



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Accreditation Report **for the New Postgraduate Study Programme of:**

**Artificial Intelligence and Immersive Technologies in Education,
Training, and Game Design**

Institution: Democritus University of Thrace

Department: Information Technology

Date: November 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 **Artificial Intelligence and Immersive Technologies in Education, Training, and Game Design** 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 **Artificial Intelligence and Immersive Technologies in Education, Training, and Game Design** of the **Democritus University of Thrace** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Law 4653/2020:

- 1. Assoc. Prof. PAPADAKI MARIA** (Chair)
University of Warwick, United Kingdom
- 2. Prof. Drineas Petros**
Purdue University, United States of America
- 3. Prof. Tsatsaronis George**
Technische Universität Berlin, Germany
- 4. Prof. Vavoula Giasemi**
University of Leicester, United Kingdom
- 5. Mr. Chadoulis Rizos Theodoros**
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) of experts has been formed by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE). This External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel was tasked with assessing the compliance of the new postgraduate study programme (PSP) entitled “Artificial Intelligence and Immersive Technologies in Education, Training, and Game Design”, which is offered by the Department of Informatics, Democritus University of Thrace. In particular, the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel was tasked with preparing an accreditation report in accordance with the HAHE Quality Assurance requirements (laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020). To this end, a comprehensive review of relevant documents was carried out, alongside online interviews with the Vice- Rector, the Head of Department, the Programme Director, academic teaching staff and relevant stakeholders, including employers and social partners. The evaluation adopted an evidence-based approach, aiming to assess the extent to which the programme meets HAHE’s quality assurance standards and to provide insights into its compliance, effectiveness, and practical implementation. For the purposes of this assessment, the information provided by the PSP was considered factually accurate. The discussions with the members of staff and stakeholders were conducted remotely via the Zoom platform. The Department organised an excellent online meeting where the various meetings took place in virtual rooms. Furthermore, the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel had access to a separate Zoom channel organized by HAHE where the External Evaluation & Accreditation External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel members could hold private discussions.

The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel attended a series of videoconference meetings, utilizing Zoom tools, to evaluate and accredit the proposed postgraduate study programme.

The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel Review virtual visit took place remotely (via Zoom) on Thursday 30th October 2025. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel members were also able to use the remainder of the week to hold additional private meetings, consolidate their findings and draft the Accreditation Report, which follows hereafter. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel held three private meetings. On Monday 27th October, they discussed the submitted documents regarding accreditation, exchanging initial ideas and opinions, and allocating the work needed to draft the report. On Thursday 30th October, they held a debrief on the main findings from the virtual visit. Finally, on Wednesday 5th November, they discussed the report’s final outcomes.

At the opening session of the virtual visit day, the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel was warmly welcomed by Prof Georgiou, Vice-Rector and President of MODIP, as well as the Head of the Department, the Director of the PSP, and the MODIP supervisor. It was an opportunity for Profs Papakostas and Kazanidis to present the department as a whole and the PSP programme under consideration respectively. More specifically, they presented an overview of the history of the department, their programmes, the market analysis, details and expectations of the proposed PSP programme. The discussion extended to the Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) and associated quality assurance procedures in place for the PSPs, particularly in the context of distance learning. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel members and the Department's representatives

had the opportunity to engage in a dialogue concerning the programme's admission procedures and overall *modus operandi*. At the conclusion of this extensive meeting, all External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel members sincerely thanked the Departmental representatives for delivering a comprehensive, timely, and precise overview of the PSP design, highlighting its significance within the Department's initiatives.

During the subsequent meeting with teaching staff, the Panel had the opportunity to discuss with the 4 members of staff who intend to teach at the proposed PSP programme. The discussion focused on workload, plagiarism detection, AI-assisted learning tools, student feedback from evaluations, and overall module evaluation metrics.

During the third session, the Panel had the opportunity to engage with employers and external stakeholders of the proposed programme, some of whom were graduate students of the department. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel explored their interactions and relationships with the department and the proposed PSP, as well as their perspectives on the programme's structure and intended outcomes. The participants' strong professional profiles and their warm support for the programme were evident from the outset. Everyone recognised the need for the proposed programme, and intended to engage with it as students, collaborators, or potential employers of its graduates.

