



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@ethaee.gr • www.ethaee.gr

Accreditation Report

for the New Postgraduate Study Programme of:

**International Relations and Diplomacy in the Context of the Global
Security Environment**

Department: Economics
Institution: Democritus University of Thrace
Date: May 2025



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 New Postgraduate Study Programme of International Relations and
Diplomacy in the Context of the Global Security Environment 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 new postgraduate study programme of **International Relations and Diplomacy in the Context of the Global Security Environment** of the **Democritus University of Thrace** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. GIANNAKOS SYMEON (Chair)**
Salve Regina University
- 2. ANAGNOSTOPOULOS YIANNIS**
Royal Holloway, University of London
- 3. EFSTATHIADES ANDREAS**
European University Cyprus
- 4. Kyriakopoulos Irene**
National Defense University, Washington, DC, USA
- 5. Papathomas Aristides**
University of Western Macedonia

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

Upon receiving its mandate from the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE), the Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EAP) communicated via email to set the agenda for its first official meeting, arranged by HAHE for Monday, April 28, 2025. The EAP panel discussed its responsibilities, processes, and functions while delineating a plan for its visit. The EAP members had already reviewed the digital materials uploaded by HAHE to its electronic platform and made available to the EAP. Immediately after the official meeting, the EAP met with the Vice Rector and President of MODIP and the Chair of the Department of Economics Sciences, which will house the two proposed postgraduate programs. It should be noted that this visit involved the concurrent evaluation and accreditation review of two proposed programs: International Relations and Diplomacy in the Context of the Global Security Environment and Financial Technology. As such, each proposed program's director also attended the meeting. The Department Chair presented an overview of the department, and each director gave a slide presentation on their proposed program. Subsequently, this report focuses only on the postgraduate program in International Relations and Diplomacy.

The following day, the EAP met with the teaching staff of the International Relations and Diplomacy program and engaged in a frank and productive discussion about curricular and faculty professional development and research. Due to time limitations, the EAP chose to forgo the meeting on the campus tour and extend the meeting with the teaching staff instead. EAP members either visited the campus and facilities in person or opted to view the video tour at a different time.

The next meeting of the EAP was with the potential employees and social partners of the proposed program, and it was an engaging and fruitful conversation. After this, the EAP held a private debriefing meeting to prepare for the closure meeting with the Vice Rector, the Department Chair, and the Director of the proposed program. This meeting was conducted in a collegial and productive manner. The entire process took place in a friendly atmosphere, which indicated that the university recognized the value of the evaluation and accreditation process.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The Department of Economic Sciences at the University of Thrace was established in 1999 in Komotini. It offers two specializations: one in Business Administration and another in economic analysis, as well as an MBA and Ph.D. degree. It employs just over 20 full-time faculty members and serves around 300 undergraduate students.

The proposed MA in International Relations and Diplomacy, within the context of the Global Security Environment, aims to attract up to 45 military and civilian students. Thrace is home to the Fourth Army Corps, while the Third Army Corps is headquartered in Thessaloniki. Indeed, the potential for attracting significant military personnel to the program is realistic. The proposed program requires students to complete eight mandatory courses and a thesis. It emphasizes economics, which is expected since it is housed in a department of economics that seeks to differentiate itself from similar programs offered by political science departments at other universities in Greece. The duration of studies includes four courses per academic semester, followed by the completion of the thesis. In this respect, the program is designed to be completed within one calendar year. The eight planned courses include International Relations Theory, Conflict Resolution, International Political Economy, Game Theory, Greek Turkish Relations, The EU as an International Actor: Economics, Politics, and Security, Communications and Crisis Management, and Economics of Security and Defense. The potential for attracting non-military students is reasonable, considering it will be the only online postgraduate program in international relations outside Athens.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 1: STRATEGY, QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND QUALITY GOAL SETTING FOR THE NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD INCLUDE IN THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT THE DEVELOPMENT, ORGANISATION, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES (PSP) IN SPECIFIC SCIENTIFIC FIELDS AFTER INVESTIGATING THEIR FEASIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY. INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY FOR THE NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT.

THIS POLICY SHOULD EXPAND AND BE AIMED (WITH THE COLLABORATION OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS) AT THE PSP OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL INTERESTED PARTIES.

