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Accreditation Report

for the New Postgraduate Study Programme on:

Education Sciences: Science, Sustainability and Technology Education

Institution: Democritus University of Thrace
Department: Primary Level Education
Date: November 2025

Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης
ΕΣΠΑ 2021-2027
Πρόγραμμα
Ανθρώπινο Δυναμικό και Κοινωνική Συνοχή
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Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the New Postgraduate Study Programme of **Education Sciences: Science, Sustainability and Technology Education** 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 **Education Sciences: Science, Sustainability and Technology Education** of the **Democritus University of Thrace** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Law 4653/2020:

1. **Assist. Prof. Siina Christina (Chair)**
   Durham University, United Kingdom

2. **Prof. Katsarou Eleni**
   College of Education, University of Illinois at Chicago, United States of America

3. **Assoc. Prof. Makopoulou Kyriaki**
   University of Birmingham, United Kingdom

4. **Ms. Makri Angeliki**
   National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

5. **Assoc. Prof. Valavanidou-Ioannitou Georgia (GINA)**
   Le Mans Université, France

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) conducted the review of the new Inter-institutional Postgraduate Programme (IPP) "Education Sciences: Science, Sustainability and Technology Education" in line with HAHE guidelines. The review combined prior desk-based analysis of the documentation with formal online meetings with the institutional leadership and the academic and administrative teams responsible for the PSP.

In preparation for the review, the Panel studied the full accreditation file, including the Accreditation Proposal, the Senate decisions on the establishment and strategic positioning of the PSP, the MODIP report, the feasibility and sustainability studies, the Quality Policy and Quality Targeting documents, the Study Guide, the course outlines, the list of teaching staff, and the full set of regulations (internal regulations, study regulations, complaints, thesis, research ethics, e-learning, tuition fee utilisation and diploma template).

During the site (online) visit, the Panel held structured meetings with the Rectorate and institutional leadership on issues of strategy and quality assurance; with the heads of the participating Departments and members of the Programme's Coordinating Committee; with teaching staff from all three partner universities; with administrative staff supporting the PSP; and with a group of external/social partners. The Panel also received presentations on the design and implementation of the hybrid learning model, the internal quality assurance mechanisms (including MODIP procedures), and the planned use of digital platforms and infrastructure. Additional material (programme website, promotional material and updated quality policy links) was consulted where appropriate.

Overall, the Panel considers that it was provided with comprehensive and coherent documentation, and that the meetings allowed for clarification of key aspects of the design, governance, and quality assurance of the PSP.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The new Inter-institutional Postgraduate Programme (IPP) “Education Sciences: Science, Sustainability and Technology Education” is coordinated by the Department of Primary Education, School of Education, Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH), in collaboration with the Department of Primary Education and the Department of Early Childhood Education of the School of Social and Human Sciences at the University of Western Macedonia, and the Department of Physics, School of Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

The PSP is situated at the intersection of Science Education, Environmental/Sustainability Education and Educational Technology, and is explicitly aligned with contemporary international orientations such as STS, STSE and socio-scientific issues approaches. It aims to prepare graduates who are able to design, implement and evaluate innovative Teaching and Learning Sequences (TLS) that promote inquiry-based learning, critical engagement with scientific and environmental issues, and the pedagogically grounded use of digital technologies in both formal and non-formal learning environments.

The PSP leads to a Postgraduate Diploma (90 ECTS, EQF level 7) over three academic semesters, with the possibility of part-time study over six semesters. It offers three specialisation tracks: “Science Education,” “Physics Education and Educational Technology,” and “Environment and Sustainability Education.” The curriculum combines common core modules with specialisation-specific compulsory and elective courses and gives students the option either to complete a Master’s thesis or, alternatively, to follow a coursework-only route through additional modules in the third semester. Teaching is offered in Greek and is organised in a hybrid mode, with approximately 40% face-to-face teaching and 60% synchronous distance learning, supported by certified videoconferencing facilities and institutional e-learning platforms.

The PSP builds on and complements existing postgraduate provision in Education Sciences at DUTH and its partners and is underpinned by a detailed feasibility and sustainability study, including analysis of labour-market needs and of the academic and infrastructural capacity of the three institutions. It is explicitly designed to serve both practicing and prospective teachers in primary and secondary education, as well as graduates wishing to pursue research and doctoral studies in the combined fields of science, sustainability and technology education.

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 link 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

At institutional level, Democritus University of Thrace has a clearly articulated strategy for the development of postgraduate study programmes, which emphasises excellence in education, the link between teaching and research, and responsiveness to societal and labour-market needs. This strategy is formally endorsed by Senate decisions and operationalised through the internal Quality Assurance System and MODIP procedures.

The PSP under review is firmly embedded within this strategic framework. The Accreditation Proposal, the MODIP report and the feasibility/sustainability studies demonstrate that the programme's establishment was preceded by a structured analysis of academic remit, labour-market demand, available human and material resources, and long-term financial viability, including a detailed budget and consideration of alternative funding sources.