Later, during a break from the discussions, the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel members held a private meeting to review the key outcomes of the virtual visit and prepare the initial verbal feedback report for the Department. During the final session of the day, the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel chair presented the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel's initial feedback and brief list of conclusions. The presentation primarily highlighted the postgraduate programme's key positive aspects but also identified some potential areas for improvement.

The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel members also held a final meeting and follow-up discussions online to compile the draft report. The aim was to consolidate all findings, reach a consensus and conduct a peer review of the Accreditation report.

It must be noted that the report hereafter presents the collective findings of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel, based on the meetings, the PSP's quality assurance materials provided by HAHE, as well as the shared documentation available on the portal.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The Department of Informatics at the Democritus University of Thrace was established in 2024, having originated from the TEI Kavalas (1999) and the International Hellenic University (2019). It is one of the three computer science departments in Greece, which integrate teaching qualifications with computer science studies. The department is supported by 7 academic, 3 teaching and technical, and 2 administrative staff members. Its student numbers exceed 2,000 undergraduate students, 20 PhD candidates, and 100 postgraduate students.

The proposed Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) entitled “Artificial Intelligence and Immersive Technologies in Education, Training, and Game Design” is a 1-year intensive distance-learning programme with 75 Level 7 ECTS credits, delivered and assessed in the Greek language. It accepts candidates with BSc (Hons) and English language qualifications. The programme is designed to support 8-100 students per year from non-IT backgrounds, who will be required to pay tuition fees. A scholarship programme is also offered to successful candidates.

The proposed programme focuses on the application of AI and immersive technologies in the fields of education and game design. The curriculum consists of a combination of technical and non-technical modules, each worth 7.5 ECTS credits. The optional independent study project thesis is worth 15 ECTS. Successful completion of 75 ECTS is required for the award of the PSP, either by completing 8 taught modules and a project thesis, or 10 taught modules.

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 Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) "Artificial Intelligence and Immersive Technologies in Education, Training, and Game Design" at the Department of Informatics at the Democritus University of Thrace has a well-documented Quality Assurance Policy (QAP), which aligns with the institution's one and national standards, and is committed to quality education. Annual evaluation mechanisms, as well as internal and external stakeholders are used in the improvement processes. The quality manual indicates how appropriate quality procedures are implemented to improve the programme.

The PSP is offered exclusively online. The minimum duration of studies is one full year (2 semesters plus a summer term). No internships are required during the studies. The teaching staff consists of a total of less than 10 teachers, which may result in a very high workload. The PSP plans to use instructors from other institutions, even from abroad. The programme is compliant with the ECTS system. The evaluation of teaching quality by students is conducted by questionnaires. The student participation in this process is relatively high.

The PSP uses a well-endowed technological environment and high-quality student support services. The academic faculty is well-experienced and qualified to support the PSP. Appropriate Key Performance Indicators are used for quality assurance. Overall, the programme is consistent with the quality assurance requirements of HAHE.

II. Analysis

The PSP structure aligns with quality standards and addresses modern academic and market demands. The programme employs comprehensive frameworks to track progress and implement improvements. Annual internal audits are scheduled. A service for hearing complaints from students is being offered, and a system of academic advisors has been instituted.

The evaluation committee could not find evidence on formal, organised direct connections with industrial partners, apart from occasional person to person conversations between faculty members and external stakeholders. Establishing a formal advisory board would further reinforce the PSP quality and the engagement of stakeholders.

The department should further explore opportunities for internationalisation of the programme, for example, by establishing additional partnerships with international universities, and enhancing student mobility.

III. Conclusions

The PSP proposes a Quality Assurance System which is in line with European Quality Standards and with the Quality Policies of the Institution. The proposed quality assurance policy is robust, and transparent, with measurable goals for continuous improvement.

The PSP "Artificial Intelligence and Immersive Technologies in Education, Training, and Game Design" fully complies with Principle 1.

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

- R1.1 Establish a Stakeholders Advisory Board.
- R1.2 Define and implement an internationalisation strategy
- R1.3 Employ a larger number of instructors

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.

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

The Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) “Artificial Intelligence and Immersive Technologies in Education, Training, and Game Design” aligns with the strategic priorities of the Democritus University of Thrace and the institution’s wider quality assurance policy. The quality policy of the academic unit is clearly formulated, public, and implemented in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), ensuring that mechanisms for monitoring and continuous improvement are in place.