By decision/s of the Institutional Senate, the Institutions should adapt their strategy to allow for the provision of postgraduate study programmes, in addition to attending to the profile, vision, mission and strategic objectives of the Institution. In this strategy, the Institutions should anticipate the potential benefits, difficulties or risks from the implementation of new postgraduate study programmes and plan all the necessary actions to achieve their goals. The Institution's strategic choices should be documented through specific feasibility and sustainability studies, especially for new postgraduate study programmes.

In the case of PSP delivered by distance methods, the Institution prepares and applies an e- learning strategy. The Institution's e-learning strategy is integrated into its overall strategy and identifies educational goals while keeping up to the rapid technological changes and to the developments in pedagogical models. The Institution should include in its strategy the justification and feasibility as to why e-learning has been selected as the appropriate learning strategy for the particular programmes of study where it is applied.

In the context of e-learning, innovation strategies, the possibility of programme revision, the linking between learning and research (requiring knowledge of the latest innovations in order to select the most appropriate means to achieve the learning outcomes) should be taken into account.

The quality assurance policy of the academic unit for postgraduate study programmes should be in line with the Institution's strategy 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 postgraduate 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 continuous 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 and the availability 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 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 internal review and audit of the quality assurance system for the PSP through the cooperation of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU)*

Documentation

- *The Institutional strategy for postgraduate studies, which includes a special strategy for e-learning, as long as it is applied to the Institution's PSP*
- *Feasibility and sustainability studies for the new PSP*
- *Quality Policy of the academic unit for the development and improvement of PSP*
- *Quality Targeting of the academic unit for the PSP*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Senate of Democritus University of Thrace, with its decision 25/97/16-11-2023, sets the development of Postgraduate Study Programs as a strategic goal. The university's postgraduate programs aim to promote original scientific research and make a substantial contribution to the advancement of knowledge, at least in one scientific field.

The quality assurance policy of the Postgraduate Studies Program (PSP) "International Relations and Diplomacy in the Contemporary Security Environment" within the Department of Economics at Democritus University of Thrace is fully compatible with the University's quality assurance policy and focuses on the continuous improvement of its quality along with its educational, research, and administrative work.

The aims and objectives of the Department's Quality Policy were formulated by considering the guidelines of the HAHE, the teaching and research goals of the university, the consultations with faculty members and students, as well as the European and international policies concerning higher education.

Specifically, the PSP "International Relations and Diplomacy in the Contemporary Security Environment," as part of the university's strategic planning, aims for the further advancement of knowledge, the development of research and the arts, and the fulfillment of the educational, research, social, cultural, and developmental needs of the country. The PSP "International Relations and Diplomacy in the Contemporary Security Environment" seeks to implement quality processes in teaching work, aligned with the quality policy of the Department and the Institution, by:

- 1 Designing, modifying, and improving its curriculum with transparency and the involvement of all stakeholders so that it responds to contemporary scientific demands and teaching needs.:
- 2 Implementing quality assurance procedures in alignment with the Department's and the Institution's quality policy in teaching by:
 - Selecting appropriate instructors in accordance with applicable legislation.
 - Evaluating teaching by students on a semester basis.
 - Participating in internal evaluation processes coordinated by the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP).
 - Utilizing a variety of teaching methods and techniques, emphasizing student-centered approaches.
 - Encouraging students to write research papers, publish in reputable academic journals, and present at national or international conferences.
 - Ensuring the availability and accessibility of educational resources.
 - Fostering a climate of respect, cooperation, communication, and participation among all involved in the program
- 3 Ensuring the quality (and quantity) of the research output of its academic staff
- 4 Ensuring the integration of teaching with research.

The program goals are defined as SMART, and all parties involved are committed to achieving those goals.

The quality goals are aligned with suitable KPIs, which are regularly updated and communicated to all parties involved.

The learning outcomes of the PSP are suitable for level 7, according to the European and National Qualifications Framework.

II. Analysis

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

The Steering program committee shall monitor the program delivery and develop proposals to the General Assembly related to the program content and delivery process.

For the development and its continuous improvement, the program 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's research activities into the curriculum. An additional source of feedback for monitoring and improving quality will be students' course evaluations. The department operates a student complaint policy as a quality improvement tool. The Student Affairs Committee of the department is responsible for monitoring and properly implementing the procedures for managing student complaints and objections.

