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Accreditation Report

for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Children's Books and Educational Material

Department: Pre-school Education and Educational Design

Institution: University of the Aegean

Date: 23/02/2025



Επιχειρησιακό Πρόγραμμα
Ανάπτυξη Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού,
Εκπαίδευση και Διά Βίου Μάθηση
Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



NOTES

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Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Postgraduate Study Programme of **Children's Books and Educational Material** of the **University of the Aegean** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the postgraduate study programme of Children's Books and Educational Material of the **University of the Aegean** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. Makopoulou Kyriaki (Chair)
(Title, Name, Surname)
University of Birmingham
(Institution of origin)

2. Almpanaki Xanthi
(Title, Name, Surname)
Regional Centres for Educational Planning (PEKES).
(Institution of origin)

3. KYRIAKIDES LEONIDAS
(Title, Name, Surname)
Τμήμα Επιστημών της Αγωγής, Σχολή Κοινωνικών Επιστημών και Επιστημών της Αγωγής, Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου
(Institution of origin)

4. LIZARDOU DIMITRA PANAGIOTA
(Title, Name, Surname)
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
(Institution of origin)

5. VALAVANIDOU-IOANNITOU GEORGIA (GINA)
(Title, Name, Surname)
Le Mans Université
(Institution of origin)

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

Please refer briefly to the Panel preparation for the postgraduate study programme review, as well as to the documentation provided and considered by the Panel. State the dates of the review and describe the review and the meetings held. Feel free to mention any additional information regarding the procedure, as appropriate.

The members of the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) had access to all necessary documentation provided by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) and the University of Aegean, in advance of the online meetings scheduled for the external accreditation of the Post-graduate Study Programme (PSP) 'Children's Books and Educational Material' (thereafter referred to as PSP or the Programme). All materials were readily available online and included the Standards for Quality Accreditation, Mapping Grid, Assessment Guide, Assurance Policy Document, the European Qualifications Framework, and various other supporting documents. Additionally, for the current accreditation, the materials included the School's Proposal for Accreditation of the Postgraduate Programme, module descriptions, as well statistical data (e.g., results from module evaluations), quality indicators and goals, student evaluation questionnaire etc. The EEAP also reviewed the School's web-site. The visit was online, using Zoom. The first teleconference was conducted on Monday 13/01/2025 and the second on Wednesday 15/01/2025. A number of private meetings of the EEAP took place (on different occasions, including prior to the online meetings and before the closure meeting) to finalise the report. During the visit the EEAP had the following meetings:

Monday 13 January 2025

1) Meeting with the director of the Programme, the Head of Department, and members of the OMEA and MODIP

In this meeting, a clear and succinct overview of the Programme was provided, covering its history, development over time, and current status and important matters for consideration. The presentation highlighted key actions taken to ensure quality provision and address any areas of concern.

2) Online tour and discussion about facilities and available resources

With key administrative staff and technical support personnel present, the meeting provided an overview of the facilities and learning resources (such as materials and equipment) available to enhance student engagement and learning.

Wednesday 15 January 2025

3) Meeting with teaching staff

Several topics were covered in this meeting, such as professional development opportunities,

staff mobility, workload, student assessments, Programme and module evaluation processes, and engagement with research and research-driven teaching strategies.

4) Meeting with current students

During this meeting, various topics were discussed, including student satisfaction with their study experience, the facilities and support, their contribution and perspectives on quality assurance processes, and any other matters that the students perceived to be their priorities related to their studies.

5) Meeting with graduate students

The meeting with graduates consisted of sharing their experiences during postgraduate studies, including the challenges and successes they encountered. Additionally, we discussed how this postgraduate degree have influenced their career path, including any specific skills or knowledge they gained that have been beneficial in their professional development.

6) Meeting with employers and social partners

In this meeting, the relationships that the Programme has established with external stakeholders from both the private and public sectors were explored. Discussions focused on how these partnerships have been developed and maintained, including any collaborative projects, education and research initiatives undertaken, as well as how these connections contribute to the overall quality and relevance of the Programme, ensuring it meets the needs of both students and the wider community.

7) Closure meeting

Following an intermediate private meeting of the EEAP, the closure meeting was intended to, firstly, engage in a discussion to clarify points and findings that required further explanation; and secondly, provide an informal and preliminary summary of the key findings, observations and recommendations, from EEAP. This summary highlighted the strengths of the Programme as well as areas for improvement, ensuring that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the preliminary evaluation outcomes, and opportunity for a constructive discussion was available.

Names of key staff from the Programme and MODIP:

- Stamatis Panagiotis, Professor, Head of the Department
- Missiou Marianna, Assistant Professor, Director of PSP “Children’s Book and Educational Material”
- Kouroutsidou Maria, Assistant Professor, OMEA member
- Stylianos Xanthopoulos, Associate Professor, Vice Rector of Administrative and Academic Affairs, Head of MODIP
- Christos Matsoukas, Associate Professor of the Department of Environment, MODIP Member
- Maria Leventeli, MODIP staff

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

Please provide a brief overview of the postgraduate study programme with reference to the following: history, academic remit, duration of studies, qualification awarded, employment opportunities, orientation challenges or any other key background information. Also, you may provide a short description of the home Department and Institution, with reference to student population, campus or any other facts, as deemed appropriate.

The PSP 'Children's Book and Pedagogical Material' initially began its operation as an Inter-departmental Postgraduate Program of Studies with the same title during the academic year 1998 – 1999. The academic year 2007 - 2008 inaugurates its autonomous operation as a PSP of the Department of Early Childhood Education, School of Humanities at the University of the Aegean, with new content of studies. Since that time, several amendments and Programme development actions have been implemented. These changes occurred in various years, specifically in 2014, 2018, 2019, and 2023. Each of these updates sought to enhance the Programme's quality and relevance, addressing evolving educational standards and the needs of students.

The current Programme aims to specialise in training teachers and other professionals to develop the knowledge, skills, and understanding necessary to effectively use children's books to enhance school children's comprehension. Additionally, the Programme focuses on students learning how to design relevant, evidence-based pedagogical material, empowering them to address contemporary challenges in education and society effectively. The primary mission of the PSP is to ensure excellence in postgraduate education in children's literature, books, and educational material development. The Programme's primary objectives are identified below:

- a. Focus on studying and researching the field of children's literature, including its diverse forms and applications in education.
- b. Train experts capable of utilizing children's books and designing educational materials. Students are equipped with the technical knowledge needed to promote playful and creative learning, ultimately tackling educational and societal challenges across various educational levels.
- c. Enhance the competencies of educators by familiarizing them with modern perspectives on literature, innovative teaching methodologies, and new tools for classroom implementation.

The curriculum encompasses a broad range of topics designed for teachers and professionals in both formal and non-formal education. It delves deeply into areas such as children's books and literature, pedagogical materials, and educational games, all within the context of modern learning and educational environments.