The programme has a formal Quality Policy, aligned with the institutional Quality Policy of DUTH, which sets out its commitment to promoting the academic profile and orientation of the PSP, achieving its learning outcomes and continuously improving its provision. This policy, together with a detailed Quality Targeting document that identifies strategic and operational quality goals, indicators, baseline values, target values, responsible actors and timelines, is available in written form and published on the programme's website.

The Panel also noted that the institution has an explicit e-learning strategy, incorporated into the broader institutional strategy, which specifies the pedagogical and technological framework for distance learning in postgraduate programmes. For this PSP, the choice of a hybrid model with up to 60% distance learning is justified in the documentation, with reference to the existing certified infrastructure at all three partner universities and the digital competences of the teaching staff.

Mechanisms for internal quality assurance and review are clearly defined. The Study Regulations set out annual internal evaluation procedures in collaboration with MODIP, including monitoring of curriculum content, student workload, progression and completion rates, and student satisfaction with the learning environment and support services. The Quality Policy also commits the PSP to reviewing and updating its website and publicly available information regularly.

II. Analysis

The Panel judges that the PSP is well aligned with the institutional strategy for postgraduate studies. The programme is clearly positioned within DUTH's aspiration to connect high-quality postgraduate education with research, innovation and societal engagement, and it responds to recognised national and international priorities in science, sustainability and technology education. The inter-institutional nature of the PSP is consistent with the institution's strategic emphasis on collaboration and regional development.

With regard to quality assurance policy, the programme meets and, in some respects, exceeds the expectations of Principle 1. The Quality Policy is not a generic statement but a context-specific document that links explicitly to the PSP's academic profile, learning outcomes and intended graduate attributes, and it is supported by concrete quality targets and measurable indicators. This provides a robust framework for monitoring both the implementation and the outcomes of the PSP over time.

The e-learning strategy is similarly well articulated. The institution has in place clear regulations and pedagogical guidelines for distance learning, and the PSP has justified its hybrid model with reference to both educational considerations (flexibility for working teachers, support for students from different regions) and the available digital infrastructure and staff expertise. The Panel considers that the hybrid approach is appropriate to the target student group and to the nature of the programme, provided that the quality of interaction and student support is systematically monitored.

The procedures for internal review and quality enhancement are coherent and integrated within the institutional IQAS. There is evidence of prior internal scrutiny by MODIP, including the completion of a specific questionnaire on the PSP's compliance with the requirements of Principle 1, and a clear description of how internal evaluations will feed into decision-making at programme and departmental level.

One area where the Panel sees scope for further strengthening concerns the systematic involvement of external stakeholders (e.g. school partners, graduate representatives, social partners) in the periodic review of strategic quality goals and in assessing the evolving relevance of the PSP to labour-market and societal needs. While external partners have been consulted in the design phase, their structured involvement in ongoing quality targeting is not yet fully formalised.

III. Conclusions

Overall, the PSP fully meets the requirements of Principle 1. The development, organisation and implementation of the programme are firmly embedded in the institution's strategic management framework; feasibility and sustainability have been analysed in depth; a clear and published Quality Policy and Quality Targeting framework are in place; and the e-learning component is supported by an explicit strategy and adequate infrastructure.

The Panel encourages the academic unit to build on these strong foundations by further formalising the role of external stakeholders in the periodic review of quality goals and by continuing to monitor the implementation of the hybrid learning model through systematically collected evidence on student engagement, progression and outcomes.

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 EEAP recommends that the Department:

- Further formalise the participation of external stakeholders (e.g., school partners, graduates, representatives of educational and cultural institutions) in the annual review of the PSP's strategic and quality targets, for example through an advisory or "external partners" committee with a clear remit.

- Ensure that the Quality Policy and Quality Targeting documents remain easily accessible and up to date on the PSP website and consider providing an English summary to enhance international visibility.

- Monitor and periodically review the hybrid e-learning model using specific indicators (e.g., student engagement, satisfaction, completion rates) so that any necessary pedagogical or organisational adjustments can be made in a timely manner.

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

The Democritus University of Thrace and under the aegis of the Department of Primary Education of the School of Education that stands as the coordinating department, and in collaboration with the Department of Primary Education and the Department of Early Childhood Education of the School of Social and Human Sciences at the University of Western Macedonia, and the Department of Physics of the School of Sciences at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, jointly organizes what they name as the Interinstitutional Postgraduate Program (IPP) titled: Educational Sciences: Science, Sustainability and Technology Education. The IPP offers three (3) specialization tracks: Science Education, Physics Education & Educational Technology, Environment and Sustainability Education.