The program's quality policy is available on the website. Printed materials will also be distributed to the students and other participants in all academic and scientific events. All printed materials are also digitized on the program's website and are

available at the department's secretariat.

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

III. Conclusions

Based on the documentation provided and feedback from interviews with all stakeholders, including academic and administrative staff, employers, and various social groups, the panel concluded that principle 1 is fully compliant.

Panel Judgement

Principle 1: Strategy, Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Goal Setting for the New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

The PSP should consider formalizing the process of collecting information from external stakeholders by establishing an Advisor Board.

PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF NEW 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 NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES. THE OBJECTIVES, THE SPECIFIC SCIENTIFIC SUBJECT AND THE STREAMS OR SPECIALISATIONS, THE EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND THE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS ARE SET OUT IN THE PROGRAMME DESIGN. DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW 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, the specialisations, the expected learning outcomes, the structure, the courses, the teaching and assessment modes, the teaching staff and the necessary resources 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. In particular, for each expected 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 for the 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 NQF, 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: teaching assignments per subject area and per course*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

From the outset, it is uncommon for economic departments to offer academic programs in international relations. Political science departments typically offer such programs since international relations is a subfield of political science. This also applies to political economy. More importantly, political science departments offer comparable online programs in Athens. There are no other online programs offered in northern Greece. There is an advantage and a disadvantage to this. On the one hand, the program does fill a void in that part of Greece; on the other hand, nothing prevents potential students from northern Greece from enrolling in one of the online programs in Athens, like those offered by Panteion University and the University of Athens. That is the reality of online programs. People can enroll in them from anywhere on the Internet. Considering, though, that the primary target market of the program is the military, there is a justification for it. The Third and Fourth Army Corps are headquartered in Thessaloniki and Alexandroupolis, respectively. That is a potentially considerable market, while such a program will be of considerable educational value to the Greek Armed Services. However, because the proposed department is founded and housed in an economics department, the curriculum is skewed towards economics more than towards geopolitics, which would be of more use to the military.

II. Analysis

As mentioned in the previous section of the report, the proposed program's curriculum includes eight obligatory courses and an MA thesis. Three of the eight courses are about economics, leaving very little room for more regional geopolitical courses. The only such course is Greek Turkish Relations. Additional courses like the Law of the Sea, East Mediterranean Resources and Politics, and Turkish Foreign Policy would also be instrumental. As much as the proposed program fulfills a market demand in the region, the curriculum is not optimized for it.

III. Conclusions

The curriculum should be streamlined to meet the specific needs of regional geopolitics. The program currently has one external faculty member from a political science department and another one from a mathematics department, but it needs more faculty members with more regional specializations. This would allow it to better compete with similar online programs offered by political science departments in Athens.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2: Design and Approval of New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Merge the EU course on the economy, politics, and security with the course on the economics of security and defense. Replace it with a regional geopolitics course offered by a specialist from another department, ideally a political science department.

Remove the thesis requirement for military officers and offer two courses with a regional geopolitical focus. Military officers typically do not pursue an academic career. This change will make the program more professional and better suited to their educational needs.

PRINCIPLE 3: REGULATIONS FOR 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).

The Institution should develop and publish the internal regulations prescribed by law which, among other things, should regulate all issues of postgraduate studies from the beginning to the end of the studies.

Indicatively:

- *The students' 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*

In case that the PSP is offered through distance learning methods, the Institution should have in place a regulation for e-learning, including in particular the following issues:

- *Services of the Institution to support e-learning*
- *Methodology for the development and implementation of courses*
- *Ways of providing teaching and variety of teaching and assessment modes*
- *General standard of course structure*
- *Student support system*
- *Support of faculty/teachers with mandatory e-learning training for new staff members*
- *Technological infrastructures made available by the Institution*
- *Student identity confirmation system (student identity check, assignment and exam writing process, security and certification issues).*
- ❖ *The Institution should establish rules for the provision of appropriate access and for the assurance of the participation of students affected by disability, illness, and other special circumstances.*
- ❖ *Ethical issues, such as those concerning data protection, intellectual property rights and rules for protection against fraud are governed by the e-learning regulation.*