The Programme spans three academic semesters, including the compulsory completion of a

research thesis in the third/final semester. To obtain the Master's Degree, it is required a successful examination in ten (10) total modules and the successful completion of the Master's Thesis. In the first semester of studies, postgraduate students should attend, and successfully complete, 5 core modules (5 Courses x 6 ECTS = 30 ECTS). In the second semester of studies, the choice of specialisation is made. In every specialisation the students should attend and successfully complete 5 modules (5 Courses x 6 ECTS = 30 ECTS). In the third semester of studies, the preparation of the thesis begins, and its completion offers 30 ECTS. There is no module designed to offer work experience (placement) in the Programme. Upon successful completion of the PSP, graduates are conferred with a Diploma of Postgraduate Studies in Children's Books and Educational Material. This qualification will equip students with various career opportunities in different settings in the public and private sector and in schools. The institution offers high-quality infrastructure for face-to-face and web-based learning.

The PSP operates within the framework of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), which quantifies academic workload. The complete cost of the Post-graduate Programme amounts to 2.600€, reflecting the total number of 90 required credit units. Teaching is provided in the Greek language, although applicants are expected to have good knowledge of English language, to access the bibliography and other learning materials. The student acceptance is up to 40 students per academic year and there is an entry examination.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 1: QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND QUALITY GOAL SETTING FOR THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT. THIS POLICY SHOULD EXPAND AND BE AIMED (WITH THE COLLABORATION OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS) AT THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

The quality assurance policy of the academic unit should be in line with the quality assurance policy of the Institution and must be formulated in the form of a public statement, which is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study programmes offered by the academic unit.

Indicatively, the quality policy statement of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement a quality policy that will promote the academic profile and orientation of the postgraduate study programme (PSP), its purpose and field of study; it will realise the programme's goals and it will determine the means and ways for attaining them; it will implement appropriate quality procedures, aiming at the programme's improvement.

In particular, in order to implement this policy, the academic unit commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate:

- a) the suitability of the structure and organisation of postgraduate study programmes*
- b) the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education - level 7*
- c) the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching at the PSP*
- d) the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff for the PSP*
- e) the drafting, implementation, and review of specific annual quality goals for the improvement of the PSP*
- f) the level of demand for the graduates' qualifications in the labour market*
- g) the quality of support services, such as the administrative services, the libraries and the student welfare office for the PSP*
- h) the efficient utilisation of the financial resources of the PSP that may be drawn from tuition fees*
- i) the conduct of an annual review and audit of the quality assurance system of the PSP through the cooperation of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU)*

Documentation

- *Quality Assurance Policy of the PSP*
- *Quality goal setting of the PSP*

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Quality Assurance (QA) Policy of the Programme aligns with the quality policy and procedures of the University (see Annex 1.1). Specifically, the PSP is committed to maintaining and improving the quality, while ensuring that it operates in accordance with the rules governing the Department of Early Childhood Education and Educational Planning of the University of the Aegean. More specifically, the PSP ensures compliance with strategic goals, internal quality systems, and stakeholder input, aiming for continuous academic and administrative improvements. To achieve its goals (and these were presented earlier in this report), the PSP implements a series of quality assurance measures, which are periodically reviewed and adjusted. These include:

- **Programme Design and Structure:** The PSP is designed to reflect contemporary inter-disciplinary pedagogical practices. It ensures alignment with the needs of the student community and the broader objectives of the University of the Aegean.
- **Learning Outcomes:** Learning objectives are carefully aligned with the European and National Qualifications Frameworks for higher education (level 7).
- **Research Integration:** Teaching is closely linked with research through the inclusion of specialized modules, workshops, seminars, and applied projects. This approach ensures that students remain informed about current research developments.
- **Faculty Expertise:** The Programme is primarily staffed by permanent faculty members from the Department of Early Childhood Education and Educational Planning of the University of the Aegean and other related departments from other Greek higher institutions. Additional staff, including contract lecturers and doctoral experts, are re-recruited transparently to maintain academic rigor.
- **Student Support Services:** Comprehensive support services, including administrative assistance, library resources, and student welfare provision, are provided to enhance the student experience.
- **Connection to the Job Market:** The PSP emphasizes the applicability of acquired skills in the job market. It actively engages with alumni and tracks their career progression to refine the Programme's relevance.
- **Evaluation and Improvement:** The team develops, implements, and reviews annual quality goals to inform the ongoing development of the Programme. Also, the PSP conducts regular internal evaluations in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Unit (MO.ΔΙ.Π.) of the University and the Internal Evaluation and Accreditation Team (OM.E.A.).

Further to the Quality Objectives of the PSP and its strategic vision (see Annex 1.2), these emphasize increasing the Programme's visibility through enhanced online presence and improving academic quality by fostering student-centered learning and engagement. Specific goals include promoting interaction between current and past students, tracking alumni career paths, and increasing student participation in evaluations. Actions involve strengthening support mechanisms for students, utilizing online platforms, and conducting alumni surveys. The

overarching goal is to strengthen the Programme's impact and ensure alignment with modern educational and professional standards. Lastly, the PSP ensures transparency and accessibility by publishing the quality assurance policy on the program's website (<https://pms-pvpy.aegean.gr/genikes-plirofories/>) in Greek, making it available to all stakeholders. The QA Policy is also communicated to the public through the orientation of the new students and faculty and through regular updates via email to all stakeholders.

II. Analysis

The Quality Assurance (QA) Policy of the PSP exemplifies a thorough and systematic approach to maintaining academic excellence and aligning with the overarching objectives of the University of the Aegean and its Department of Early Childhood Education and Educational Planning. This well-defined and well-articulated policy addresses essential dimensions required to cultivate a high-quality postgraduate programme. Specifically, it aligns with both the European and National Qualification Frameworks for Higher Education, ensuring that the Programme meets rigorous standards. The QA Policy encompasses a wide range of areas, including curriculum design, teaching quality, administrative support, and inclusivity. By focusing on these critical aspects, the policy ensures that the Programme remains relevant, effective, and responsive to the needs of its students and stakeholders. The commitment to continuous improvement and adherence to established frameworks highlights the Programme's dedication to providing an exceptional educational experience.

The QA policy effectively integrates key principles of quality assurance. It addresses multiple dimensions, including academic structure, student support, research integration, and faculty expertise, providing a holistic approach to quality assurance. A notable focus on removing barriers to education, fostering equity, and integrating digital tools underscores the Programme's commitment to inclusive and modern education. Moreover, the QA policy emphasizes tracking alumni outcomes and aligning the Programme's offerings with market demands, reflecting its practical orientation and commitment to student employability. Nevertheless, the policy mentions consultation with stakeholders but could provide more detailed mechanisms for their involvement in developing the policy. Also, though international competitiveness is mentioned, the policy could include more targeted strategies for international collaboration, such as partnerships with global institutions or programmes. In addition, even though there is an emphasis in the QA policy for research development, there is no specific module in Research Methods in Education as part of this Programme. Further-more, even though there are modules for the design of educational materials, a more specific module on curriculum development is absent. Therefore, the quality of the students' the-sis cannot be easily ensured, nor can the acquisition of research skills.