This PSP was designed in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework, level 7. What distinguishes the PSP is that it a) is an Interinstitutional Postgraduate Program (also named IPP in public documents) that affords the three major IHEs in the northern part of the country to play critical roles in the design and implementation of the program; b) aims to provide postgraduate-level teaching through interdisciplinary approaches and prepare educators for the design and implementation of contemporary trends in primary and secondary education curricula. It follows that c) these trends emphasize important approaches that include inquiry-based teaching and learning, encouraging participants to create learning environments where students engage in scientific investigation, the study of scientific texts from printed as well as digital sources, hands-on experimentation, problem solving, as well as synthesizing resources.

The program addresses a complex field that integrates Science Education (SE), Sustainability and Environmental Education (SEE), and both digital and traditional Technology (T). This integration reflects two key educational imperatives: a) the contemporary global challenges that are increasingly linked to environmental and sustainability issues, and b) that educational approaches must adapt to the larger and evolving knowledge base, in which technology plays a central role, and therefore aims in connecting theory into practice.

The IPP has three major aims for its students/graduates:

1) Train current and prospective teachers in primary and secondary education in the design, implementation, and evaluation of Teaching and Learning Sequences (TLS) in the domains of Science–Sustainability–Technology. Furthermore, the notion of TLS aims to support the teaching of declarative, procedural, and epistemological knowledge, with a strong emphasis on identifying, utilizing, and transforming students' representations through the integration of digital technologies. As such, TLS fosters inquiry-based learning and are grounded in educational research.

2) Educate researchers in the field of Educational Sciences, with a specialization in science and sustainability/environmental education, enhanced using technology. Graduates of the IPP will acquire the theoretical and practical background, as well as the necessary skills, to work in a range of professional and research contexts related to science and environmental/sustainability education with technology, in
both formal and non-formal learning environments.
3) Equally emphasize research and professional development, aiming to support graduates in pursuing doctoral studies and in becoming not only effective educators
but also, capable educational leaders and agents of change within the educational system.

Students enrolled in the program may opt for the minimum duration of study leading to the award of the Postgraduate Diploma of Specialization (PDS) in three (3)
academic semesters, corresponding to 90 ECTS credits. There is provision for part-time attendance, with completion of the program in six (6) semesters. The completion of a master's thesis is within the full/part time framework and depends largely on the area of specialization and/or the option even, of a thesis submission. As advertised in the Student Guide students must successfully complete all required courses during the first and second semesters (A and B), and either submit and defend a master's thesis, or complete all required courses offered in the third semester (C), according to the selected area of specialization. Courses are categorized as Common courses (shared across all specialization areas), and Specialization-specific courses, which are further classified as Compulsory (required for each specialization area), and Optional (students choose from a predetermined list). Each semester includes two elective courses per specialization area, which are listed in separate tables following the detailed semester structure.

The mode of instruction is designed to be of a hybrid learning model, which combines in-person instruction with synchronous distance learning methods, with 60% of instruction to be delivered through synchronous online teaching. The collaborating departments in the three campuses provide the necessary infrastructure to support remote teaching, including videoconferencing classrooms and licensed educational software platforms for distance learning.

In the Student Guide there is a detailed account of rules and regulations about attendance, assignments, evaluations/assessments, an unabridged schedule of all the classes and course descriptions and faculty assignments by course, as well as details about the thesis submission are provided. All the above are cross-referenced with links that students can also access easily. The annual number of students admitted to the (IPP) is set at a maximum of seventy-five (75), distributed evenly across the three specialization areas, with twenty-five (25) students per area. Tuition is set at 800 Euros per semester or totaling 2400 Euros.

Across the three campuses, faculty with areas of expertise have been identified and are listed as course instructors, often collaborating across institutions and supporting the central tenet of interinstitutional work and study. As expected, the preponderance of instructors is from the Democritus University of Thrace, with the University of Western Macedonia in second place in terms of designers/collaborators, and the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, coming in third. Accordingly, within the cities of the three collaborating institutions (Alexandroupoli. Florina and Thessaloniki) the program has identified and has worked in the past with numerous educational and cultural institutions that serve as external collaborators and ardent supporters of this new IPP.

II. Analysis

This PSP is tightly and expertly designed and aims to meet the needs of its students and critically, to equip the labor market in diverse educational and cultural settings as well as in offering graduates with doctoral and research options, all in the complex field that integrates science education, sustainability and environmental education, and both digital and traditional technologies. It has become clear that the faculty and coursework that has been designed challenges traditional routes to teaching and learning in the physical sciences by elevating the discourse as to what constitutes scientific leaning and how that can best be supported and interpreted in multiple educational settings. This is a much-needed area of expertise, and this program aims to train and support students, graduates, institutions, and indeed their respective local communities. This is admirable work that without a doubt will bring to fruition all that has been designed and constructed from years of experience and expertise of the faculty.

Nonetheless, it is unclear to this EEAP committee how students that enroll in the program that do not have a school affiliation, or an educational background will fare in a program that is necessarily school based and uniquely teaching and learning oriented. It is unclear whether a student from a non-educational background will be sufficiently equipped for what the realities of a teaching and learning are and will require if there is no provision for significant teaching practice experiences. This committee in fact questions whether with the acquisition of the IPP diploma, a teaching certificate will also be awarded; for if that is the case indeed, this aspect of the program needs to be re-articulated and clarified in all public documents.