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

Documentation

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the postgraduate study programme*
- *Special regulation for the implementation of e-learning if the PSP is delivered through distance methods*
- *Research Ethics Regulation*
- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility, and student assignments*
- *Degree certificate template and Diploma Supplement template*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP provides structured documentation covering the full cycle of the postgraduate studies. The Regulation of Studies (A12) outlines the admission process, student categories, credit allocation, thesis requirements, options for part-time study, and leave of absence. It specifies eligibility criteria, necessary supporting documents, selection processes, and available appeals mechanisms. Inclusive access and student mobility are referenced through Erasmus+ participation and flexible enrolment options. Academic mentoring is addressed through the Academic Advisor Regulation (A14), which defines mentor roles and assignment procedures. Ethical research practices are formally regulated through the Research Ethics Regulation (A15), although its highly official format may limit accessibility for students. While core academic regulations are in place, the PSP's dedicated e-learning regulation is not specifying in detail digital infrastructure, academic integrity safeguards, or online teaching methodologies. There is however clear evidence that such information exists elsewhere within the website, making it accessible to students.

II. Analysis

The program demonstrates alignment with typical requirements and quality assurance standards in all key areas. Admission and progression procedures are clearly documented and include provisions for appeals and special enrolments. Thesis supervision and evaluation processes are well-defined. The mentoring system is formally established, although its practical application could benefit from clearer operational guidelines. The absence of a comprehensive e-learning regulation reduces the clarity of provisions for online teaching, identity verification, examination security, and faculty training. References to student mobility and support for students with disabilities exist but are not fully elaborated. The Research Ethics Regulation is compliant with legal requirements but may not be easily understood by the broader student body.

III. Conclusions

The Postgraduate Program in International Relations and Diplomacy meets the requirements of Principle 3, particularly in terms of compliance and structural organization. However, some areas, particularly those relating to digital education, student support, and accessible communication of academic policies, could be strengthened to enhance the overall quality and functionality of the accessibility of the information for the program. The program is assessed as fully compliant, showing a solid regulatory foundation with scope for further operational improvements.

Panel Judgement

Principle 3: Regulations for Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Postgraduate Studies, and certification	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

It is recommended that the institution develop a more comprehensive e-learning regulation specifically for this program and ensure that all relevant documentation addressed to students is communicated through a more comprehensible format.

PRINCIPLE 4: TEACHING STAFF OF NEW 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 and scientific competence of the teaching staff at the PSP, the appropriate staff-student ratio, the proper staff categories, the appropriate subject areas, the fair and objective recruitment process, the high research performance, the training, 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, policy for attracting highly qualified staff, and PSP Obligation Regulation*
- *List of the intended for recruitment teaching staff including subject areas, employment relationship, Institution of origin, Department of origin and relevant individual achievements*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The International Relations PSP is taught by eight faculty members, serving a maximum of thirty-five graduate students per academic cycle. The faculty consists of four Full Professors, three Associate Professors, and one Assistant Professor. All faculty, with one exception, are affiliated with Democritus University; one faculty member is affiliated with the University of Peloponnese. The faculty possess a wide range of specializations and expertise, as reflected in courses offered, including Comparative Economic Systems, Business Management, Marketing and Market Research, International Economic Relations, Economic Development and Entrepreneurship in Europe, and Diplomacy and International Governance. The faculty's female-to-male ratio stands at 40%, with a stated goal of reaching parity by the end of 2025. Research activities of faculty members are documented in terms of the number of professional publications as well as citations. The department clearly states the importance placed on refereed publications, particularly in international journals. Faculty professional development, as well as interface and collaboration with national and local stakeholders, are documented and constitute established strategic goals of the program. Faculty appointments and promotions through the ranks follow the established Greek framework of an appointments committee to conduct a rigorous evaluation of the research and

teaching credentials of the faculty under consideration.