The academic identity of the programme is clearly defined and notably interdisciplinary, connecting the domains of artificial intelligence, immersive digital environments, pedagogy, and game design. The programme’s objectives emphasise the acquisition of both theoretical understanding and applied research skills, and these intentions are reflected in the curriculum structure. The Study Guide presents the distribution of coursework, the expected learning outcomes, and the progression requirements in a manner consistent with the National and European Qualifications Frameworks. The programme is delivered with the support of appropriate digital infrastructure for distance learning, enabling students to engage with synchronous and asynchronous teaching in a cohesive online learning environment. A mild concern raised by the committee had to do with the hardware support and infrastructure for XR and VR courses that necessitate specialized hardware (glasses, CPU/GPU support, etc.). The department leadership seemed to have considered such issues and had remedies for these courses.

The feasibility and sustainability study for the programme indicates an awareness of labour market developments and professional demand in relevant fields. During the evaluation, the committee met with external stakeholders representing sectors such as educational technology, interactive media, digital training solutions, and applied AI development. These stakeholders expressed a clear recognition of the relevance of the knowledge and skills targeted by the programme, describing a growing need for graduates capable of integrating artificial intelligence and immersive technologies into educational and training settings. The discussions with stakeholders revealed that the programme aligns closely with emerging professional roles and responds directly to labour market needs. This connection between programme learning aims and employment opportunities was considered a notable strength by the committee. A mild concern raised by the committee was the lack of a mechanism for stakeholders to provide continuous feedback on the programme to the department leadership. This issue can be easily fixed by creating an advisory board of external stakeholders to oversee and provide feedback to the department. Although assessment methods are described in the course outlines, the committee noted that the correspondence between the stated learning outcomes and the specific evaluation criteria used to assess their achievement could be presented more explicitly and consistently, in order to improve transparency and clarity for students.

A significant potential issue is that the programme is currently structured at 75 ECTS, including an optional independent research project of 15 ECTS. The committee recognises the programme team's care in developing the structure and acknowledges that Greek Law 4957/2022 permits postgraduate programmes of this credit volume. The discussions with staff demonstrated a thoughtful and responsible approach to programme planning, and the committee appreciates that the decision to structure the programme in this way was taken in good faith and in accordance with national regulations. However, this credit structure does not fully align with broader European conventions, particularly those operating within the Bologna framework, where Master's degrees typically comprise 90 or 120 ECTS and include a mandatory research dissertation as an essential element of demonstrating research competence.

This divergence between national and European practices does not indicate non-compliance with Greek legislation, but it raises important considerations regarding international recognition, graduate mobility, and the comparability of qualifications. Given the programme's stated aim to prepare graduates for research-informed professional and academic pathways, the committee considers it appropriate to recommend that the programme team reflect on whether the 75 ECTS structure fully supports the intended learning outcomes at the level expected within the broader European Higher Education Area. It is proposed that this discrepancy be explicitly acknowledged to support future strategic decision-making.

II. Analysis

The programme demonstrates strong alignment with Greek national quality requirements and presents a coherent academic design supported by appropriate resources and internal quality mechanisms. The academic identity of the programme is clearly articulated, the connection to research activity is present, and the relevance to labour market needs is well-substantiated and positively validated through stakeholder input. The programme's responsiveness to developing professional landscapes represents a significant strength and supports its rationale and feasibility.

The primary issue requiring reflection arises from the programme's credit volume and the optional nature of the research project. While legally permissible, this structure may compromise alignment with widely recognised European expectations for Master's level qualifications and may affect the ease with which graduates pursue further academic or professional opportunities abroad.

III. Conclusions

The committee recommends that the programme team evaluate the sufficiency of the 75 ECTS structure in relation to learning outcomes and consider the potential benefits of increasing the total credit load and ensuring a mandatory research component.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- R 2.1 Evaluate the sufficiency of the 75 ECTS structure in relation to learning outcomes.
- R2.2 Consider the potential benefits of increasing the total credit load and ensuring a mandatory research component.
- R2.3 Form an external advisory board to ensure relevance of the programme to the job market.
- R2.4 Continuously evaluate the need for hardware support for online offerings of VR/XR courses.

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 findings reported here are based on documents A1, A2, A11, A12, A14, A15, A16 and A18, as well as information shared during the meetings.

