/2024:

- a) Meeting and discussion with PSP2 Environmental Planning and Environmental Education teaching staff members Profs. A. Kyriazopoulos, G. Arabatzis, E. Manolas, A. Paschalidou, G. Papaioannou, G.

Korakis, M. Papakosta, A. Kantartzis, and external teaching staff Drs. K. Ioannou and D. Vasilakis

- b) Meeting and discussion with ten (10) current PSP2 students.
- c) Meeting and discussion with ten (10) recent PSP2 graduates.
- d) Meeting and discussion with employers and PSP2 social partners: Mr. G. Pistolas, Secretary General of Geotechnical Chamber, Eastern Macedonia and Thrace Branch; Mr. K. Kontos, Technical Director and Geotechnical Projects Manager, Homeotech Environmental Management Firm; Mrs. A. Gouliama, Consultant , Education of Philologists, Evros Prefecture; Mr. V. Mavridis, Director Office of the Regional Governor of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace; Mrs. Th. Skartsi, Manager Society for the Protection of Biodiversity of Thrace; Mr. S. Katsogridakis, Deputy Regional Governor for Education, Eastern Macedonia and Thrace Region; Mrs. R. Lefkeli, Principal of Evgenidio Primary School; Mr. A. Paleras, Principal Dikaia High School; Mr. S. Sarantidis, Principal Nea Vyssa Karatheodorio Primary School; and Mr. M. Asteriadis, Deputy Mayor for the Environment, Cleanliness and Green, Municipality of Orestiada.
- e) Private debriefing meeting (EEA Panel members only): Discussion of the outcomes and findings of the PSP2 virtual visit; preparation of oral report.
- f) Closure meeting with the Head of the Department of Forestry and Management of the Environment and Natural Resources, PSP2 Director and Steering Committee faculty, QAU President and staff, and IEG faculty members: Informal, oral presentation of the EEA Panel PSP2 key findings and clarifications.

Thursday 16/05/2024 to Saturday 18/05/2024:

Draft report writing. EEA Panel virtual meetings. Review and finalization of PSP2 accreditation draft report.

Throughout the review and evaluation process, the EEA Panel was in close communication with the University QAU staff, which were very accommodating in providing additional information requested by the EEA Panel. The EEA Panel found that the Department and the PSP2 administration, as well as the faculty, staff, current students, and recent graduates interviewed were eager and helpful in our discussions, providing valuable additional information.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The postgraduate study programme (PSP) Environmental Planning and Environmental Education is organized and offered by the Department of Forestry and Management of the Environment and Natural Resources of the Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH), located in Orestiada. Since 2006, the PSP was run under different titles until 2021, when the current PSP was established (Official Gazette 4253/B/15-09-2021) and operates with the latest Graduate Programme Regulations updated in 2022 (Official Gazette 6989/B/31-12-2022) based on law 4957/2022.

The objectives of the PSP are training and specialization of scientists in environmental issues and environmental education. Emphasis is placed on planning and education in the sustainable management of forests, terrestrial ecosystems and the natural environment, in accordance with modern innovative trends and developments in the science of Forestry and the Environment. More specifically, the mission of the PSP is:

- a) The deepening of knowledge and the development of research and innovation in cutting-edge sectors to achieve sustainable development;
- b) The provision of specialized knowledge in matters concerning Natural Resources, Environment, and Environmental Education, and the cultivation of critical, analytical thinking and skills;
- c) The development of scientific approaches to environmental and social issues; and
- d) The promotion of modern research methodology and new technologies and the specialization and familiarity of postgraduate graduates with them.

Teaching in the PSP is provided by faculty and teaching staff of the Department of Forestry and Management of the Environment and Natural Resources (DUTH), as well as external specialized scientists from academic and research Institutions. Specialized technical staff and administrative staff assist the PSP.