II. Analysis

The International Relations PSP faculty possesses strong and diversified credentials in teaching, research, and collaborative interaction with local and national stakeholders. The department emphasizes research, clearly stating the importance of refereed publications and international journals. The faculty's research output is thoroughly documented. The institution supports and funds faculty participation in seminars and conferences to enhance teaching and research performance. During the period from 2019 to 2024, the faculty produced 145 publications, and the number of citations in Google Scholar and/or Scopus was nearly 2,700, averaging 7 citations per publication. The quality of research is comparable to that of other institutions, both nationally and internationally. Collaboration with external stakeholders is evident in conferences and activities that involve the broader academic community and military institutions of higher learning. Faculty members are regularly evaluated by students through online course questionnaires that can be filled out and submitted digitally. However, for this exercise to be meaningful, the percentage of students participating in the faculty assessment should increase considerably. In terms of teaching loads, there is significant variability in the total number of hours, ranging from a high of 266 hours to a low of 129 hours. This imbalance can be mitigated by the anticipated addition of one faculty member. The strength of qualifications and experience that the faculty possesses is sufficient to support the PSP. The anticipated hiring of an additional faculty member and continued reliance on adjunct faculty would add to the strengths of the PSP. The International Relations PSP faculty can make important contributions to the educational qualifications of members of the Armed Forces.

III. Conclusions

The department faculty possesses the necessary knowledge, teaching skills, research output, and connections with external stakeholders to achieve the goals of the International Relations PSP. The department has provided ample evidence that it implements a fair and transparent process for the recruitment, training, and professional development of faculty members.

Panel Judgement

Principle 4: Teaching Staff of New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Consider offering future panels a sample faculty vacancy announcement along with a brief yet representative description of the timeline from candidate selection to the final faculty appointment.

PRINCIPLE 5: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER THE TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS OF THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES. 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, 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 and foreign students, students with disabilities), in addition to the shift towards student-centered 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 EAP completed a virtual tour of the campus and the department's facilities, which included classrooms, laboratories, common areas, and faculty offices. To support its learning and academic activities and promote research, the new PSP utilizes its human resources consisting of 20 regular members (with three more to be recruited in the immediate future). The program is administratively supported by the Secretariat, which is staffed by two administrators who, due to budgetary constraints, are not exclusively dedicated to the PSP but rather support both undergraduate and postgraduate operations. The PSP will also utilize the institution's existing infrastructure. Technology is housed in its own building with smaller classrooms and an auditorium. The EAP had the opportunity to tour the facilities that will be used by the PSP virtually and hear the opinions of the teaching staff. However, the EAP did not receive detailed information about specialized

libraries and possibilities for access to electronic databases and software, such as an alumni network.

Teaching will be exclusively online and off-site. The courses require practical, laboratory, and/or training particularly for the quantitative and programming courses. The department organizes lectures and research seminars (online) by internationally renowned researchers from abroad and Greece, in which students and professors have the opportunity to participate to develop scientific dialogue on key issues related to the program.

Students in the new PSP can access the university's support and advisory services, including the library, computer center, catering, foreign languages, sports activities, cultural activities, mental health counseling, services for students with special needs, and international student mobility programs.

The PSP provides for the awarding of scholarships for outstanding academic performance for approximately 5% of the top students (2/40 students).

II. Analysis

The department's facilities appear adequate and can support modern, online teaching. In addition, the student support services, ranging from academic advising to the Mental Health Counselling Service, along with some departmental events organized by the PSP (such as guest lecturers, internally organized conferences, and colloquiums), add value to it. All services are functional and easily accessible to students. Finally, the PSP offers a scholarship program to make education more accessible and promote high standards among students. The level of tuition fees and the expected number of students seem to ensure that the PSP can finance its operating costs.

At this stage and for the purposes of the program, the department does not appear to have immediate infrastructure needs. Thanks to the care of the department's personnel, facilities and equipment seem to be well-maintained and updated when necessary.

III. Conclusions

Based on the findings and analysis, the new PSP is fully compliant with Principle 5. The Program has sufficient and appropriate infrastructure and services to support student learning and enhance the overall student experience. Following further discussions and clarifications with the teaching staff, online tuition has never presented the department with delivery or communication issues. On the contrary, both staff and students seem better served by the flexibility this mode of delivery offers in terms of the delivery itself, as well as the pace of practice require

Panel Judgement

Principle 5: Learning Resources and Student Support	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

The department should consider recording the lectures as an additional quality service. This can be achieved in various ways, such as uploading the recording at the end of the teaching day, week, or term.

PRINCIPLE 6: INITIAL INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVALUATION AND MONITORING OF NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS AND ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM, FOR THE AUDIT, INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE NEW POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES, THUS ENSURING COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE PRESENT STANDARDS. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

The internal evaluation of the new PSP includes the assessment of the accreditation proposal, as well as the documentation in accordance with the Principles of the present Standards and the quality procedures of the Institution's Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS). The internal evaluation of new postgraduate study programmes also aims at maintaining the level of educational provision and creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students. The Institution, through its Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) and the corresponding academic units, organise and support the external evaluation procedures of the new PSP, according to the specific guidelines and directions provided by HAHE.