The EEAP discussed the possibility of the master's thesis being not an option for students, but in fact, a requirement for all students across the three areas of specialization. This, especially given the program's heavy reliance on scientific notions of research, teaching and learning and the complex realities of environmental sustainability, as well as the integration of current digital technologies, seems to be a prudent consideration.

Based on interviews with representatives of the exceptional array of social/external partners, this PSP is very well received and appreciated by all. And

while the internal faculty and MODIP evaluation processes are exemplary in their detail and candor and hence, point to important programmatic considerations, it appears that the same cannot be claimed about consultation with external partners. This would be a terrific addition to evaluating the program in the future certainly, as well in revising key areas, such as the major omission mentioned above.

III. Conclusions

This PSP contributes greatly to current and advanced conceptualizations of science education that include the innovative and critically important notions of environmental sustainability and technological expertise. It was evident from all the documents examined, and the interviews conducted with faculty as well as with the external partners form the three cities involved, that this PSP is highly valued by all its constituents for the program's scientific scope and socio-cultural significance. Certainly, with a few revisions, this PSP will most certainly lead in this important field.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that the Department:

- First, clarity of educational/school setting background as to the students that will enroll in the program, is an important consideration before this program is approved to commence. It follows, that students admitted in any of the three areas of specialization that do not have teaching experiences must be provided with opportunities to gain such experiences, especially if the diploma will afford graduates teaching certification.
- Second, a program that purports to hold in high esteem scientific notions of teaching and learning in the physical sciences and in numerous labor contexts, as well as environmental sustainability and complex technologies, might consider ways to make the master's thesis a requirement for all students. This may be a distinguishing mark of the program rather than the usual route of either a thesis or two extra courses.
- Third, program revisions can be enhanced greatly by consulting with graduates of physical sciences undergraduate programs across the three campuses to harness valuable information and opinions. Similarly, the identified external/social partners that this EEAP believes are of an unusually high quality as a group and individually, may also be critical partners in re-thinking and re-constructions of some key elements of the program.

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

Student admission, duration of studies, student progression and mobility are clearly defined in the programme. The intended selection criteria for student admission are transparent and mainly based on the following: general grade of Bachelor's degree, grade in undergraduate courses related to the subject of the PSP, performance in the thesis (if applicable at the undergraduate level), and any research or professional experience of the candidate in a related field.

The general structure of the programme applies to the ECTS system (90 ECTS in total), which allows easy transfer among European Universities, student mobility, and process of recognising the degree. Courses are taught in person and remotely with a corresponding percentage 40/60. The PSP "Education Sciences Science, Sustainability and Technology Education" is in Greek. New postgraduate students of the PSP will be supported with appropriate actions, including information on the Programme of Study, visits to the infrastructure, and orientation.

A grant mechanism is planned to encourage student recruitment. The Erasmus+ Programme provides student mobility, both for studies in Institutions of Higher Education, as well as for internships in different infrastructures abroad.

The Department, together with the other two other institutions implicated in the PSP, will provide Academic Advisors for each of the postgraduate students to advise the student during his/her studies. An official Study Guide clearly outlines the conditions for the realisation of the Master's thesis which is optional (e.g., transparency in the process of awarding and examining the thesis, counselling, and guidance for the preparation of the thesis). Students will have regular communication with the coordinator of their thesis. The progress of students is monitored with statistics which are presented to the Assembly of the Department by the Coordinating Committee.

Communication between students and professors is facilitated through electronic means, allowing for the submission of assignments, distribution of marks, course reviews, and access to professors' notes. The Department utilises e-learning and has supplied, free of charge, to all faculty and students the Microsoft Teams platform.

The evaluation process of teachers by students is also well defined. The evaluation of the educational process by students takes place electronically, for all courses of the current semester, during the teaching period. After the completion of the evaluation through MODIP, the members of the teaching staff and OMEA are informed.

There is currently no established internship offered by the Master Programme. It is recommended that it should be part of the curriculum as optional.

II. Analysis

The Department has established clear and detailed student admission procedures and support for the smooth progression of their studies. They also effectively apply regulations that pertain to all aspects of students' admission, progression, recognition, and degree/certification award. Graduating students will be issued both a Diploma and its Supplement automatically and free of charge, immediately after the completion of their studies.

III. Conclusions

Procedures concerning student admission, student mobility, and thesis realisation, are clearly presented, and are following the required European standards. The structure of the PSP promotes the achievement of the target learning outcomes but should also reflect on whether students would benefit from an internship.

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

The EEAP recommends that the Department:

- The Department should offer the option of internship/practical training or thesis. The students with no work experience in the field of education should have a mandatory internship and an option of thesis. Students with working experience should have a mandatory thesis and an option of internship. Offering work experience module/s for structured opportunities and for application of theoretical knowledge in practice is significant for students.