The programme has set at seventy (70) the maximum number of admitted students per academic year. In the academic year 2022-2023, the number of admitted students was 70, the number of all registered postgraduate students was 77, while the number of finished graduates (i.e., those that completed all requirements and graduated) was 62. The total number of PSP graduates since its initial establishment in 2021 is 115. Most of the current students and recent graduates the EEA Panel interviewed stated that the PSP Environmental Planning and Environmental Education of the Democritus University of Thrace was among their first choice based on the curriculum, methodologies used, response and organization of the PSP, as well as familiarity. The PSP consists of a minimum of two (2) academic semesters study, plus a summer session, resulting in level 7 Diploma of Postgraduate Studies. There are two tracks/specializations: a) Environmental Planning and Management of Natural Resources; and b) Environmental Education and Communication.

To graduate, the student must have successfully completed a total of 75 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits (coursework only or a combination of coursework and the preparation and successful completion of the postgraduate thesis). Elective courses are offered. Lectures are given in-person on campus and/or remotely and synchronously. Attendance in lectures is mandatory and final examinations are administered in-person on campus. There is no required practical training. The EEA Panel found that the number of courses offered cover advanced as well as new topics and technologies in the PSP focus on Environmental Planning and Environmental Education.

The PSP prepares graduates for careers in both the private and public sector of the economy, such as forest services and industry, environmental services, consulting companies, public bodies, as well as primary and secondary education. There are strong links to the society, which is key priority of the PSP Environmental Planning and Environmental Education, the Department of Forestry and Management of the Environment and Natural Resources, and the Institution.

The Department of Forestry and Management of the Environment and Natural Resources offers three (3) postgraduate study programmes and supports doctoral studies.

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 Institution has developed and implemented its Quality Assurance Policy as part of its broader strategy (<https://duth.gr/en/University/Quality-Assurance-Unit>; https://duth.gr/Portals/0/-%20-final-logo_certified.pdf). The Department of Forestry and Management of the Environment and Natural Resources, in collaboration with the University Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) and the Department Internal Evaluation Group (IEG), has harmonized the quality policy of

the PSP Environmental Planning and Environmental Education with that of the University, accompanied by annual quality assurance targets for the continuous development and improvement of the PSP, as well as that of the academic unit and other educational programmes.

The Quality Assurance Policy of the PSP is publicly accessible from the Department website (<https://fmenr.duth.gr/>) and includes adequate reference to the PSP delivery, including commitments to satisfy requirements and strive for continuous improvement. In addition to IEG, a departmental Coordinating/Steering Committee further aids in the overall quality assurance of the PSP and the Department.

The processes and procedures used for the monitoring and continuous improvement of the quality of the PSP are as follows: a) The strict implementation of the PSP Policy for Quality Assurance; b) The optimal disposition and management of the PSP resources, including those resulting from tuition fees; c) The establishment of Quality Assurance objectives of the PSP on an annual basis; d) The periodic internal evaluation and monitoring of the PSP on an annual basis; e) The collection of Quality Data, quantitation, analysis and improvement of the PSP; f) The disclosure and publication of all information related to the PSP made publicly accessible; g) The periodic external evaluation and accreditation following established procedures by HAHE.

f) The quality and effectiveness of teaching at the PSP is closely monitored through the course/instructor evaluation by the students, the collection of data by the IEG and transfer to QAU on an annual basis. Training of the PSP teaching staff is accomplished with the help of the DUTH Support Teaching & Learning Center (<https://duth.gr/en/Services/Structures/Teaching-Support-Office>). The findings are supported by the documents provided to the EEA Panel by the PSP, the interviews with the teaching, support staff and alumni of the programme.

II. Analysis

The structure and organization of the PSP is well thought out and in line with the overall goal of the programme. The advanced material covered along with the study of new technologies in the area of Environmental Planning and Environmental Education result in learning outcomes and qualifications of the postgraduate students consistent with Level 7 of the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. Teaching methods, learning outcomes, and student satisfaction are all explained in the PSP Study Guide.