Admissions:

The PSP accepts applications from home and international university graduates (degree equivalence is checked for international applicants). Application packs comprise a completed application form and supporting documentation including CV, degree certificate and transcripts, copy of passport or national ID, and English language certificates. Applications are scored based on a pre-defined rubric, taking into account final degree mark, number of languages, number of other postgraduate degrees, number of peer-reviewed publications and monographs, and relevant research or professional experience. Additionally, applicants are interviewed by a External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel, who mark the interview individually based on pre-defined criteria. Final scoring and ranking of applicants take into account the score of the application (40%) and of the interview (60%). A minimum of 5 and a maximum of 100 students can be admitted per intake.

(Noting that document A12 does not mention the interview as part of the admission process).

Student rights, obligations, and progression:

Student rights and obligations are clearly defined. Obligations include attendance and participation in teaching sessions; timely submission of assignments; sitting of oral and written examinations; adhering to programme, academic integrity, plagiarism and copyright regulations; and timely submission of dissertation and accompanying compliance declaration. Student rights include access to university email systems and services; access to libraries and library subscriptions; access to lab infrastructure for coursework; participation in governance structures; option to offer teaching and other services with supervisor approval; participation in research programmes; participation in mobility programmes. There is also provision for equal access for students with disabilities.

Monitoring of student progress is governed by institutional regulations. Student performance is monitored on semester basis to identify struggling students early. Student participation in educational activities is assessed as a measure of academic engagement. Formal and informal feedback from tutors to students is continuous. The programme committee reviews student engagement and performance data and makes recommendations for improvement and support. Assessment is by written or oral examination, coursework submission, coursework presentation, or development of educational/interactive applications. The documentation (A11) specifies that written/oral examinations at a distance are facilitated by applications that support user authentication and exam invigilation. It does not however provide details of processes / tools for plagiarism checking of submitted coursework. The programme committee explained in the meetings that the department has access to Turnitin, which can be utilised for these purposes.

Internships and scholarships:

The programme does not include student placements or internships. This is due to the nature of the subject, which deals with state-of-the-art technologies that are not yet widely applied in the sector. Engagement with the sector is nevertheless encouraged in the context of the dissertation project.

Scholarships are available to students. These are awarded based on criteria of academic excellence set by the departmental academic committee, who also set the size and conditions of the award as well as the rights and obligations of the awardees. Socioeconomic criteria are also taken into account in awarding scholarships and fee waivers. Up to 30% of students per intake may be awarded scholarships.

Performance-based excellence awards are also available for students who achieve top results, as are competitive research studentships and research assistantships on funded research projects.

Drafting of assignments / thesis:

The master thesis is optional and is undertaken over 2 modules. The thesis is required to present original, methodologically robust scientific research, and demonstrate critical thinking and analysis. The thesis is examined by a thesis committee comprising three staff, who assess the quality of the research, its methodological clarity, the validity of the findings, and the contributions of the thesis.

Research for the thesis can be desk-based, empirical, or involve the development of research-informed software/applications. Thesis projects are assigned a supervisor. The wordcount limit of the thesis is normally 15-30K words. Formatting and structure guidance is available in the programme handbook. Projects for the Independent Study module have similar requirements but are smaller in scale, reflected in a smaller wordcount limit (10-15K words). Students propose research projects, which are reviewed by the programme committee, who then approve the project and assign a supervisor and a thesis committee.

Student mobility:

The university participates in Erasmus+ and has several related agreements with other participating universities. Students on the programme can participate either for undertaking studies in another university, or for undertaking a placement in a participating organization.

E-learning:

The University's pedagogical framework for e-learning and distance learning implementation has been followed in the design of the programme. The department has access to necessary platforms and software services, and all teaching staff have access to necessary equipment. Hardware specifications for student equipment are published in the call for applicants, and students are granted access to necessary software and platforms by the department.

E-learning provision is based on facilitating student-resource and student-teacher interactions, and encouraging active participation, revision and reflection. Appropriate resources and materials are made available electronically to support

e-learning. The University has subscriptions/supports platforms for synchronous and asynchronous teaching (Moodle, MS Teams, Open e-Class, Zoom, Google Meet). The programme also uses Metaverse MSc IMT to enable geographically dispersed distance learners to interact with each other via avatars and familiarize with the technologies they study. The virtual world, which was demonstrated to the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel during the meetings, comprises spaces for meeting and collaborating with peers and students, and points of access to course information and resources. It enables students to share examples of good practice and case studies, and to share ongoing work for peer feedback.

