



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
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Accreditation Report for the Distance Learning Postgraduate Study Programme (HEI):

**Master of Science by Research (MScRes) in Digital Deep Tech Driven
Circular Economy**

Department: Cultural Technology and Communication

Institution: University of the Aegean

Date: June 2026



Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση
της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



Πρόγραμμα
Ανθρώπινο Δυναμικό και
Κοινωνική Συνοχή



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Distance Learning Postgraduate Study Programme of **Master of Science by Research (MScRes) in Digital Deep Tech Driven Circular Economy** 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 distance learning postgraduate study programme Master of Science by Research (MScRes) in Digital Deep Tech Driven Circular Economy of the University of the Aegean comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Law 4653/2020:

- 1. VONORTAS NICHOLAS (Chair)**
Institute for International Science and Technology Policy & Department of Economics, The George Washington University, USA
- 2. Angelaki Erasmia**
Hellenic Mediterranean University
- 3. Dagiuklas Tasos**
London South Bank University
- 4. TIROPANIS THANASSIS**
University of Southampton
- 5. Vasileiou Ismini**
De Montfort university Leicester, UK

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

This External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) carried out the accreditation review process for two new Postgraduate Study Programmes of the Department of Cultural Technology and Communication of the University of the Aegean: MScRes in Digital Deep Tech Driven Circular Economy (PSP1), and MSc in Digital Deep Tech Driven Circular Economy (PSP2). The interviews were held online (Zoom platform) during June 22-23, 2026. Our onsite visit started the first day of interaction with the representatives of the University, Department, and Programmes (see below). The extensive documentation received prior to our virtual meetings adequately described the current programmes and practices in place.

Furthermore, the EEAP asked for

and received a copy of the two power point presentations delivered during the first day of the meetings.

On Monday, 22 June 2026, the EEAP started with its own private meeting, followed by one online session with members of the Department of Cultural Technology and Communication:

Session 1. The Director of the two online PSPs, the Head of the Department, and the Vice Rector of the University and representative of MODIP:

- Prof. Stylianos Xanthopoulos, Vice Rector of Administrative and Academic Affairs, Head of MODIP
- Prof. Evangelia Kavakli, Head of the Department
- Prof. Christos Kalloniatis, Director of the PSP1 & PSP2 programmes

On Tuesday, 23 June 2026, the EEAP carried out six (6) online sessions relating to PSP1 & PSP2:

Session 2. Meeting with the Teaching Staff (PSP1):

- Assoc. Prof. Konstantinos Kotis, University of the Aegean
- Prof. Rebeka Kovačič Lukman, University of Maribor
- Dr. Giorgos Demetriou, Ecole de Ponts Business School
- Dr. Ioannis Basdekis, Circular Economy Foundation
- Assoc. Prof. Federica Acerbi, Politecnico di Milano
- Dr. Panagiotis Psomos, University of the Aegean
- Dr. Aikaterini-Georgia Mavroeidi, University of the Aegean

Session 3. Meeting with the Teaching Staff (PSP2):

- Assoc. Prof. Konstantinos Kotis, University of the Aegean
- Prof. Rebeka Kovačič Lukman, University of Maribor

- Dr. Giorgos Demetriou, Ecole de Ponts Business School
- Dr. Ioannis Basdekis, Circular Economy Foundation
- Assoc. Prof. Federica Acerbi, Politecnico di Milano
- Dr. Panagiotis Psomos, University of the Aegean
- Dr. Aikaterini-Georgia Mavroeidi, University of the Aegean

Session 4. Online tour of facilities related to the PSPs:

- Prof. Christos Kalloniatis, Director of the PSP1 & PSP2 programmes
- Ms. Antri Constantinou, Virtual Campus Presentation
- Mr. Panagiotis Kargas, Laboratory Technical Staff
- Dr. Stamatia Ladikou, Administrative Staff, PSP1
- Ms. Efstratia Mavrogeorgi, Administrative Staff, PSP2

Session 5. Employers, social partners:

- Mr. Karl Waedt, Project Manager, Framatome
- Ms. Athina Panagiotou, General Director, Cyprus Organisation for Standardisation
- Mr. Christian Wolff, Senior Researcher, ATB Institute
- Mr. Anastastios Manos, Director, Association of Hellenic Information Technology Enterprises
- Mr. Konstantinos Chatzifotis, Manager of European Affairs, Motor Oil Group
- Ms. Alexia Papadimitriou, Research and Innovation Manager, DIGITAL EUROPE