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 teaching staff of the Inter-institutional Postgraduate Programme (IPP) "Education Sciences: Science, Sustainability and Technology Education" is drawn from three collaborating universities: the Department of Primary Education of the School of Education at Democritus University of Thrace (coordinating department), the Department of Primary Education and the Department of Early Childhood Education of the School of Social and Human Sciences at the University of Western Macedonia, and the Department of Physics of the School of Sciences at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

The teaching team includes members of academic staff across different ranks (Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors and Lecturers), whose scientific profiles cover the core areas of the PSP: science education, physics education, environmental and sustainability education, educational technology and related fields of education sciences. The staff list and course allocation tables included in the accreditation file demonstrate that each module is assigned to appropriately qualified academics with expertise in the relevant thematic area. In several cases, modules are co-taught by staff from different institutions, which

reinforces the inter-institutional character of the programme and supports interdisciplinarity.

The number of teaching staff involved is adequate to support the planned intake of up to 75 students (25 per specialisation), the hybrid teaching model and the supervision of Master's theses. The distribution of staff is weighed towards the coordinating institution (DUTH), but there is meaningful participation from the University of Western Macedonia and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, ensuring representation of all partners. Teaching responsibilities, thesis supervision duties and administrative roles in the Programme's Coordinating Committee are clearly defined in the internal regulations and in the documentation submitted for accreditation.

The research activity of the teaching staff is substantial. The CVs and publication lists provided indicate that staff members are active in national and international research projects in science and environmental education, sustainability, STEM/STEAM, and digital technologies in education, and publish in peer-reviewed journals, edited volumes and conference proceedings. This research profile is reflected in the curriculum, particularly in modules focusing on inquiry-based learning, socio-scientific issues, and the design and evaluation of Teaching and Learning Sequences (TLS).

Members of the teaching staff have extensive experience in initial teacher education and in-service teacher professional development, as well as in supervising postgraduate theses. Several are involved in collaborations with schools, environmental centres, museums and other cultural or scientific institutions, which strengthens the links between the PSP and its broader educational ecosystem.

Professional development opportunities for teaching staff are available at institutional level, including seminars and training related to university pedagogy, assessment, and the use of digital tools and e-learning platforms. The institutions provide technical support for hybrid teaching (e.g., videoconferencing facilities, e- class platforms, Microsoft Teams), and there is evidence that staff are already using these tools in their teaching.

The quality of teaching is monitored through the institutional quality assurance system (MODIP), which includes regular student evaluations of courses and instructors via anonymous questionnaires, as well as internal reviews conducted by the Department and programme committees. The results of these evaluations processes are discussed in departmental bodies and are intended to inform teaching improvement and staff development.

II. Analysis

The Panel considers that the teaching staff is well qualified and appropriate in number and profile for the aims and scope of the PSP. The combination of expertise in science education, environmental and sustainability education,

physics, and educational technology is particularly well aligned with the three specialisations and with the cross-cutting emphasis on TLS, inquiry-based learning and socio-scientific issues. The inter-institutional composition of the team offers clear added value, allowing students to benefit from diverse academic traditions, research orientations and local partnerships across three regions.

The strong research activity of the staff contributes to a research-informed curriculum and provides a solid foundation for engaging students in inquiry, project work and thesis research. The experience of many staff members in teaching education and professional development is an additional asset, given the PSP's orientation towards practicing and prospective teachers and its ambition to prepare educational leaders and change agents.

The mechanisms in place for staff evaluation and development, through MODIP and institutional staff development services, are appropriate and consistent with national and European expectations. The provision of training and support in digital pedagogy is particularly important in view of the hybrid delivery model, and the Panel notes positively that the institutions have already invested in this area.

At the same time, the Panel notes some points for further attention. First, while the distribution of teaching responsibilities is clear, it will be important to monitor workload balance across the three institutions and among staff, especially as the programme becomes fully operational and student numbers stabilise. This includes teaching, supervision, administrative roles, and participation in quality assurance processes. Second, given the rapidly evolving nature of the fields of sustainability and digital technology, the programme would benefit from a structured approach to continuous professional development in these areas, including opportunities for staff to participate in specialised training, international networks and collaborative projects directly connected to the PSP. Third, the inter-institutional character of the programme offers an opportunity to further develop co-teaching, joint supervision and team-based curriculum development, so that students more fully experience the added value of studying in a multi-university PSP.

III. Conclusions

The Panel concludes that the teaching staff of the PSP meets the requirements of Principle 4 in terms of number, qualifications, scholarly activity and relevance to the subject areas of the programme. The academic staff is research-active, experienced in postgraduate teaching and supervision, and capable of supporting the hybrid learning model and the intended learning outcomes of the PSP. The inter-institutional composition of the team, combined with existing quality assurance and staff development mechanisms, provides a strong basis for the sustainable delivery and continuous enhancement of the programme.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that the Department:

- Monitor the distribution of teaching, supervision and administrative workloads across staff and institutions on a regular basis, to ensure that responsibilities remain balanced and sustainable as the PSP evolves.