Synchronous meetings are organized flexibly via doodle polls to suit the schedules of students and staff.

Data protection and service continuity measures include regular secure backups and distributed network architecture.

The programme is delivered fully by distance learning, and 75% of delivery is synchronous as per Greek legislation.

Staff teaching on the programme have high levels of knowledge of the e-Learning systems used and are well-positioned to use them in pedagogically effective ways.

II. Analysis

Regulations relating to all aspects of the programme (student admissions, progression, teaching and learning, accessibility, student dissertation research, student rights and obligations, student mobility, etc.) are clearly presented in the documentation and embedded in the design of the programme.

In the meeting with the programme coordinators, we discussed the feasibility of interviewing all applicants, particularly if the programme proves as popular as it is expected. We recommended that the programme committee review this decision and aim to implement a two-stage process where only short-listed candidates are interviewed.

The programme currently does not include industry placements or internships. The justification—that the subject matter of advanced and emerging AI and VR technologies is not yet sufficiently widely apply in industry—is convincing. Nevertheless, the department should monitor the situation closely and engage with industry partners, with the aim to introduce industry placements as soon as it becomes feasible.

The e-Learning framework that is implemented is pedagogically excellent. There are potential implementation issues however, particularly in terms of (a) access to necessary hardware and equipment for students who are geographically far from the department's laboratories and (b) the new Metaverse space for collaborative teaching and learning. In terms of the former, the programme committee assured us that students will be able to take away hardware on loan, which is something they have successfully trialled in the past. Nevertheless, this still calls for caution and close monitoring to ensure that students have reasonable access to necessary technical resources. In terms of the latter,

although the Metaverse space does have potential educational benefits, we would also encourage the programme coordinators to monitor its use, effectiveness, and how it impacts the student experience.

Extensive use of coursework assignments across modules necessitates systematic use of plagiarism detection software such as Turnitin.

III. Conclusions

The programme is underpinned by clear and comprehensive regulations that effectively support its academic and operational integrity. The documentation demonstrates strong design and governance, though certain aspects require monitoring and ongoing review. While the absence of industry placements is currently justified, proactive engagement with industry partners is encouraged to enable future collaborations. Overall, the programme exhibits a high level of pedagogical innovation, particularly through its Metaverse application, and would benefit from continuous evaluation to ensure these innovations translate into positive learning experiences and outcomes.

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

- R3.1 Consider adopting a two-stage admissions approach, with interviews reserved for shortlisted applicants.
- R3.2 Continue monitoring developments in AI/VR applications in the sector and nurture formal sector relationships to prepare for the inclusion of industry placements or internships in the future.
- R3.3 Regularly evaluate the effectiveness and student experience of the Metaverse learning environment, making adjustments as needed.
- R3.4 Implement routine and systematic use of Turnitin for all coursework submissions.

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 PSP "Artificial Intelligence and Immersive Technologies in Education, Training, and Game Design" follows current standard procedures for selecting academic and administrative staff. Established procedures are in place for transparent and structured course evaluations.

The department has 11 staff members ΔΕΠ, 2 staff members ΕΔΙΠ, 1 staff member ΕΤΕΠ, and 2 administrative staff. Approximately 6-7 staff members participate in the teaching activities. This fact, combined with the plan to attract up to 100 postgraduate students for this PSP annually, may result in a very heavy load for the teaching staff. The PSP director will need to identify additional teachers from other institutions.

The international mobility of staff members is, in general, supported through the Erasmus+ programme, which enables collaboration with other universities and research centres. An increase in the number of teachers will be required for the teaching staff to be able to take advantage of this and other opportunities (e.g., sabbatical leave) for increasing internationalization of the department.

The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel could not determine whether a mentoring scheme is in place to provide guidance, support, and direction for the professional development of early-career faculty members. This includes support for participation in European research consortia and assistance securing research funding from European agencies.

II. Analysis

The presented records of the academic staff's activities suggest that the staff is experienced and engaged in teaching and research. The selection procedures for academic and administrative staff follow the standard regulations of the host institution and are consistent across all Greek Higher Education Institutions. The hiring (or the promotion) of any faculty member in Greek universities is governed by national laws.

The teaching staff of the Department played a central role through their involvement in the structure and organisation of the programme with the support of the technical and administrative services. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel recognises the dedication of teaching staff, who demonstrate flexibility in working hours and teaching methods in trying to accommodate the needs of the student body.