Session 6. The the Vice Rector of the University, Director of PSP1, the Head of the Department, and representative of MODIP;

- Prof. Stylianos Xanthopoulos, Vice Rector of Administrative and Academic Affairs, Head of MODIP
- Prof. Evangelia Kavakli, Head of the Department
- Prof. Christos Kalloniatis, Director of the PSP1
- Ms. Piyi Karavia, MODIP staff

Session 7. The the Vice Rector of the University, Director of PSP1, the Head of the Department, and representative of MODIP;

- Prof. Stylianos Xanthopoulos, Vice Rector of Administrative and Academic Affairs, Head of MODIP
- Prof. Evangelia Kavakli, Head of the Department
- Prof. Christos Kalloniatis, Director of the PSP2
- Ms. Piyi Karavia, MODIP staff

Sessions 2 & 3 and Sessions 6 & 7 were combined into single longer sessions as they involved the same people.

The EEAP members worked privately and collectively for several more days to draft this report.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The Department of Cultural Technology & Communication was established in the year 2000. It is based in the campus of the University of the Aegean in Mytilini. The Department belongs to the School of Social Sciences. It has 21 regular full-time faculty members (DEP), 7 members EDIP and ETEP, 9 postdoctoral researchers, and 4 administrative staff. It manages an undergraduate programme with 635 students, 7 research laboratories, and 2 postgraduate programmes: Cultural Technology & Communication, and Smart Information Systems.

The two English-language online post-graduate programmes MSc in Digital Deep Tech Driven Circular Economy and MSc by Research in Digital Deep Tech Driven Circular Economy are being established within the framework of the European project 3D-CIRCULAR (Digital Deep tech Driven Circular Economy) which started in August 2025, has a duration of (4) four years and is funded by the European Health and Digital Executive (HADEA) Agency (Contract No. 101226256) (<https://3d-circular.eu/>). Specifically, the costs of organizing and operating the postgraduate programs, including tuition fees for students from EU countries, for the first three (3) cycles of operation of the postgraduate program are covered by the funding of this specific project as well as additional funding from national public sources. Students from countries beyond the EU will be charged €5,000 for the first three cycles and €7,000 thereafter. EU country students will be charged €5,000 starting with the fourth cycle.

The project 3D-CIRCULAR is comprised of 32 partners including 10 higher education institutions, 9 research organizations and standardization bodies, 6 large industry partners, and 7 small and medium-sized enterprises. Its mission is to create the new generation of the educational ecosystem for the development of high-level interdisciplinary skills, in the context of promoting a European, digitally native and circular economy. The project aims to provide integrated specialized education and training services, through the development of innovative and modular curricula and certifications at postgraduate and doctoral levels. These programs integrate the principles of sustainability, circular economy, digitalization and innovation, while ensuring the effective, inclusive and accessible provision of educational services across the European Union.

The objective of the MSc in Digital Deep Tech Driven Circular Economy is to promote scientific knowledge in the fields of digital circular economy, deep tech technologies (AI, Blockchain, Digital Product Passports) and regulatory compliance in the context of green and digital transition. It aims to Prepare graduates for professional engagement in digital transformation, ESG & sustainability reporting and green innovation roles, in private and public sector businesses and organizations, as well as to produce new knowledge in the

context of relevant research initiatives. The content is delivered in three semesters and comprises of six compulsory and three elective courses in the first two semesters and the MSc thesis in the third semester for a total of 90 ECTS.

The objective of the MSc by Research in Digital Deep Tech Driven Circular Economy is to promote scientific knowledge and research excellence in the fields of the digital circular economy, deep innovation technologies (AI, Blockchain, Digital Product Passports, etc.) and regulatory compliance frameworks that support the green and digital transition. It aims to prepare researchers capable of designing and implementing original research, contributing to the development of innovative solutions and producing new knowledge through scientific publications, research projects and doctoral studies, strengthening the interface between academia, research organizations and industry. The content is delivered in three semesters and comprises of six compulsory and one elective courses in the first two semesters and the MSc thesis in the third semester for a total of 90 ECTS.