- Further strengthen opportunities for staff development in areas directly related to the PSP, such as hybrid/digital pedagogy, sustainability education and emerging technologies, making explicit links between these activities and the programme's curriculum.

- Encourage and, where feasible, formalise co-teaching and joint thesis supervision arrangements across the three institutions, so that students can benefit more fully from the inter-institutional nature of the programme.

- Consider establishing a light internal mentoring or peer-observation scheme within the PSP, particularly to support early-career staff and to promote the sharing of good practices in postgraduate teaching and supervision.

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 new Inter-Institutional Postgraduate Study Program (PSP) "Education Sciences: Science, Sustainability and Technology Education" of the Democritus University of Thrace, in collaboration with the University of Western Macedonia and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, is an academically ambitious and innovative initiative. Its interdepartmental nature allows access to the collective human, physical, and digital resources of three universities located in different cities, thereby providing students with a wide and rich learning environment.

The PSP is supported by the existing infrastructure of DUTH, including well-equipped lecture rooms, laboratories, and full access to the University's Central Library, as well as to online databases and electronic repositories. Students benefit from modern e-learning platforms such as e-class, which supports hybrid

instruction and allows seamless communication between students and faculty, dissemination of teaching material, and submission of assignments.

Teaching is conducted in a hybrid format—40% face-to-face and 60% distance learning—offering flexibility and accessibility for students from different regions. The structure also promotes inclusive participation, enabling students with professional, family, or geographical constraints to engage effectively in postgraduate studies. Courses are enriched by laboratory-based components, interactive seminars, and research-oriented learning activities, ensuring that students develop both theoretical and methodological competences.

The teaching staff comprises a large number of experienced academics from the three partner institutions, each contributing specific expertise in education sciences, sustainability, and technology. This diversity ensures that students gain a multidisciplinary understanding and are exposed to high-level academic mentoring. The program also encourages the use of digital tools, collaborative projects, and participation in seminars and conferences.

However, the program does not currently include a practical training or internship components. While the master's dissertation offers a valuable research-based experience, the absence of practical fieldwork may limit students' opportunities for hands-on application of their knowledge in authentic educational contexts.

II. Analysis

The PSP demonstrates strong institutional commitment to providing adequate and high-quality learning resources and student support. The hybrid instructional model enhances flexibility and accessibility, particularly valuable for working teachers or students residing outside the university cities. The collaboration between three universities broadens the available academic and infrastructural resources and enriches the learning experience through interdisciplinarity and diversity of perspectives.

A key strength of the program lies in its academic staff. The teaching team is composed of highly qualified professors and researchers, representing diverse scientific backgrounds and recognized expertise in the fields of science education, environmental education, sustainability, and educational technology. Their active involvement in research and participation in national and international projects ensures that course content is continuously updated and aligned with the latest developments in the field. Moreover, their pedagogical approach is student-centered, emphasizing mentoring, interactive learning, and continuous feedback. This human resource component significantly enhances the quality of learning and provides students with individualized academic and professional guidance.

Students have access to modern digital platforms, scientific equipment, and a comprehensive library network, ensuring that learning and research needs are well met. Academic and administrative support structures, including advising and counselling services, reflect best practices in student-centered learning and inclusion. The existence of tuition exemptions and scholarships further supports equity in access.

III. Conclusions

The PSP provides adequate and high-quality learning resources and comprehensive student support mechanisms. The collaboration among three universities, the hybrid model, and the involvement of highly qualified academic staff ensure that students are offered a rich and inclusive learning environment. Procedures concerning student admission, academic guidance, and thesis realisation are clearly defined and aligned with European quality standards.

The structure and resources of the PSP fully support the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. However, the program could further benefit from considering the introduction of an internship component to enhance students' practical experience and strengthen the link between theory and educational practice.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that the Department:

For students without prior professional experience in the field of education, an internship should be mandatory, while for those with relevant work experience, the completion of a thesis should be mandatory with the option of an internship. Establishing structured work experience modules would provide meaningful opportunities for the practical application of theoretical knowledge and further enhance students' professional development.

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 Democritus University of Thrace has an Internal Quality Assurance System (MODIP). The University, through MODIP and with the assistance of the Department of Primary Education organises and supports the internal and external evaluation procedures of the new Postgraduate Programme "Education Sciences Science, Sustainability and Technology Education." The annual internal evaluation of the PSP is carried out in collaboration with the Quality Assurance

Unit of the Democritus University of Thrace in the context of the internal evaluation of the academic unit to which it belongs. The annual report includes, in the form of tables, aggregated data on curricula, on educational and research work, as well as on other services offered by academic and administrative units during an academic year (two consecutive winter and spring semesters).The continuous monitoring and periodic internal evaluation of the Postgraduate Program aims at maintaining and/or improving the educational level and at the same time at creating a supportive and effective learning environment for postgraduate students.