The very compact form of the PSP introduces some restrictions in the training and counselling of the graduate students. For example, students are excluded from programmes like Erasmus+ to spend a semester in a European institution and have additional training in courses in another foreign country.

III. Conclusions

The PSP "Artificial Intelligence and Immersive Technologies in Education, Training, and Game Design" meets the HAHE requirements concerning teaching staff. The commitment, flexibility, and expertise of the faculty contribute significantly to the programme's quality and effectiveness.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- R4.1 In the future the PSP should develop some long-term exchanges with selected foreign groups of scientists and teachers.
- R4.2 Strengthen the support offered for professional development, especially to newly hired and early career teaching staff members.
- R4.3 Support the teaching staff activities further by establishing an Advisory Board

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 MSc Programme “Artificial Intelligence and Immersive Technologies in Education, Training, and Game Design” of the Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH) demonstrates strong compliance with the requirements concerning learning resources and student support.

The documentation confirms that the Institution ensures adequate financial, human, and infrastructural resources to support teaching and learning activities, while maintaining direct access for all postgraduate students to these facilities and services. The available infrastructure includes certified teleconferencing classrooms, computer-equipped offices for all teaching staff, and software licenses for tele- education tools such as Zoom and Moodle.

Learning resources also include the electronic learning platform (eClass), the Universis student management system, and access to the University’s electronic library and Teaching and Learning Support Center that promotes pedagogical innovation and good teaching practices.

The Study Guide (A8) highlights the operation of the Academic Advisor system, which provides personalized mentoring to each postgraduate student on academic progress, doctoral opportunities, and career perspectives. Additionally, the Student Counselling and Accessibility Structure offers psychosocial support and accessibility services for all students, ensuring equal participation for individuals with disabilities and supporting issues such as exam anxiety, study difficulties, and social integration.

Financial sustainability and continuous support are assured through the five-year viability plan included in the Feasibility and Sustainability Studies (A5), which details dedicated annual budgets for teaching staff, administrative support, equipment, scholarships, and infrastructure maintenance.

II. Analysis

The Programme fully aligns with the Principle 5 standards. It secures funding and logistical provisions for postgraduate education through clearly defined mechanisms and budget planning. The inclusion of scholarships and support structures for students with financial or accessibility needs demonstrates a student-centered philosophy. The integration of digital learning tools and virtual environments (e.g., AIMT Metaverse Space) ensures a modern, inclusive, and interactive learning experience consistent with the nature of the MSc’s scientific field. The programme also supports flexible access modes—synchronous and asynchronous—facilitating participation by working professionals and international students. Furthermore, the Teaching and Learning Support Center and the Counseling & Accessibility Office reinforce the institutional framework that guarantees continuous improvement in educational quality and student well-being.

III. Conclusions

The MSc Programme exhibits full compliance with Principle 5.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- R5.1: It is recommended to further operationalize the existing Academic Tutor system. In practice, the tutor should act as the primary point of contact for any academic or personal concerns, ensuring continuous communication and fostering student engagement and success.

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

The institutional MODIP undertakes internal evaluation of all programmes of study annually. One independent assessor is assigned to each programme of study and academic units are notified of the evaluation schedule at least 15 days prior to assessment. The evaluation considers all of the programme's procedures and activities.

The OMEA of the academic unit is responsible for preparing the evaluation submission, which comprises a report based on quality data submitted to the MODIP information system for the reporting period, and a report based on the teaching evaluation data for the reporting period. These are based on analysis of

previous evaluation reports, quality data, teaching evaluation data, and data on student complaints and disputes.

MODIP assesses the submission and provides the OMEA with feedback regarding student performance, student evaluations, graduation data, etc. For each issue raised by MODIP, an action plan is jointly agreed with OMEA that specifies the issue, the necessary corrective actions, the 'owner' of the action, and the deadline for action.

Student evaluations are undertaken every semester using MODIP's standard module/teaching evaluation questionnaire (departments can request to include additional questions if they wish). The questionnaire is administered via MODIP's information systems and is anonymous. The questionnaire contains standard sections on lecturer abilities, quality of teaching, and quality of the course.