Here the EEAP would like to call attention to some prospective challenges:

1. Each of the two PSPs has an upper limit for newly enrolled students of 250. This is related to the European 3D-CIRCULAR project. Nonetheless, the EEAP considers such numbers excessive for a Department of this size. While the teaching and thesis supervision burden of the two PSPs is reportedly to be distributed among the various consortium partners, the bulk of the burden will inevitably fall on the Department of Cultural Technology & Communication, assisted by a few closely nit partners, since both PSPs are fully established there. For instance, one administrative person has been allocated to each programme, an inadequate resource even in the presence of extensive automation (virtual campus). Moreover, there are many tasks besides teaching. Selection of applicants, orientation, laboratories attached to the courses, follow-up of student progress, evaluation of courses through questionnaires, evaluation of professors, and most of all supervision of Masters theses!! Even if we assume that the MSc takes 100 students and the MScRES takes 50, we think that they will overwhelm the Department.

The Department Head and the PSP director strenuously argued that the Department can do it, however, we think that a Department of this size with an active undergraduate programme and two additional Masters degrees ranging already, must be very careful with the workloads.

2. The distinction between the MSc and the MScRES is inadequately described in the documents and the presentations. How exactly will the courses which by and large share titles -- except in the two compulsory courses the second semester for the MScRES, be taught differently between the two programmes? Put simply, how is the RES going to be achieved? Again the Department and the PSP director as well as other interviewees argued that everything has been ironed out. However, the EEAP members were not entirely convinced with the details.

3. How easily the laboratories of the industrial partners will be reached? Are there any security concerns? Two industrial partners that were interviewed expected the process to be smooth.

4. What happens after the third cycle when the funding from 3D-CIRCULAR and the national public purse stops?

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 1: STRATEGY, QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND QUALITY GOAL SETTING FOR THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES (PSP) OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A STRATEGY FOR DISTANCE LEARNING, AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC PLANNING. FURTHERMORE, EACH INSTITUTION APPLIES A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY REGARDING THE DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES. THIS POLICY SHOULD EXPAND AND BE AIMED (WITH THE COLLABORATION OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS) AT THE DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

Each Institution develops and implements a strategy for distance learning with the pedagogical utilisation of ICT (eLearning). This strategy is integrated into the overall strategy of the Institution and defines the pedagogical framework for the utilisation of the ICT, in both distance learning environments (eLearning), and blended learning environments. The strategy includes the feasibility of applying the distance learning and blended learning in particular PSP, and determines the innovations that aim at the linking of teaching with research, with emphasis on the production of new knowledge and the updating of the PSP.

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.

In particular, 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 distance learning Postgraduate Study Programme, 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 continuous improvement of the Programme.

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

As regards the distance learning PSP the academic unit commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate:

- a) the suitability of the structure and organisation of the distance learning 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 distance learning PSP*
- d) the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff for teaching in distance learning 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 distance learning PSP through the cooperation of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).*

Documentation/Annexes

D1.1 Institutional strategy for distance learning, according to article 2 of the Ministerial Decision No 18137/Z1/2023

D1.2 Quality Policy of the Institution for the distance learning PSP

D1.3 Quality Policy of the academic unit for the development and the enhancement of the distance learning PSP

D1.4 Quality Targeting of the academic unit for the distance learning PSP, as per the attached template

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The educational process of both PSPs is implemented remotely, following responding to the growing needs for digital skills and international good practices in digital education and in accordance with the strategy of the University of the Aegean regarding online education (D1.1 Στρατηγική του Ιδρύματος για την εξ αποστάσεως εκπαίδευση, σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 2 της Υ.Α. αριθ. 18137/Z1/2023). The Programmes purport to enhance student-centered learning and the development of lifelong learning and digital collaboration skills. A comprehensive distance learning system will be available to support both PSPs. This system includes the Department's systems for synchronous (Microsoft Teams and Cisco Webex Platform) asynchronous education (LMS Open eClass) as well as the Virtual Campus. In addition to the distance learning infrastructure of the Foundation, the PSPs will utilize the pan-European digital and inter-university campus that has been developed within the framework of the 3D-CIRCULAR project. This Virtual Campus focuses on the development of advanced knowledge and skills for the circular economy and constitutes the central operational environment through which the educational activities and training activities associated with the Master's Degrees will be implemented.

The EEAP members had the chance to see a detailed video clip showing the capabilities of this system Virtual Campus.

Importantly, the Department understands that the effective operation of the postgraduate programs is based on the systematic preparation, guidance and support of students and teachers in distance education. Characteristically, both

students and teachers are informed in a timely manner about the principles of distance education and the use of the distance learning platform through specialized guides and support workshops ("train the trainers") before they start in the programme.