Furthermore, the External Evaluation of the PSP will take place, through the MODIP, and the Department will organise and support the processes of the external evaluation of the new Postgraduate Programme in accordance with the specific instructions and guidelines of the University. Upon receipt of the final external evaluation of the Programme, the Curriculum Committee will study and endorse to the Assembly of the Department the findings and recommendations of the External Evaluation Committee. These findings will be discussed in specific meetings of both the OMEA, the Departments involved in the programme, and the Director for further reflection and possible actions that must be implemented. When the external evaluation of the PSP is completed and the accreditation report on the Programme is submitted, the OMEA of the Department together with the MODIP will ensure that the External Evaluation Committee's recommendations will be adopted and become the main axes of the implementation of quality assurance for the programme.

II. Analysis

The EEAP believes that the Department and the PSP have adopted procedures concerning the implementation of the curriculum and quality indicators of the entire programme and will focus on data collected through an evaluation form. The quality assurance and evaluation procedures of the PSP will continue to be carried out based on the process entitled "Internal Evaluation". The internal evaluation of a new PSP includes the evaluation of the accreditation proposal of the Postgraduate Programme and documentation in accordance with the requirements of the HAHE standards. An annual internal evaluation report will be prepared by the Quality Assurance Committee and communicated to the Board of Directors, so that any modifications can be made to occur as soon as possible. The formal evaluation of the content of the courses by the students and the teaching in individual study modules will be obtained through anonymous questionnaires that will be distributed to students. The information collected will be analysed and the programme will possibly be modified according to the internal and external evaluation data.

III. Conclusions

The maintenance of academic standards and the management and enhancement of both procedures for quality assurance and control are the collective responsibility of the Department and the University of Thrace. The EEAP members confirmed through their review of the relative documents that the

Department of Primary Education of Democritus University of Thrace, in collaboration with the Department of Primary Education and the Department of Early Childhood Education of the School of Social and Humanitarian Sciences of the University of Western Macedonia, and the Department of Physics of the School of Science of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, have in place the competent bodies and mechanisms to regularly review essential aspects of the Programme "Education Sciences Science, Sustainability and Technology Education". The Programme will be regularly internally reviewed and revised, with the participation of students and faculty members. Some of these aspects concern the objectives, content, and structure of the curriculum, knowledge offered and level of science and technology in the subject, to ensure the innovative character of the Programme.

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

The EEAP recommends that:

The Department is encouraged to obtain feedback concerning the new Programme formally from external stakeholders by operating an "external partners" committee.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

The EEAP identified several features of good practice in the design and organisation of the new Inter-institutional Postgraduate Programme (IPP) "Education Sciences: Science, Sustainability and Technology Education":

- Clear strategic alignment and robust quality policy

The PSP is firmly embedded in the institutional strategy for postgraduate education at DUTH and its partner institutions. It is supported by a clearly articulated and publicly available Quality Policy and a detailed Quality Targeting framework with specific indicators, baseline and target values, responsible actors and timelines. These elements demonstrate a mature approach to strategic planning and internal quality assurance.

- Innovative and timely academic profile

The PSP occupies a coherent and forward-looking niche at the intersection of science education, sustainability/environmental education and educational technology. Its explicit alignment with contemporary approaches (e.g., STS/STSE, socio-scientific issues, inquiry-based learning) and its focus on Teaching and Learning Sequences (TLS) position it as a programme of high academic and socio-cultural relevance, responsive to current educational and societal challenges.

- Strong inter-institutional collaboration and resource sharing

The inter-institutional character of the PSP constitutes a significant strength. The collaboration between three universities enables the pooling of specialised academic staff, infrastructures and external partnerships across three cities, broadening students' exposure to diverse scientific and educational environments and enhancing the overall learning experience.

- Well-structured curriculum and flexible study pathways

The curriculum is clearly organised, with a meaningful balance between common core modules and specialisation-specific compulsory and elective courses. The provision for full-time and part-time study, as well as the option between a thesis route and a coursework-only route, enhances flexibility and widens participation. The alignment with EQF level 7 and the coherent use of ECTS facilitate recognition and mobility.

- Hybrid learning model and effective digital infrastructure

The programme's hybrid format (approximately 40% face-to-face and 60% distance learning) is well justified and is underpinned by certified technological infrastructure and institutional e-learning platforms. This model supports accessibility for working professionals and students from different regions, while promoting the pedagogically informed use of digital technologies.

- High-quality academic staff and student-centred support structures

The teaching team consists of experienced and research-active academics with recognised

expertise in science education, environmental/sustainability education and educational technology. Their engagement in national and international projects ensures that teaching is research-informed and up to date. Academic advising, use of digital platforms for communication and feedback, and clearly defined procedures for thesis supervision and student evaluation reflect a student-centred ethos and good practice in postgraduate provision.