III. Conclusions

As evaluated by the EEAP, the QA policy is a comprehensive document that effectively positions the Programme to achieve its goals of academic excellence and societal relevance. By enhancing the aspects identified above the policy could achieve even greater impact in the educational landscape. For example, more concrete actions in systematically collecting data from graduates and other external stakeholders (e.g., social partners, employers) would provide help to better understand the extent to which the Programme responds to the labour market needs. This process would also lead to even closer collaborations with public and private educational institutions (e.g., organisation of events and information fairs). Further-more, by including modules in research methods in education and curriculum development, the students could gain the necessary skills to not only conduct rigorous research but also contribute to the development of curriculum-related knowledge.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

Engage in concrete actions in systematically collecting data from graduates and other external stakeholders (e.g., social partners, employers) and demonstrate how these interactions inform the ongoing development of the Programme.

Include more targeted strategies for international collaboration, such as partnerships with global institutions or programmes.

Include specific modules in Research Methods in Education and in Curriculum Development.

PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

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

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

In addition, the design of PSP must consider:

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

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

Documentation

- *Senate decision for the establishment of the PSP*
- *PSP curriculum structure: courses, course categories, ECTS awarded, expected learning outcomes according to the EQF, internship, mobility opportunities*
- *Labour market data regarding the employment of graduates, international experience in a relevant scientific field*
- *PSP Student Guide*
- *Course and thesis outlines*

- *Teaching staff (name list including of areas of specialisation, its relation to the courses taught, employment relationship, and teaching assignment in hours as well as other teaching commitments in hours)*

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

To achieve the Programme aims, as these are outlined earlier in this report, Programme delivery is delivered 50% in person provision and 50% remotely (online), through access to asynchronous (Moodle) and synchronous distance learning platforms. Students deepen their knowledge, skills and competencies by participating in academic lectures, interactive work-shops, applied seminars, and other learning activities that promote (inter)active learning. The curriculum covers a wide spectrum of topics for teachers and professionals of formal and non-formal education on a) children's books and b) on the designing of pedagogical material, offering the know-how and solutions for social challenges, as well as educational and literacy related priorities. According to the quality standards, and as these were reviewed in Principle 1 above, the department is committed to implementing procedures and standards of quality in teaching and research through the employment of appropriate teaching approaches and staff. As designed and published in the Student Guide, the Programme has ten mandatory modules and students can follow one of two specialisations. The module descriptions include clear learning objectives and overall areas of focus, teaching methods employed, the set student assessment mode, as well as relevant reading lists (i.e. bibliographies). In line with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the Programme offers 90 required credit units, spanning three academic semesters. To graduate with a Master's Degree qualification, students must successfully pass a total of ten (10) modules, across the first two semesters (5 modules per semester x 6 ECTS = 30 credits each semester x 2 semester = 60 credits) and successfully complete a Master's thesis (30 credits) in the third and final semester. There is no work experience modules in the Programme.

II. Analysis

In all the documents reviewed for this principle, the information is clearly articulated and presented. The curriculum design is broadly in line with the set accreditation criteria. The expected learning outcomes are established in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Frameworks (EQF, NQF) and the Dublin Descriptors for level 7. The inclusion of a compulsory Master's thesis is a significant strength of the Programme. The experience of completing a Master's thesis can be highly rewarding for students. It not only enhances their research capabilities but also prepares them for future academic pursuits or professional roles that require strong analytical and problem-solving

skills. The thesis project can serve as a valuable portfolio piece, showcasing their ability to conduct independent research and make meaningful contributions to their discipline.

However, there are two significant areas for development. The Programme does not provide modules for practical application (i.e., work placement module) and research methodology. In relation to the lack of work placement module/s, students who pursue this master's but do not have experience in schools or other (educational) establishments, have minimum opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings, which is crucial for deepening their understanding and for developing practical skills, including ability to reflect on practice to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Without work experience and application, graduates might find it challenging to transition smoothly into the work-place, as they may lack the practical competencies and confidence that employers often seek. Additionally, work experience during a master's Programme can provide valuable net-working opportunities, allowing students to build professional relationships and gain in-sights into industry practices.

In relation to the lack of a module on research methods, our concerns relate to academic rigour. Research methods modules ensure that students are equipped to engage with advanced academic content and contribute to scholarly discourse. Although staff members discussed that the development of research methods knowledge and skills occurs as part of other modules (integrating research methods teaching in various modules in line with their focus), the existing module learning outcomes did not explicitly address research-related knowledge and competencies. A more structured and formal research methods module would support students become informed consumers of research more broadly and to make evidence-informed decisions on both academic and professional contexts.

III. Conclusions

In our reading of the structure of the Programme, we found that core modules constituting its identity are offered and support the fulfilment of the aims of the Programme. The curriculum design meets most of the accreditation criteria and aligns with EQF, NQF, and Dublin Descriptors for level 7. However, the curriculum lacks two important modules: work experience and a dedicated research methodology module. These gaps hinder students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings (especially those who are not in employing while studying or who do not have the teaching qualification). The lack of a research methods module also does not support students developing essential research skills. The compulsory Master thesis is an advantage of the Programme and the Department has the staff who can support it. Overall, the EEAP assesses the curriculum as one that provides the required skills for the specialisation of the students in their field but it needs to be reviewed and further developed.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

Organise courses in pedagogy, for the students who do not come from pedagogy related schools and do not have the educational background needed.

Design and deliver a dedicated module on research methods to add academic rigour in the Programme.

Design and deliver a placement / work experience module so that students have the opportunity to develop job-specific and broader skills. This major element can be threaded across the coursework of the two different specialisations to provide students opportunities to conduct real practice in various fieldwork spaces, perhaps at appropriate sites for each specialisation.

Develop a regular mechanism of feedback from stakeholders. The contact and regular feedback from stakeholders will increase the opportunities for employment of Programme graduates. Current annual audits can be enhanced to further investigate dimensions of quality which relate to labour market factors, employment of graduates and the efficient use of financial resources.

PRINCIPLE 3: STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE THAT POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES PROVIDE THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE LEARNING PROCESS. THE ASSESSMENT METHODS SHOULD REFLECT THIS APPROACH.

Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in enhancing students' motivation, their self-evaluation, and their active participation in the learning process. The above entail continuous consideration of the programme's delivery and the assessment of the related outcomes.