The Quality Assurance Policy is sufficiently communicated to all parties involved. The PSP has set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely goals regarding the postgraduate programme. However, the number of targets is very limited; only six (6) targets have been set, monitored, and the degree of achievement reported. In particular, the following targets are not set and thus are not monitored: grade point average of postgraduate theses; research output by the faculty such number of publications, citations and impact; number of publications with postgraduate students as co-authors; indicators of mobility (e.g., Erasmus); percentage of postgraduate students who continued for doctoral studies, etc. Based on the data provided to the EEA Panel, the targets are also paired with suitable key performance indicators (KPIs). Goals are monitored, updated, and

communicated, according to the Quality Assurance Policy implemented by the Institution and the PSP. The quality assurance system is reviewed on an annual basis by the IEG and results communicated to the University QAU, which issues an annual report. According to 2023 Quality Targets report, the degree of achieving set targets ranges from 0%/7.7% (fraction of teaching staff from other departments) and 0/2 (number of students participating in conferences and/or have published their work) to 230/400 (number of students participating in the course/instructor evaluation). The low degree of achieving some of the set targets raises concerns relative to the long-term sustainability of the otherwise excellent postgraduate programme; appropriate actions should be taken.

III. Conclusions

Overall, this is a very well-organized PSP focusing on the quality of the offered knowledge and skills. The Department has established a Quality Assurance Policy that is appropriate for the PSP. It includes a commitment for its implementation and continuous improvement. The metrics established by the PSP and the Institution are adequate in tracking and documenting the quality of the programme. However, the number of targets set and monitored by the PSP is very limited and the degree of achieving several targets is very low.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To further enhance adherence to Principle 1, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

R1-1 Major improvements made as a result of course/instructor evaluations should be documented, communicated to all involved, and published on the PSP website.

R1-2 Increase the number of targets set by the PSP as well as the degree of achievement.

R1-3 Interactions with alumni upon their graduation should be exploited as a potential means of informing the decision-making process regarding future directions of the programme.

R1-4 Establishment of a formal External Advisory Board should be considered, which will guide the continuous review, revision, and further development of the curriculum.

PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

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

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

In addition, the design of PSP must consider:

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP is innovative and addresses important needs relating to environmental planning and environmental education, awareness and communication. The EEA Panel considers that overall, the PSP succeeds in providing its graduates with useful and specialised knowledge and experience relevant to its subject matter. The structure of the curriculum is reasonable and balanced.

II. Analysis

The design of the programme was based on appropriate standards, and the relevant legislation and regulations of the University/Department.

The curriculum is balanced and adequately covers the subjects of the Programme. It enables those students who wish to deepen their research, to carry out a postgraduate thesis, which starts in the second semester and can last up to 8 months. The majority of the PSP's students are educators. Most of them meet the need for practical training by applying the knowledge and skills they acquire, in their working environment.

The curriculum design presents the following points for improvement:

- In the course descriptions there is a lack of uniformity in the way teaching activities are presented. The teaching hours in some courses do not correspond to the actual teaching hours (as presented during the interviews and in the curriculum guide).

- The course descriptions in the Study Guide refer to course webpages to which the evaluators do not have access.

The structure of the PSP is reasonable. The rationale behind the design of the Environmental Education and Environmental Communication specialization in a PSP not offered by a Department of Education was adequately explained and documented by the Program Director.

A process for periodic review of the Program is foreseen by the relevant Departmental regulations.

Although there is no formal process for frequent and continuous contact with stakeholders, this happens informally. There is no structured and formal way of communicating with alumni, nor has the University or the Department moved forward with the creation of an alumni association, which would particularly facilitate communication with them.

The Study Guide is comprehensive, informative and provides all the information students would want to have at the start of and during their studies. Both students and graduates made particular reference to the adequacy of the information available to them at the start of the programme and the ease with which they could access any additional information they required.