- Well-developed internal evaluation and quality assurance mechanisms
The PSP is fully integrated into the institutional Internal Quality Assurance System (MODIP). There are clearly described procedures for annual internal evaluation, systematic use of student feedback, and structured processes for responding to internal and external evaluation findings. These mechanisms provide a solid basis for ongoing monitoring and quality enhancement.

II. Areas of Weakness

The EEAP also identified certain areas where the PSP could be strengthened:

- Clarity regarding target student profile and teaching qualification implications
While the programme is explicitly oriented towards primary and secondary education, it is not fully clear how students without prior educational/teaching background will be supported in acquiring the necessary school-based competences. In addition, the relationship between completion of the PSP and any form of teaching certification or professional recognition is not consistently and transparently articulated in all public documents.

- Limited provision for structured practical experience
The absence of an internship or structured practical training component may restrict opportunities for students, particularly those without prior professional experience, to apply theoretical knowledge in authentic educational settings and to develop practice-based competences systematically.

- Optional status of the Master's thesis
Given the programme's strong emphasis on research-informed practice and its stated aim of preparing graduates for doctoral studies and research roles, the optional nature of the Master's thesis may dilute the research dimension for some students and reduce the distinctiveness of the PSP.

- Partial formalisation of external stakeholder involvement in quality assurance

Although the PSP has consulted external/social partners during its design and enjoys strong support from them, the structured and regular involvement of external stakeholders and graduates in the ongoing internal review of the programme and in assessing labour-market relevance is not yet fully formalised (e.g. through a standing advisory committee with a clear remit).

- Internship and work experience not yet integrated into overall design

While the panel recognises that the programme is new, the link between the proposed options for internships/practical training and the broader learning outcomes, progression routes and quality assurance framework has not yet been fully elaborated.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

Building on the above strengths and areas for improvement, the EEAP recommends that the Department and partner institutions consider the following follow-up actions:

1. Clarify and refine the target student profile and professional outcomes

- Clearly define, in official and public documents, the academic and professional profile of the students for whom the PSP is primarily intended, distinguishing between those with and without teaching experience.

- Explicitly state whether the PSP leads to, or is associated with, any form of teaching certification or professional recognition, and ensure that this information is consistently presented across all documents and websites.

2. Introduce and formalise structured practical training opportunities

- Integrate an internship or practical training component into the curriculum, particularly for students without prior professional experience in education, so that they can acquire structured and supervised practice in relevant educational or cultural settings.

- Consider adopting a differentiated model whereby students without work experience have a mandatory internship (with the option of a thesis), while students with substantial work experience have a mandatory thesis (with the option of an internship or work-based module).

3. Reconsider the status of the Master's thesis in light of programme aims

- Re-examine the decision to offer the Master's thesis as an option rather than a requirement for all students, especially in view of the programme's strong research orientation and its stated aim of preparing graduates for doctoral studies.

- If the thesis remains optional, ensure that the alternative coursework route includes substantial research-oriented components that adequately support the development of research skills.

4. Strengthen the formal involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance

- Establish a formal "external partner" or advisory committee, including representatives

from schools, educational and cultural institutions, graduates and other social partners, with a clear mandate to provide feedback on programme relevance, curriculum updates and labour-market trends.

- Use the feedback from this committee, alongside MODIP procedures, to inform periodic curriculum review and strategic quality goal setting.

5. Systematically monitor and review the hybrid learning model.

- Develop specific indicators (e.g., student engagement, satisfaction with online and face-to-face components, progression and completion rates, digital access and inclusion) to monitor the effectiveness of the hybrid format.

- Use the evidence collected to make pedagogical or organisational adjustments where needed, ensuring that the quality of interaction and student support is maintained across all modes of delivery.

6. - Consolidate and communicate good practice in learning resources and student support

Continue to capitalise on the strong human and material resources across the three institutions, documenting and sharing good practices in mentoring, use of digital tools, and research-based teaching.

- Ensure that information regarding learning resources, student support services, scholarships, and mobility opportunities is easily accessible and regularly updated on the PSP website.

Taken together, these follow-up actions aim to preserve and further enhance the strong academic profile, inter-institutional collaboration and innovative character of the PSP, while addressing specific issues related to practical experience, research training and stakeholder involvement, thereby supporting the sustainable development and continuous improvement of the programme.

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
SIINA CHRISTINA	Signed by SIINA CHRISTINA
KATSAROU ELENI	Signed by KATSAROU ELENI
MAKOPOULOU KYRIAKI	Signed by MAKOPOULOU KYRIAKI
MAKRI ANGELIKI	Signed by MAKRI ANGELIKI
VALAVANIDOU-IOANNITOU GEORGIA (GINA)	Signed by VALAVANIDOU-IOANNITOU GEORGIA (GINA)