The student-centred learning and teaching process

- *respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs by adopting flexible learning paths*
- *considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate*
- *flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods*
- *regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods aiming at improvement*
- *regularly evaluates the quality and effectiveness of teaching, as documented especially through student surveys*
- *strengthens the student's sense of autonomy, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teaching staff*
- *promotes mutual respect in the student-teacher relationship*
- *applies appropriate procedures for dealing with the students' complaints*
- *provides counselling and guidance for the preparation of the thesis*

In addition

- *The academic staff are familiar with the existing examination system and methods and are supported in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The assessment criteria and methods are published in advance. The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Student assessment is conducted by more than one examiner, where possible.*
- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and conducted in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *The function of the academic advisor runs smoothly.*

Documentation

- *Sample of a fully completed questionnaire for the evaluation of the PSP by the students*
- *Regulations for dealing with students' complaints and appeals*
- *Regulation for the function of academic advisor*
- *Reference to the teaching modes and assessment methods*

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

As evidenced in the paperwork provided, the PSP provides sufficient resources and means to support the learning and academic activity of postgraduate students, in both its in-person and online provision. Students enhance their knowledge and skills, including research capabilities, through participation in interactive lectures and seminars, workshops focused on practical application, and a variety of other distance learning methods and activities (e.g., discussions/debates, tutorials). In this context, there is sufficient structure and support for students to combine theory and practice, especially if students have an education post concurrently to their studies. The Programme is designed following the principles of student-centred learning. Key elements of this approach include regular group consultation meetings with students for discussion and guidance, frequent communication and support to address questions, assistance for students during assessment preparation (including information sessions at the beginning of each academic year regarding assessment procedures), provision of clear study schedules, homework revision sessions, and personalized feedback. Furthermore, the PSP is dedicated to providing resources and support to facilitate the academic journey of postgraduate students. This includes access to state-of-the-art facilities, digital learning tools, research materials, and staff mentorship. Through these means, the Programme ensures that students have the necessary resources and academic guidance. An ongoing review of the student learning experience is an integral part of the Programme, as further discussed and reviewed in Principle 9 of this report.

II. Analysis

Based on documentary evidence and interviews with students and alumni, EEAP is convinced that despite the ongoing challenges of recent years, the Programme follows the principles of student-centred learning, teaching and assessment. The module objectives and activities, as well as practices applied in the teaching practice, are also consistent with a student-centred approach. During the meetings the EEAP held with students, alumni, and employers/social partners of this Programme, the EEAP was impressed with the unanimous satisfaction expressed about both the content and delivery of this PSP. Everyone who spoke - and all of those present did - complimented the dedication and expertise of the staff, and the organization in-place for supporting the students throughout their studies. Furthermore, it is important to note that the PSP has undertaken initiatives to strengthen student participation in the assessment process so that its results allow safer conclusions to be drawn and more fully fuel decision-making to improve the operation of the PSP. The feedback of students via the end of semester questionnaires is carefully considered and, whenever feasible, student opinions and suggestions are utilized toward the continuous improvement of this Programme. Finally, it is important to note that, in relation to continuous improvement of teaching, the Programme incorporates formative and diagnostic evaluation procedures that are aligned with student-centered principles.

III. Conclusions

The PSP follows the principles of student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment. It promotes the fundamental importance of student-centred learning and teaching, as well as in the course assessments, strengthening student engagement at all stages of the learning journey and encouraging and developing mutual respect between students and staff.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

None

PRINCIPLE 4: STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AND CERTIFICATION.

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP AND APPLY PUBLISHED REGULATIONS COVERING ALL ASPECTS AND PHASES OF STUDIES (ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, THESIS DRAFTING, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION).

All the issues from the beginning to the end of studies should be governed by the internal regulations of the academic units. Indicatively:

- *the student admission procedures and the required supporting documents*
- *student rights and obligations, and monitoring of student progression*
- *internship issues, if applicable, and granting of scholarships*
- *the procedures and terms for the drafting of assignments and the thesis*
- *the procedure of award and recognition of degrees, the duration of studies, the conditions for progression and for the assurance of the progress of students in their studies*
- *the terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility*

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

Documentation

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the Postgraduate Study Programme*
- *Research Ethics Regulation*
- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility, and student assignments*
- *Degree certificate template*

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

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 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. New postgraduate students of the PSP are supported with appropriate actions, including information on the Programme of Study, visits to the infrastructure, and orientation. The support of new students is provided in terms of information: a) through internet, primarily through the website of the Programme, which is constantly updated, and the page of post-graduate studies announcements (http://www.pse.aegean.gr/?page_id=3929), b) through the website of T.E.P.A.E.S. and the P.A., for issues concerning newcomers in both undergraduate and postgraduate level, c) during an information meeting that is organized in the first week of the academic year.

The general structure of the PSP applies to the ECTS system (90 ECTS in total), which allows easy transfer among European Universities, student mobility, and process of recognising the degree. The Erasmus+ Programme provides student mobility, for studies in Institutions of Higher Education. There is regular information to the academic community about the Erasmus+ programs by the Erasmus+ Office, through its updated website (<http://erasmus.aegean.gr/el/>), but also with frequent emails, which provides all necessary information.

The Department provides an Academic Advisor for each of the postgraduate students to advise the student during his/her studies. An official Study Guide clearly outlines the conditions for the realization of the Master's thesis (e.g., transparency in the process of awarding and examining the thesis, counselling, and guidance for the preparation of the thesis). Students have regular communication with the coordinator of their thesis. The Members of the three-member Examination Committee must have the same or related scientific specialty with the subject of the Programme. The evaluation process of teachers by students is also well defined (and this is further discussed later in this report). In short, the initiation of the process of electronic completion of questionnaires takes place each semester, and students have the opportunity to offer their views about each module, teaching methods employed, assessment requirements etc. The percentage of students participating in this process was approximately 40% for the year 2022-23.

II. Analysis

The Department has established clear and detailed student admission procedures and supports for the smooth progression of their studies. These procedures are designed to be transparent and accessible, providing prospective students with all necessary information regarding entry requirements, application processes, and deadlines. The Programme effectively applies regulations that pertain to all aspects of students' admission, progression, recognition, and degree/certification award. This comprehensive approach ensures that students are well-informed and supported from the moment they apply until they graduate. Upon successful completion of their studies, graduating students will automatically receive both a Diploma and its Supplement free of charge. This process is streamlined to ensure that students receive their credentials promptly, allowing them to transition smoothly into their professional careers or further academic pursuits. A key component of the curriculum is the thesis, which provides students with the opportunity to develop and refine their research interests and skills. This experience is invaluable, as it allows students to engage deeply with their chosen field of study, conduct original research, and contribute to the academic community.

As highlighted in principle 2, the lack of a work experience module is significant and this needs to be established and organized for all students. This practical component is designed to give students hands-on experience in real-world

settings, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Through such a module, students can apply what they have learned in the classroom to professional environments, gaining valuable in-sights and skills that will benefit them in their future careers. The Programme also emphasises the importance of continuous improvement and quality assurance. Regular reviews and updates are conducted to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant and aligned with current academic and industry standards.

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. The study program includes the completion of an MA thesis but lacks work placement modules..

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

Design and deliver a placement / work experience module so that students have the opportunity to develop job-specific and broader skills. The cognitive/theoretical domain of the Programme lends itself to the theory into practice approach as well as to the highly regarded research orientation teacher/practitioner inquiry. This major element can be threaded across the coursework of the two different specialisations in order to provide students opportunities to conduct real practice in various fieldwork spaces, perhaps at appropriate sites for each specialization. In that end the department could prepare a cooperation plan with educational units.

Continue your efforts to increase the rate of participation of students to the evaluation procedure.

Strengthen and support student mobility.