There is a defined process for the evaluation, adjustment and update of course content. The process is triggered as a result of external accreditation assessment, changes in the legal framework, or for smaller scale updates, as a result of internal evaluations. The programme committee proposes updates to MODIP, which reviews the proposal and sets a timeframe for implementation. MODIP has the option to reject the proposal if it deems that it is not fully evidenced or thought through.

There is also a defined process for corrective actions, which enables the programme committee to address issues that arise in student evaluations or feedback from OMEA. The programme's strategy and quality are reinforced through a defined quality targeting action plan that includes collections and analysis of student evaluation data, monitoring of quality indicators related to student achievement, data on the programme's links with research in terms of student participation in research projects and publications, and feedback from external partners and institutions. The action plan is approved by the departmental assembly, which considers OMEA's recommendations for action plan revisions. The action plan is driven by a set of quality objectives, organized under 5 main strategic objectives (increased programme effectiveness, programme internationalization, enhanced student participation in research activities, links with public life, extroversion and outreach). Specific KPIs and actions are identified for each quality objective.

External evaluation is undertaken through periodic HAHE reviews, the recommendations of which are reviewed and actioned upon by the programme committee in collaboration with OMEA.

II. Analysis

The processes and procedures for monitoring, evaluation and revision/update of the programme are robust and governed appropriately by national and institutional regulations.

The quality targeting action plan (A7) is currently underdeveloped, as each quality objective has one associated action. It is advisable that the programme

committee take this as a starting point to develop a more comprehensive and nuanced action plan that approaches each quality objective from multiple perspectives. For example, for 'links with public life' the only planned action currently is to approach local schools to organize school visits to the department; in addition to this the department may want to consider e.g. collaborating with local civic groups to develop research projects or lifelong learning programmes. Similarly, in the context of extroversion and outreach, the department could consider participation in local events, educational festivals, or open days.

The department should also consider adding to the quality action plan specific objectives and actions related to engagement with external stakeholders.

III. Conclusions

The programme's monitoring, evaluation and revision processes are well-structured and aligned with national and institutional regulations, ensuring effective quality assurance. However, the current quality targeting action plan remains limited in scope and would benefit from further development to reflect a more strategic and multifaceted approach to quality enhancement and stakeholder engagement.

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

- R6.1 Revise and expand the quality targeting action plan to ensure that objectives are achievable and include strategic engagement with stakeholders.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

1. A robust and transparent quality assurance policy, with measurable goals for continuous improvement.
2. The programme's responsiveness to developing professional landscapes represents a significant strength and supports its rationale and feasibility.
3. A high level of pedagogical innovation.
4. Student scholarships and student support services suggest a student-centred philosophy.
5. Strong support from industrial stakeholders and partners.

II. Areas of Weakness

1. Informal industrial and external stakeholder relationships are not yet formalised into partnerships supporting an international or growth strategy
2. The programme's 75 ECTS credit volume and the optional nature of the research project, while legally permissible, may compromise alignment with widely recognised European expectations for Master's level qualifications and may affect the ease with which graduates pursue further academic or professional opportunities abroad.
3. The programme's admissions system could be more scalable, by adopting a two-stage admissions process.
4. Optional use of plagiarism detection in assessed coursework.
5. The current quality targeting action plan remains limited in scope and could benefit from a more strategic and multifaceted approach to quality enhancement and stakeholder engagement.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

1. Consider expanding the curriculum from 75 to 90 ECTS, and ensuring a mandatory research component, in order to further strengthen the academic, research, and international dimensions of the MSc Artificial Intelligence and Immersive Technologies in Education, Training, and Game Design.
2. Formally establish an external Advisory Board of academic and professional experts to provide continuous consultation on curriculum development, innovation trends, and employability skills.
3. Continuously evaluate the need for hardware support for online offerings of VR/XR courses.
4. Consider adopting a two-stage admissions approach, with interviews reserved for shortlisted applicants.
5. Consider mandating plagiarism detection for all coursework assessments.
6. Formalise the assignment of an Academic Tutor to each postgraduate student to provide continuous guidance, ensuring a personalised learning experience.

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: **none**

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: **2**

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: **none**

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname	Signature
PAPADAKI MARIA	Signed by PAPADAKI MARIA
Drineas Petros	Signed by Drineas Petros
Tsatsaronis George	Signed by Tsatsaronis George
Vavoula Giasemi	Signed by Vavoula Giasemi
Χαδούλης Ρίζος Θεόδωρος	Signed by Χαδούλης Ρίζος Θεόδωρος