III. Conclusions

The EEA Panel considers that overall the PSP is innovative, has a reasonable structure and succeeds in providing its graduates with useful knowledge and experience relating to environmental planning and environmental education, awareness and communication.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The PSP is very well structured and therefore suggestions for further improvement are relatively limited. In particular, the EEA Panel proposes:

R2-1 Describe course activities in the course descriptions in a similar way

R2-2 Correct the teaching hours in course descriptions so that they correspond to the actual hours as presented in the Study Guide.

R2-3 Establish the Program's (and the Department's) alumni association for more organized and effective communication with them.

R2-4 Establish a formal external Advisory Board, which will consist of stakeholders and alumni of the Program. The Board will provide feedback on improvements that can be made or on emerging needs that can be addressed by the PSP.

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

The PSP requires 75 ECTS credits over three periods and includes two tracks of specialization. Specific course attendance and exams are mandatory. Those who choose to prepare a postgraduate thesis are examined in a total of five (5) compulsory courses and one (1) elective course, while those who do not choose the postgraduate thesis are additionally examined in four (4) elective courses. There is

no required practical training.

The PSP Study Guide is distributed annually. Course lectures are primarily conducted on weekdays but can include weekends, and up to 35% of the PSP curriculum is taught via distance learning, synchronous, using platforms like Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Open eClass. These platforms also facilitate seminars, individual tutorials, and oral exams.

There are detailed rights and privileges of the students, including excellence awards for outstanding academic performance, all detailed in the PSP Study Guide.

The lecture halls are well-equipped. Student complaints are processed online. Information is available in both Greek and English on the PSP website.

Course/instructor evaluations by the students are conducted at the end of each semester. An Academic Adviser supports students with personal, academic, and career advice.

II. Analysis

Admissions do not favor vulnerable groups or low-income individuals. The PSP employs modern educational methods, and information on distance education platforms is adequate. Lecture halls are satisfactory and functional.

The mode of operation and all relevant procedures concerning the postgraduate program are detailed in the PSP Study Guide. Admission procedures of new students, their selection criteria and evaluation are clearly stated.

The availability and role of the Academic Advisor is described in detail as well as the ways in which students are supported during their studies.

The personalized teaching approach is achieved by the way the courses are selected, the full functionality of the distance learning platforms and tools and the adoption of alternative teaching methods by the teaching staff.

Students acquire knowledge and skills determined by their choice of a specific track of specialization and their professional expectations.

III. Conclusions

The EEA Panel considers that in general the PSP functions adequately concerning student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment. Overall, the careful design of the PSP gives students the opportunity to choose to a large extent the skills they will acquire, thus contributing to the achievement of individualized learning outcomes.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To further enhance adherence to Principle 3, the EEA Panel recommends the following:
R3-1 Consider additional admissions for low-income students and/or students from vulnerable groups.

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 PSP Coordinating/Steering Committee selects students based on various criteria including their degree grade, undergraduate course performance, thesis relevance, English proficiency, additional degrees, research and professional experience, publications, recommendations, and interviews. The student selection process is detailed in the PSP Internal Operating Regulation.

The duration of study is defined in the Study Guide. The ECTS is applied across the curriculum and the PSP Student Guide is particularly detailed about the rights and privileges of the students. Postgraduate students enjoy the same rights and privileges as the undergraduate students until their study expires. They must attend seminars, lectures, and workshops, with attendance monitored by the instructors. The ECTS is applied across the curriculum.

Teaching methods include in-person lectures, synchronous distance learning and workshops. Students' mobility is encouraged. Postgraduate students have the opportunity to complete their practical training in foreign countries through the Erasmus+ program.

At the end of the first semester, the PSP awards 1-2 scholarships based on student academic performance. The scholarships exempt recipients from tuition fees for the second semester.

The Credits required to obtain the Postgraduate Diploma amount to seventy-five (75) ECTS. The preparation of a postgraduate thesis is optional, as postgraduate students are given the opportunity to choose either between a postgraduate thesis or additional elective courses. Along with the Postgraduate Diploma, the Diploma Supplement in Greek and English is given.