PRINCIPLE 5: TEACHING STAFF OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ASSURE THEMSELVES OF THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF THEIR TEACHING STAFF, AND APPLY FAIR AND TRANSPARENT PROCESSES FOR THEIR RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.

The Institution should attend to the adequacy of the teaching staff of the academic unit teaching at the PSP, the appropriate staff-student ratio, the appropriate staff categories, the appropriate subject areas, the fair and objective recruitment process, the high research performance, the training-development, the staff development policy (including participation in mobility schemes, conferences, and educational leaves-as mandated by law).

More specifically, the academic unit should set up and follow clear, transparent and fair processes for the recruitment of properly qualified staff for the PSP and offer them conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching and research; offer opportunities and promote the professional development of the teaching staff; encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research; encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies; promote the increase of the volume and quality of the research output within the academic unit; follow quality assurance processes for all staff (with respect to attendance requirements, performance, self-assessment, training, etc.); develop policies to attract highly qualified academic staff.

Documentation

- *Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment*
- *Employment regulations or contracts, and obligations of the teaching staff*
- *Policy for staff support and development*
- *Individual performance of the teaching staff in scientific-research and teaching work, based on internationally recognised systems of scientific evaluation (e.g. Google Scholar, Scopus, etc.)*
- *List of teaching staff including subject areas, employment relationship, Institution of origin, Department of origin*

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The PSP has a well-defined framework for its teaching staff, focusing on transparent selection processes and excellence. The teaching staff recruitment procedures are aligned with the current national law and regulations of the University of the Aegean. The teaching staff includes academics from the University of the Aegean and other Greek higher education institutions. Faculty members are assessed anonymously by students through questionnaires designed by the university's Quality Assurance Unit (ΜΟΔΙΠ) which are also aligned with the standards of the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (ΕΘ.Α.Α.Ε.). More specifically, students evaluate each module and tutors at the end of each

semester, based on the course content and teaching methods, integration of new technologies, connection between theory and practical application, effectiveness of assessment methods, promotion of research, experiential learning, and collaborative activities, and communication and engagement between tutors and students. The Coordinating Committee of the PSP analyses the student feedback as part of its annual assessment of teaching quality. After the spring semester, committee members process the evaluation data to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Consequently, results guide decisions for the upcoming academic year, such as curriculum adjustments, teaching enhancements, and professional development for instructors. The documentation (Annexes 2.5. and 5.1.) includes a list of the teaching staff outlining their names, position, subject areas, teaching hours as well as citation reports (from Google scholar and Scopus) for each member of the teaching staff. The PSP's faculty members are 8 in total. There are also two EDIP members, and four external collaborators.

II. Analysis

During the virtual meeting, the EEAP discussed with members of the teaching staff professional development opportunities, mobility, competence and adequacy of the teaching staff to ensure learning outcomes as well as workload issues and teaching staff's involvement in research projects and areas of further improvement. All members of the teaching staff of the PSP present at this meeting were willing to share with the EEAP all the documents and information that could make their work visible and they have presented and explained their vision about the Programme. The recruitment process for teaching staff adheres to national laws and regulations and transparent procedures and criteria for the recruitment of properly qualified staff. Based on the material presented to EEAP, it is evident that staff members of the PSP can establish strong collaborations amongst themselves, and they already have a multidimensional portfolio of teaching. However, based on the number of their recent publications, and citations (in Google Scholar), they should try to further improve their international recognition and academic influence, by focusing on publishing in higher-impact journals, which would improve their citation metrics and increase the visibility of their research. The EEAP also suggests the PSP and the Departments to consider alternative ways to further increase the faculty's international scientific collaborations (e.g., by hosting visiting scholars) and mobility such participation of research projects (particularly under the Erasmus+ program).

Limited emphasis is also given on professional development practices and training. For example, even though the annual budget of the PSPS foresees costs for the participation of the teaching staff at scientific conferences, as well as for the continuous upgrading of the technical equipment they use for research and for conducting their modules, mechanisms for equipping staff with the skills needed for interdisciplinary and inclusive teaching or for integrating innovative educational technologies are not discussed. Opportunities for collaborative research or teaching with other institutions or departments are not also emphasized, which could enhance professional growth and bring fresh

perspectives to the Programme .

The evaluation of teaching staff in the PSP is structured and student-centred, designed to ensure continuous improvement and maintain high academic standards. However, it is optional. A compulsory evaluation might enhance accountability and improvement among staff members, and it will promote the PSP's commitment to aligning teaching practices with contemporary educational and research standards. Lastly, it is noted that contact information and CVs are publicly available in the PSP's website (<https://pms-pvpy.aegean.gr/didaktiko-prosopiko/>), but only in Greek. It might be helpful if short bios of each faculty member are also included and if their information was also available in English.

III. Conclusions

The EEAP considers that appropriate actions have been taken to ensure quality in teaching and research of the PSP. The Programme adheres to transparent recruitment procedures and criteria to employ high qualified teaching staff. However, a stronger focus on professional development and training would significantly enhance the quality of education and the overall effectiveness of the teaching staff. Actions should also be taken by the teaching staff to further improve their international recognition and academic influence, by focusing on publishing in higher-impact journals, which would improve their citation metrics and increase the visibility of their research. The EEAP also suggests the PSP and the Departments to consider alternative ways to further increase the faculty's international scientific collaborations (e.g., by hosting visiting scholars) and mobility such participation of research projects (particularly under the Erasmus+ program). Incorporating these elements would align the Programme more closely with global best practices and ensure its continued growth and relevance.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

Consider alternative ways to further increase the staff's international scientific collaborations (e.g., by hosting visiting scholars) and mobility such participation of research projects (particularly under the Erasmus+ program).

Focus on publishing in higher-impact journals, to improve citation metrics and increase the visibility of staff's research.

Add short Bios to the PSP's website (<http://www-tepaes.rhodes.aegean.gr/pms-pe/default.aspx?Menu=4>). Information can be also available in English. It is also noted that when the EEAP tried to access the CVs, an error had occurred, and the CVs were not reachable.

PRINICPLE 6: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

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

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

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

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

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The PSP offers robust support through to its students utilising a variety of resources. Specifically, educational and learning activities are facilitated through a combination of synchronous and asynchronous tools (e.g., Moodle) and distance learning platforms that are user-friendly, enabling students to easily navigate and access these services whenever needed. For instance, there is evidence of:

- ☐ Use of digital tools and services – Digital Identity
- ☐ Full use of the Moodle platform for accessing developed educational

materials, announcements, and evaluation forms.

☒ Access to electronic libraries and databases for research support.

☒ Utilization of video conferencing tools (e.g. Zoom, MS Teams)

Overall, the Programme demonstrates a strong commitment to student support through various initiatives led by both the Department and staff, including both academic and administrative staff. These efforts are designed to ensure that students receive meaningful support throughout their academic journey, enhancing their overall learning experience and success. The PSP, within the context of a highly supportive Department, offers a range of resources and services aimed at addressing the diverse needs of students (as discussed in Principle 3). Staff members are readily available to provide mentorship and support, fostering a nurturing and collaborative learning environment. The available documentation offered a clear and transparent overview of how available financial resources are utilised, including provision of studentships.