The above comprise the assessment of:

- the objectives, content, and structure of the curriculum, the knowledge offered and the level of science and technology in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the PSP is up to date, according to the relevant documentation listed in the decisions of the pertinent bodies*
- the entailed students' workload for the progression and completion of postgraduate studies*
- the satisfaction of the students' expectations and needs in relation to the programme*
- the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the PSP in question*

Postgraduate study programmes are designed and established in accordance with the provisions of the Institution's internal regulations, involving students and other stakeholders.

Documentation

- The Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) procedure for verifying whether the requirements of the Standards for Quality Accreditation of New PSP are met, as well as the procedure for organising and supporting their external evaluation procedures*
- Assessment and feedback mechanisms of the PSP strategy and quality targeting, and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

HAHE's digital material provided to the EAP includes the program's proposal, which contains details regarding its formulation, deliberations, and approval. Specifically, the approval process underwent a series of sequential steps. First, it was introduced to the department's faculty assembly. From there, it was presented to the University Committee for Postgraduate Studies, which then forwarded it to the university senate, which, in turn, sent it to MODIP and subsequently to HAHE. MODIP was involved at all stages of the process, and the department seemed completely aware and cognizant of the significance and importance of the internal and external evaluation process.

One of EAP's meetings was with the external stakeholders, who were completely aware of the program's academic value and well informed of its curriculum and structure.

The procedure for utilizing the outcome of the external evaluation process is in place, and the program director appreciated the debriefing feedback provided by the EAP.

As mentioned above, this is a new program; thus, this was the first external evaluation and accreditation process it underwent. The EAP is unaware of any other external evaluation the program may have undergone.

II. Analysis

Both the department and the institutions have established the internal and external quality assurance system and have communicated the initiation, creation, and approval processes to all concerned parties.

III. Conclusions

The program underwent all internal and external quality assurance processes and complies fully with principle 6.

Panel Judgement

Principle 6: Initial Internal and External Evaluation and Monitoring of New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

No recommendations

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

The proposed program, the department, and the University exhibit strong qualities in teaching, research, and service:

- The quality of faculty is robust. The faculty is committed to the welfare of the students and their education.
- The faculty records substantial research output, instrumental to effective teaching.
- The quality of research is strong.
- The University provides all the basic services necessary for students' academic life.
- The Administrative support of the proposed program is small but effective.
- The proposed program and university are strategically located to provide valuable educational services to the region and the Greek Armed Forces.
- Stakeholders are highly supportive of the proposed program.

II. Areas of Weakness

Curricular development can be expanded and made more robust to fit the educational needs of the region better.

Similar programs offered in Athens seem to be stronger in terms of the depth of course offerings.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

The PSP should consider formalizing the process of collecting information from external stakeholders by establishing an Advisor Board.

Merge the EU course on the economy, politics, and security with the course on the economics of security and defense. Replace it with a regional geopolitics course offered by a specialist from another department, ideally a political science department.

Remove the thesis requirement for military officers and offer two courses with a regional geopolitical focus. Military officers typically do not pursue an academic career. This change will make the program more professional and better suited to their educational needs.

It is recommended that the institution develop a more comprehensive e-learning regulation specifically for this program and ensure that all relevant documentation addressed to students is communicated through a more comprehensible format.

Consider offering future panels a sample faculty vacancy announcement along with a brief yet representative description of the timeline from candidate selection to the final faculty appointment.

The department should consider recording the lectures as an additional quality service. This can be achieved in various ways, such as uploading the recording at the end of the teaching day, week, or term.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 3, 4, 5, 6.**

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

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

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

GIANNAKOS SYMEON

Signed by GIANNAKOS SYMEON

ANAGNOSTOPOULOS YIANNIS

Signed by ANAGNOSTOPOULOS YIANNIS

EFSTATHIADES ANDREAS

Signed by EFSTATHIADES ANDREAS

Kyriakopoulos Irene

Signed by Kyriakopoulos Irene

Papathomas Aristides

Signed by Papathomas Aristides