II. Analysis

All matters concerning the completion of the optional postgraduate thesis are well defined in the Study Guide, which is very detailed, as is the case of the PSP Internal Regulation.

Although students' mobility is encouraged, the majority cannot take advantage of it as they work either in the primary or in the secondary education.

The scholarships concerning exemptions from tuition fees for the second semester, are not available to part-time students.

III. Conclusions

The EEA Panel considers that in general the PSP functions adequately concerning student admission, progression, recognition of postgraduate studies and certification. On the other hand, the Panel believes that student mobility and participation in European programs can offer an added value to the existing PSP.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To further enhance adherence to Principle 4, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

R4-1 Provide optional courses to students interested in acquiring didactic competence.

R4-2 Given the large number of applicants, the number of admitted students could be increased beyond the current maximum number of seventy (70).

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 PSP is supported by competent and qualified personnel who can adequately carry out its implementation. The permanent staff have been selected through open and merit-based procedures and are making sedulous efforts for their professional development. The Department appears to be understaffed, as there has been no recruitment in recent years and, on the contrary, staff commitments have increased considerably.

II. Analysis

The recruitment of teaching staff is carried out according to procedures described in detail in the decisions of the Senate of the Democritus University of Thrace. The selection takes into account objective and merit-based criteria. The procedures for recruitment of external collaborators need improvement. Recruitment is essentially done through assignments to qualified people who are known to the Department's teaching staff. People with more qualifications and experience could be attracted through open calls.

The Department encourages faculty to participate in scientific conferences and professional development activities.

Although in theory there are several opportunities for staff mobility, in practice mobility is limited due to the workload undertaken by staff. Faculty members have essentially no possibility for sabbatical leave and their participation in Erasmus actions is occasional. If a faculty member participates in a mobility action, his/her duties are delegated to the other faculty members.

There is a disparity in the teaching load of the teaching staff. There is also an imbalance in the teaching hours of faculty members from semester to semester. Several members of the teaching staff have developed considerable research activity and are involved in research projects that have secured funding from both national and European resources.

The course/instructor evaluation by students is carried out electronically each semester through the University's Quality Assurance Unit's Information System. The questionnaires are completed by students voluntarily and anonymously. To date, the results reflect almost complete student satisfaction. The Department's Internal Regulations do not provide for a specific way of evaluating the results of the surveys, nor specific measures to deal with cases of low scores. It is the responsibility of each lecturer to take into account, as he/she understands it, the students' comments as reflected in the surveys for self-evaluation and self-improvement.

There is no defined research strategy of the PSP. General strategic guidelines are included in the PSP quality targets (KPIs) document.

III. Conclusions

The PSP is supported by competent and qualified personnel. The professional development and involvement of staff in research is suppressed due to the understaffing of the Department. The distribution of staff teaching hours in each semester could be more balanced.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Based on the above analysis, the following actions are proposed by the EEA Panel:

R5-1 Increase the Department's staff by recruiting new, qualified members, who will relieve the heavy workload of the existing members, thus increasing the opportunities for professional development and engagement in research activities.

R5-2 Open advertisement of the PSP's external collaborators positions in order to attract the most qualified personnel.

R5-3 Better planning so that a faculty member's teaching load is more evenly distributed from semester to semester (except of cases where there is a specific reason justifying this differentiation).

R5-4 A more structured utilization of the student evaluation surveys of teaching staff is suggested. For this purpose, the Department should develop internal regulations with specific reference to how the results are to be used to improve the PSP and to establish ways of reacting in cases of low scores.

R5-5 Develop a research strategy for the PSP.

PRINICPLE 6: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department of Forestry and Environmental and Natural Resources Management operates several specialized laboratories to support teaching and research in areas such as forestry, genetics, soil science, and environmental pollution. It also has modern facilities including a comprehensive University library with a robust collection in forestry and environmental science, accessible to the entire University community. Lecture halls are well-equipped.

The learning resources are shaped by the applied training methods, which vary between courses, depending on their subject and content. Instructors have the choice of teaching methodology of their preference.