II. Analysis

Based on documentary evidence and interviews with students and alumni, EEAP is convinced that despite the ongoing challenges of recent years, the Programme is well-supported by the existing infrastructure and personnel. There is a robust support system in place, ensuring that the Programme can continue to deliver high-quality education and services to its students. Additionally, the PSP team has provided a transparent overview of the current plans for utilizing tuition fees, demonstrating a clear and responsible approach to financial management. Student data, including demographics, test scores, and Programme evaluations, is automatically collected and processed by the department's internal assessment committee. This data collection is crucial for generating comprehensive reports that are central to effective Programme management. These reports are made available for review and scrutiny by both internal and external educational authorities, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement. One of the Programme's greatest assets is undoubtedly the people who support it. Both academic and administrative staff are exceptionally dedicated, often going above and beyond their expected duties to support students and Programme activities. This dedication was clearly evident to EEAP during interviews with students and graduates, who spoke enthusiastically and praised the staff's effort and commitment. The positive feedback from students and alumni highlights the significant impact that the staff's dedication has on the overall student experience and success.

III. Conclusions

In summary, the Programme benefits from strong infrastructural support, transparent financial management, and a dedicated team of staff members. These elements collectively contribute to the Programme's ability to navigate challenges and maintain a high standard of education and student support. The EEAP concludes that the Programme is fully compliant with this principle.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

None

PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

INSTITUTIONS BEAR FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTING, ANALYSING AND USING INFORMATION, AIMED AT THE EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED ACTIVITIES, IN AN INTEGRATED, EFFECTIVE AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE WAY.

Institutions are expected to establish and operate an information system for the management and monitoring of data concerning students, teaching staff, course structure and organisation, teaching and provision of services to students.

Reliable data is essential for accurate information and decision-making, as well as for identifying areas of smooth operation and areas for improvement. Effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on postgraduate study programmes and other activities feed data into the internal system of quality assurance.

The information collected depends, to some extent, on the type and mission of the Institution. The following are of interest:

- *key performance indicators*
- *student population profile*
- *student progression, success, and drop-out rates*
- *student satisfaction with their programmes*
- *availability of learning resources and student support*

A number of methods may be used to collect information. It is important that students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.

Documentation

- *Report from the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) at the level of the Institution, the department, and the PSP*
- *Operation of an information management system for the collection of administrative data for the implementation of the PSP (Students' Record)*
- *Other tools and procedures designed to collect data on the academic and administrative functions of the academic unit and the PSP*

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Programme has laid the foundations of solidly built procedures for the systematic collection of data regarding various aspects of its academic unit. These procedures incorporate information about the teaching methods and skills, the content and relevance of the available modules, the research activities of academic staff, data from student's satisfaction evaluation processes, whether and how new technologies are used, the availability of electronic and printed resources, and data on facilities, resources, equipment etc. The collection of data occurs at different and multiple levels within the Programme to ensure extensive cover-age. This whole procedure is coordinated by the administrative staff, with

the support of academic members of staff and the oversight of MODIP, which also processes information particularly in relation to quality of provision.

The Programme places a strong emphasis on regular student satisfaction surveys, conducted through evaluation questionnaires, as a key part of its data collection strategy. These surveys provide valuable insights into students' experiences, concerns, and suggestions for improvement. Administered anonymously and before the end of the semester, the surveys play a crucial role in capturing students' genuine perceptions and expectations of their academic journey. The collected data are readily available to the academic staff for re-view and action. Further details on the internal evaluation processes can be found in Principle 9. Student performance is consistently strong, with overall progression through the courses meeting expectations. A significant majority of students successfully complete their studies, with a satisfactory percentage graduating within the minimum timeframe.

II. Analysis

The Programme demonstrates a strong commitment to effectively utilizing data gathered from both personal and anonymous questionnaires. A combination of advanced information systems is employed for data collection, processing, and management, facilitated by evaluation questionnaires to ensure efficient and comprehensive data collection. These questionnaires are designed to capture a wide range of feedback from students, covering various aspects of their academic experience. The collected data is presented in a clear and informative manner, often using visual aids such as charts and graphs to enhance understanding. This data is regularly analyzed to identify key trends, areas for improvement, and opportunities for growth and development. The analysis process involves examining patterns in student feedback, performance metrics, and other relevant indicators to gain a holistic view of the Programme's effectiveness. The results of these analyses are shared with relevant departments and stakeholders to ensure transparency and accountability. This open communication fosters a collaborative environment where all parties are informed and can contribute to the continuous improvement of the Programme. The data is primarily used to enhance various aspects of the academic unit, including:

- Teaching Methods and Skills: By understanding student feedback, the Programme can refine and adapt teaching strategies to better meet the needs of learners.
- Support Services: Insights from the data help in improving student support services, ensuring that students have access to the resources they need to succeed.
- IT Infrastructure: Feedback on the use of digital tools and platforms informs up-grades and enhancements to the IT infrastructure, making it more efficient and user-friendly.
- Resource Accessibility: The data helps in assessing the efficiency and accessibility of both electronic and printed resources, ensuring that students can

easily access the materials they need.

The analysis of this data is crucial for pinpointing deficiencies or areas in need of improvement. By identifying these areas, the Programme can implement targeted interventions to address specific issues and enhance the overall student experience. Charts and other visual aids are used to present the data in a format that is accessible to academic staff, ensuring that the information is used effectively for decision-making and strategic planning.

III. Conclusions

In conclusion, overall, the Programme's commitment to data-driven decision-making ensures that it remains responsive to the needs of its students and continuously evolves to provide a high-quality educational experience. There are established procedures in place for the systematic collection of data across various aspects of the academic unit, including teaching methods and skills, module content and relevance, as well as graduate employability and career development.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

None

PRINCIPLE 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES IN A DIRECT AND READILY ACCESSIBLE WAY. THE RELEVANT INFORMATION SHOULD BE UP-TO-DATE, OBJECTIVE AND CLEAR.

Information on the Institutions' activities is useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders, and the public.

Therefore, Institutions and their academic units must provide information about their activities, including the PSP they offer, the intended learning outcomes, the degrees awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures applied, the pass rates, and the learning opportunities available to their students. Information is also provided on the employment perspectives of PSP graduates.

Documentation

- *Dedicated segment on the website of the department for the promotion of the PSP*
- *Bilingual version of the PSP website with complete, clear and objective information*
- *Provision for website maintenance and updating*

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

Key information about the academic unit and the PSP is available online. The Postgraduate Program's web link can be accessed at the following address: (<https://pms-pvpy.aegean.gr/> and Παιδικό Βιβλίο και Παιδαγωγικό Υλικό | Πανεπιστήμιο Αιγαίου). The PSP team ensures the continuous provision of comprehensive, timely, and easily accessible information regarding its educational and academic activities. The primary source of this information is the dedicated PSP website, available in Greek, which is systematically updated. However, some links are not functional, and access is unavailable, such as, for example, the academic staff CVs. Moreover, information about new calls for interest is also posted on the postgraduate pro-gram website at <https://www.eduguide.gr/grad/program/panepistimio-aigaiou-paidiko-vivlio-kai-paidagogiko-yliko,869> regarding events and activities related to the PSP. The Programme is also active on social media. At the initiative of the PSP Secretariat, a Facebook page titled "ΠΜΣ Παιδικό Βιβλίο και Παιδαγωγικό Υλικό" was created which can be accessed here: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063673977183>.