The Department offers multiple ways of assessing student performance and monitoring the learning level.

Administrative support for the PSP is provided by an external staff. Funding for the PSP primarily comes from tuition fees, which are €1,800 per student. Additional funding sources include donations, sponsorships, endowments, research projects, University resources, and the Government budget. Financial management is handled by the Special Research Funds Account (ELKE), which retains 30% of tuition income for administrative support; the remaining funds cover program operational costs. There is a provision for the utilization of tuition fees both in logistical support and in financial support of students through scholarships.

PSP students benefit from various support services such as career counseling, student welfare, and have access to sport and cultural facilities. There is also an Electronic Secretariat and online course support.

II. Analysis

The program offers tuition fee waivers to students who meet specific economic or social criteria and demonstrate academic excellence during their initial studies. Accessibility information for individuals with disabilities is prominently featured on the Department's website. The website provides comprehensive details about the teaching staff involved in the postgraduate program and its infrastructure. Additionally, students receive relevant promotional material outlining available services on the official PSP website.

III. Conclusions

The EEA Panel considers that in general the PSP has adequate learning resources and student support. On the other hand, the Panel believes that the teaching methods used concerning digital and distance education tools should be up to date, as described in the recommendations below.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To further enhance adherence to Principle 6, the EEA Panel recommends the following:
R6-1 The teaching methods used concerning digital and distance education tools should be improved.

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 PSP utilises a number of information management platforms for the collection and processing of data concerning students and their progress through the PSP.

II. Analysis

The PSP utilizes the information collection and processing platforms that support the Department and are related to:

- Evaluation of educational work by students
- Students participating in the Program (e.g., number of active students, grades)
- Counselling and other services offered to students Students also have access to MS Teams for distance learning.

There are no procedures for monitoring the employability and progress of graduates, nor has a departmental alumni association been established.

Student satisfaction surveys are conducted each semester. The Department's Internal Regulations do not include details on the ways of utilizing the surveys' results, nor a specific way of reacting in cases of low scores. Faculty reported that they evaluate the results and take them into account for self-evaluation and self-improvement.

Students and graduates were overall very satisfied with their ability to access information relevant to their studies.

III. Conclusions

The PSP utilizes adequate infrastructure for collecting and processing data concerning students and their progression. There is a gap in the management of information on graduates of the PSP, since no procedures have been established to monitor their employability and progress, nor has a departmental alumni association been set up.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Based on the above analysis, the EEA Panel proposes:

R7-1 Development of the means for a more structured utilization of the student evaluation surveys of teaching staff. For this purpose, the Department should develop internal regulations with specific reference to how the results are to be used to improve the PSP and to establish a way of reacting in cases of low scores.

R7-2 Establishment of a platform that will link the PSP with its graduates (e.g., alumni association). This platform will serve the purpose of monitoring their employability and their progress, and communicating more effectively with them.

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

Information about the Democritus University of Thrace, the Department and the PSP are available online in well-designed websites. The University website is organised into 8 categories. The main tabs provide information about the University and includes information about the Quality Assurance Unit and the external evaluation reports of the Institution and the courses. There is a tab about Studies, which include the PSP description, Erasmus and other study services. The University's PSPs are grouped into Departments. The PSP on Environmental Planning and Environmental Education has a dedicated webpage at the following link: <https://env-edu.fmenr.duth.gr/>, which provides information about the study program, mode of attendance, assessment criteria, timetable, teaching staff, and staff CVs. This information is available in both Greek and English, but the English version of the PSP website is limited in content.

II. Analysis

All pertinent information about the PSP, including learning outcomes, courses, curriculum, teaching staff, and quality policy, is thoroughly presented on the dedicated webpage. The information published on the website is up-to-date, clear, easily accessible, and easy to navigate. Additionally, information about the PSP is accessible on the website of the Department, along with the academic unit's Policy for Quality Assurance.