The PSP website features a Quality Assurance Policy document that outlines the strategies and measures implemented to ensure the Programme's quality and effectiveness. This is accessible here: <https://pms-pvpy.aegean.gr/kanonismoi-nomoi/> (<https://goo.by/mqNANF>). While this document is currently available only in Greek, it provides valuable information about the PSP's commitment to quality. This encompasses information on the Programme's structure, attendance format, evaluation criteria, awarded degree, examination details, curriculum, and

academic staff profiles. While the information is available in both Greek and English, the English version of the website requires updating to ensure accuracy and relevance.

Dedicated section on the Department's website for the promotion of the Postgraduate Program (M8.2). This segment is designed to provide comprehensive information to prospective students and other interested parties. Beyond the PSP website, relevant posts, such as information about the Postgraduate Programmes and details regarding the pedagogical and teaching adequacy of the PSP, are also published on the website of the collaborating Department (TEPAES). Additionally, since its inception, the PSP has utilized various other means to disseminate information and communicate with both students and the wider public.

All module outlines for the PSP are readily available online, providing an extensive and detailed overview of the Programme's curriculum. These outlines include comprehensive course descriptions, clearly defined learning objectives, and thorough explanations of assessment methods. They serve as an invaluable resource for both current students who wish to deepen their understanding of the courses and prospective students looking to explore the Programme's offerings. Accessing these outlines ensures transparency and helps students make informed decisions about their academic journey.

II. Analysis

A significant amount of information and guidance is available online via the PSP's website and related pages and this information is largely consistent, accurate, up-to-date, and readily accessible. The presence of a dedicated section on the website for promoting the PSP reflects a strong commitment to transparency and effective communication. This initiative is crucial for engaging prospective students and offering them a detailed understanding of the Programme's offerings. The online availability of module outlines is another commendable feature, facilitating a clear understanding of the Programme's structure and content. These outlines are an invaluable resource for both students and educators, fostering clarity and transparency in the educational process. Additionally, the inclusion of the academic unit's Policy for Quality Assurance on the PSP website highlights a steadfast commitment to upholding high educational standards. Such transparency not only builds trust among students and stakeholders but also reinforces the Programme's dedication to quality and continuous improvement. While essential information about the PSP is accessible online, there is potential for improvement in providing multilingual content, particularly in English. Expanding language options could significantly enhance accessibility and attract a more diverse cohort of international students (if this aligns with the Programme's strategic priorities).

III. Conclusions

In summary, the Department responsible for PSP has shown a strong dedication to transparency and accountability by making key information easily accessible online. The inclusion of a dedicated website section for Program promotion, detailed module outlines, and well-structured quality assurance policies highlight these efforts. To further improve accessibility and inclusivity, the Programme could consider expanding language options and enhancing the English-language content on the website to better meet the needs of international students. Additionally, keeping online content regularly updated is crucial to ensuring its accuracy and relevance.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

Continue with concerted efforts to maintain the Programme’s online content up-to-date, which is crucial to ensure that the information remains accurate and relevant. All digital materials, resources, and information must remain accurate and relevant to meet the evolving needs of the students, staff, and prospective applicants. This ongoing commitment to content updates is critical for ensuring that the Programme remains aligned with current academic trends, policies, and best practices, thereby providing students with reliable and timely information to support their academic journey.

Expand the accessibility of information by offering it in multiple languages, with a particular emphasis on updating the current English-language website to better serve the needs of international students. This initiative would significantly enhance the Programme's outreach and support to a more diverse student population, ensuring that all students, regardless of their language background, have equal access to vital information.

PRINCIPLE 9: ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC INTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS AND ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR THE AUDIT AND ANNUAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF THEIR POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES, SO AS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES SET FOR THEM, THROUGH MONITORING AND POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS, WITH A VIEW TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

The regular monitoring, review, and revision of postgraduate study programmes aim at maintaining the level of educational provision and creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

The above comprise the evaluation of:

- a) the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the PSP is up to date*
 - b) the changing needs of society*
 - c) the students' workload, progression and completion of the postgraduate studies*
 - d) the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students*
 - e) the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
 - f) the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the PSP in question*
- Postgraduate study programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date.*

Documentation

- *Procedure for the re-evaluation, redefinition and updating of the PSP curriculum*
- *Procedure for mitigating weaknesses and upgrading the structure of the PSP and the learning process*
- *Feedback processes concerning the strategy and quality goal setting of the PSP and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*
- *Results of the annual internal evaluation of the PSP by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), and the relevant minutes*

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

After reviewing all available documentation, and following completion of all meetings with staff, students and other stakeholders, the EAAP panel identified clear evidence of internal evaluation processes in place. These processes are coordinated by the relevant committee, and within the parameters set by the Quality Assurance Unit (MO.ΔΙ.Π.) of the University. The internal evaluation consists of four core pillars: (1) the formal internal review led by the Quality Assurance Unit; (2) the internal review of the Programme led by the Coordination committee; (3) the internal review of module content, design and delivery; and (4)

the process of mitigating any weaknesses and improving the student learning experience. All these actions are taking place annually. To inform the internal evaluation of the Programme, evidence is collected from various sources, including the views and experiences of students and staff (via formal and informal communication avenues), as well as results from the formal module evaluation (led by the Quality Assurance Unit). Both academic and administrative staff are involved in annual review meetings where evidence is synthesised to develop actions and to set goals to inform the ongoing development of the Programme. Throughout this process, engagement with students via “open scientific dialogue” to “promote exchange of ideas” is considered a significant aspect of the internal review of the Programme. Another key priority is keeping the Programme/module content current with the latest scientific developments in the field. Therefore, there is an expectation that module leads will review the content of each module on a yearly basis to capture educational and scientific developments with the aim of improving the student learning experience.

II. Analysis

Drawing upon these findings, there is great confidence that the processes in place for the ongoing internal evaluation of the Programme are comprehensive, transparent and robust. These processes also adhere to the criteria set by HAHE. During the meetings with both staff and students, there were multiple references to a culture of openness and dialogue. Many expressed the view that the informal channels of communication between students and staff are both established and valuable in ensuring their successful engagement with the learning process. The EAAP observed that key staff of PSP and the Department take careful consideration of the results of their internal evaluation; and these are also shared externally, with the year reports available online. Module/Programme evaluations are however optional for students. A compulsory evaluation process might enhance accountability and improvement among staff members, and it will promote the PSP’s commitment to aligning teaching practices with contemporary educational and research standards.

There was evidence of established partnerships with external stakeholders, such as education consultants, and there was agreement that such interactions can be impactful not only to the local / national education (primarily) communities but also to the ongoing development of the Programme. Such interactions are significant in ensuring that module content is adapted/ developed to reflect socio-economic and cultural developments and expectations. We found that this consultation with external stakeholders, although sustained and meaningful for those involved, is neither structured nor formalised to show in concrete and tangible ways how the Programme is informed and developed as a result of this informal consultation process.

III. Conclusions

The EAAP is confident that the entire internal evaluation process is fully compliant. The Programme is continuously monitored, reviewed, and developed to maintain excellence in education with the aim of creating a supportive, effective learning environment for students. This ongoing evaluation involves students, graduates, staff members, and external stakeholders, whose feedback informs the Programme's development. The panel recommends for the external consultation with stakeholders to be formalised and captured in a systematic way; and for student evaluations to be further promoted.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

Principle 9: On-going monitoring and periodic internal evaluation of postgraduate study programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

Explore ways to formalise consultation with external stakeholders to demonstrate not only the impact of the Programme to society/community but also the multiple and diverse ways stakeholders contribute to the ongoing development of the Programme.

Consider different ways to promote student participation in module and staff evaluations (compulsory participation could be an option if permitted).

PRINCIPLE 10: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY PANELS OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HAHE, AIMING AT ACCREDITATION. THE TERM OF VALIDITY OF THE ACCREDITATION IS DETERMINED BY HAHE.

HAHE is responsible for administrating the PSP accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by panels of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, based on the Reports delivered by the panels of external experts, with a specific term of validity, following to which, revision is required. The quality accreditation of the PSP acts as a means for the determination of the degree of compliance of the programme to the Standards, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees. Both academic units and Institutions must consistently consider the conclusions and the recommendations submitted by the panels of experts for the continuous improvement of the programme.

Documentation

- *Progress report of the PSP in question, on the results from the utilisation of possible recommendations included in the External Evaluation Report of the Institution, and in the IQAS Accreditation Report, with relation to the postgraduate study programmes*

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The present PSP has not been subjected to a prior external accreditation by HAHE or any other organisation. However, the SPS team collated relevant findings and recommendations from other external reviews, including evaluations of the undergraduate Programmes of the department (2013 and 2021) and the evaluation of the University (2015). These recommendations have been considered carefully by the team, leading to the development of a number of actions to strengthen current provision. Such actions varied significantly, ranging from offering students academic and financial support to strengthening staff and students' engagement in academic research, publications and conference attendance. For example, the external evaluation of the department identified the need to increase student engagement in module evaluations. To address this issue, an assortment of actions has been considered (e.g., positive encouragement for students to participate in formal evaluations) and a relevant Quality Goal has been set in the present accreditation proposal. Finally, as part of the University of the Aegean, the Programme has the support of the Quality Assurance Unit of the University, which provides guidance and administrative support in any external evaluation, including the present one.

II. Analysis

EEAP confirms that the procedures reported in the official documents are in alignment with the guidelines set by HAHE, and there was strong evidence that

relevant stakeholders, particularly the Director of Programme with the support of MODIP, value this process and adhered to the guidelines. During the Closure Meeting, a culture of openness and constructive debate was evident, aimed at further strengthening the Programme. The head of the department and the Programme director responded positively and constructively, demonstrating a commitment to continue embedding robust evaluation processes. This commitment includes finding effective ways to communicate the content of all internal and external evaluations to students and other key stakeholders. The EEAP is satisfied with the procedures in place – as these are captured in relevant documentation, recognising the efforts made to ensure transparency and continuous improvement within the Programme.

III. Conclusions

This is the first external evaluation of the Programme under the HAHE framework, so there are no previous recommendations to reference. However, there is clear evidence of careful planning and review of the Programme’s delivery, based on prior evaluations of the department and the university. The current actions are well-aligned with these previous evaluations. EEAP believes that the procedures adopted by the Director of the PSP, the Department, and MODIP provide a strong assurance for the implementation of any potential suggestions from the EEAP.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

None

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

Please state aspects of good practice identified, with regard to the postgraduate study programme.

This is a unique and well-established Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) that employs entry examinations to support the selection of students, ensuring a high

caliber of participants. The Programme demonstrates a significant track record of successful completions, reflecting its effectiveness and the dedication of its staff. The curriculum content is diverse, emphasising interdisciplinary thinking and research. This approach not only broadens students' academic horizons but also equips them with the thinking and knowledge to tackle complex social problems from multiple perspectives. Students report feeling academically challenged by their tutors, which fosters a rigorous learning environment. Additionally, they receive excellent support from both academic and administrative staff, contributing to a positive and enriching educational experience. There is also evidence of the Programme's significant impact on graduates' professional development and practices. Many graduates we talked to reported that the knowledge and skills acquired during their studies have been instrumental in advancing their careers.

II. Areas of Weakness

Please state weak areas identified, with regard to the postgraduate study programme.

There are a number of areas that the Programme team can reflect upon and further develop. The lack of research methods and work experience modules is problematic as it undermines the academic rigor of the Programme. It is recommended that the Programme incorporates these essential components / modules to ensure a comprehensive and robust educational experience for its students (see below).

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

Please make any specific recommendations for development.

- 1) Strengthen curriculum provision by incorporating a module on Research Methods. Consider collaboration with staff from other PSP Programmes in the school, who have extensive experience in the design and delivery of such modules.

- 2) Strengthen curriculum provision by introducing a work experience / placement module. This is particularly important for students with no background in education and who, by successfully completing this Programme, will obtain the teaching qualification.

- 3) Develop a systematic approach to obtain feedback from external stakeholders. Engage in concrete actions in systematically collecting data from graduates and other external stakeholders (e.g., social partners, employers) and demonstrate how these interactions inform the ongoing development of the Programme. Although there was clear evidence of ongoing and meaningful partnerships with external stakeholders, it was less clear how such informal

interactions inform the ongoing development of the Programme.

4) Develop your approach in capturing graduate destination/s and Programme impact. We are aware of some data already obtained but we would encourage you to explore capturing the impact of the Programme on students/graduates and society more broadly in a more systematic way.

5) Continue your efforts to obtain formal feedback from current students. We recommend engaging students more actively in the process and finding ways to 'formalise' the already established informal interactions which appear to be very valuable in the ongoing development of the Programme. Consider introducing compulsory evaluation of modules and staff.

6) Strengthen national and international collaborations to make current research initiatives more visible and impactful. Consider alternative ways to further increase the staff's international scientific collaborations (e.g., by hosting visiting scholars) and mobility such as participation of research projects (particularly under the Erasmus+ program). Focus on publishing in higher-impact journals, to improve citation metrics and increase the visibility of staff's research.

7) Ensure online information is updated and offered in multiple languages (e.g., English). Short Bios can be added to the PSP's website (<http://www-tepaes.rhodes.aegean.gr/pms-pe/default.aspx?Menu=4>), and information can be also available in English.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

3,6,7,8,9,10

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

1,4,5

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

2

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:

N/A

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname	Signature
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