III. Conclusions

The websites of the University, the Department and the PSP provide information about both teaching and departmental activities in Greek, and in English.

The PSP website could have more marketing information about the programme's usefulness, job opportunities, and testimonies of Alumni.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEA Panel has no recommendations for Principle 8.

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 self-assessment of the programme is based on procedures and continuous improvement of the level of educational offerings along with supporting the learning environment, ensuring the current character of the programme, and the strategic goals of the Institution. Factors considered for the assessment include the student's workload, students' expectations, and the assessment of the students. Also, scientific and technological developments, societal and job market needs, as well as national, European, and international policies are considered. The PSP Director collects all requests for changes to the programme. The annual report is submitted to QAU for review, and recommendations are shared with the general faculty assembly. Decisions for improvements are made at the end of the academic year and are implemented by the beginning of the following academic year.

II. Analysis

Through the process of internal review and continuous improvement plan, the

positive aspects of the programme are reinforced by adding new topics based on scientific developments. The collected information is analysed, and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date. There is a strategically designed consideration for improving courses using the course evaluations by students. Programme weaknesses are addressed when problems are identified in students' evaluations. The PSP is reviewed and revised but without the direct involvement of students and other stakeholders.

III. Conclusions

The self-assessment procedure of the programme is well established but should involve more systematic participation of the students and the external stakeholders.

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

To further enhance adherence to Principle 9, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

R9-1 The PSP should have a systematic participation of the students and the external stakeholders in the PSP continuous improvement.

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

The PSP on Environmental Planning and Environmental Education does not have an external evaluation. Following the instructions of HAHE to this Principle, the EEAP utilised the IQAS Accreditation Report (2018) of the Democritus University of Thrace and the 2016 external evaluation. The Department provided a detailed response about the previous external evaluations and the PSP has taken into consideration those relevant recommendations and provided a detailed response to the measures of improvement and the responsible for the implementation of all recommendations for the PSP.

II. Analysis

The members of the teaching staff of the PSP are aware of the importance of the external evaluation and its contribution to improvement of the PSP. A procedure for the utilisation of the outcomes of the external evaluation is in place and responsibilities for the implementation of the recommendations is a very good practice of the Department. The recommendations from the previous external evaluations were addressed in a very good manner and a detailed action plan was implemented. The active participation of the students and external stakeholders towards improving the educational processes has not fully embraced.

III. Conclusions

The recommendations from the previous external evaluations were addressed.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEA Panel has no recommendations for Principle 10.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- The PSP has the necessary procedures for monitoring quality assurance and aligns with the strategic objectives of the Department and the University.
- The faculty and staff are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and dedicated to their mission.
- Employment potential of the new PSP graduates in public and/or private positions is high.
- Employers and social partners praised the PSP and believe there is a clear need for such graduates.
- The programme is addressing an area of need in the Greek economy, both in local and national level.

II. Areas of Weakness

- There is no defined research strategy.
- There are limited interactions with stakeholders and alumni after graduation.
- Limited mobility of students, faculty and other scientific personnel.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Establish a formal process for the active participation of students, graduates, external stakeholders in the curriculum development and study programme revisions.
- Increase the number of targets (KPIs) set by the PSP and monitor on an annual basis.
- Develop a well-defined research strategy to better link education to research.
- Increase interactions with stakeholders and PSP alumni.
- Increase mobility of students, faculty and other scientific personnel.
- Consider establishing a formal external Advisory Board comprised of external faculty, graduates, and social partners to actively assist and guide the continuous review, revision, and further development of the PSP curriculum, enhance the entire programme, as well as attract external resources.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

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

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **1, 5, 7.**

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
PAVLOSTATHIS SPYROS	Signed by PAVLOSTATHIS SPYROS
KADIS CONSTANTINOS	Signed by KADIS CONSTANTINOS
PANAGOPOULOS THOMAS	Signed by PANAGOPOULOS THOMAS
Γιωτόπουλος Γεώργιος	Signed by Γιωτόπουλος Γεώργιος