The objective of the MScRES is to promote scientific knowledge and research excellence in the fields of the digital circular economy, deep innovation technologies (Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Digital Product Passports, etc.) and regulatory compliance frameworks that support the green and digital transition. It aims at preparing researchers capable of designing and implementing original research, contributing to the development of innovative solutions and generating new knowledge through scientific publications, research projects and doctoral studies, and strengthening the interconnection between academia, research organizations and industry. Reportedly the PSP focuses on the production of original scientific research in the fields of the digital circular economy, deep innovation technologies and regulatory compliance frameworks that support the green and digital transition. The professional orientation of the graduates is further tertiary studies (PhD), academic & research activity, interfacing academia and industry.

The University of the Aegean has an explicit policy assurance policy for online PSPs (D1.2). The specific Department and the two PSPs (D1.3) declared their commitment to implement quality procedures that ensure key aspects of the provision of distance graduate studies. More specifically:

- the appropriateness of the structure and organization of distance graduate studies
- the achievement of level 7 learning outcomes, as defined by national and European standards (European & National Qualifications Framework)
- the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching
- the suitability of the teaching staff
- the connection of the qualifications of the graduates with the needs of the labor market
- the quality of the support services
- the rational and transparent utilization of financial resources
- the implementation of annual quality target setting and internal evaluation

The KPIs set for the programme (D1.4) are more or less appropriate.

II. Analysis

The EEAP read the provided materials and discussed online with various members of OMEA and MODIP as well as the representatives of the teaching staff. As a new complicated online programme of studies based in one Institution but depending for its delivery on several others, it raised several questions regarding the ability to enforce the quality assurance system of the University of the Aegean not only to its faculty but even more so on the academic faculty and teaching professionals of other

organizations -- some of which as higher ranked and more well known internationally than the University of the Aegean. The EEAP at this point has no data one way or another to judge. We thus decide to err on the side of successful implementation.

III. Conclusions

The PSP has the correct quality objectives and follows the appropriate procedures to achieve them. It is compliant with criterion 1.

Panel Judgement

PRINCIPLE 1: STRATEGY, QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND QUALITY GOAL SETTING FOR THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES (PSP) OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT	
Compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R1.1. Be mindful of the organizational pitfalls of extensive consortia where the core organization does not have extensive leverage over bigger well established partners beyond a limited number of committed individuals.

PRINCIPLE 2: ORGANISATION, MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT OF THE DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

THE DELIVERY OF DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES REQUIRES SPECIAL PREPARATION, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT TO STUDENTS, TEACHING STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION. THE INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK DETERMINES THE NECESSARY ICT INFRASTRUCTURE, THE TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS, AS WELL AS THE MODES OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE INSTITUTION, THE TEACHING STAFF AND THE STUDENTS.

For the delivery of distance learning PSP, Institutions are required to have an integrated distance learning system to support the teaching process via synchronous and asynchronous distance learning methods, with the characteristics described in article 3 of the Ministerial Decision No 18137/Z1/2023.

The integrated distance learning system should be fully accessible to people with disabilities and special educational needs. In addition, for each distance learning PSP, one person (or more, if necessary) is nominated as Manager of the integrated distance learning system, (Ministerial Decision No 18137/Z1/2023, article 7). The Manager has the required expertise to support the teaching staff and the students of the PSP in using the system.

The terms and conditions regarding the organisation of the distance learning PSP are regulated by the Regulation of Postgraduate Study Programmes and Doctoral Studies of the Institution. In particular, the Regulation governs matters relating to the access to the integrated distance learning system, the maintenance and technical support of the system, the educational support of the students, the pedagogical framework of the educational activities, as well as the processes for: assessment and upgrading the digital skills of the PSP teaching staff, plagiarism check, personal data protection, system security, managing data confidentiality, and any other issue concerning the organisation of distance learning PSP.

The communication between students and the teaching staff, as well as between the HEI and students/teaching staff should be conducted smoothly by the use of the integrated distance learning system of the Institution, but also through other digital tools.

Communication among students is very important for the exchange of ideas, discussion on their progression and problem solving, and for this reason it should be supported and encouraged by the Institution. Similarly, communication among teaching staff members is particularly useful for the exchange of experience and good practices.

Students should regularly receive feedback by the teaching staff on their performance and progress.

According to the current institutional framework, part of the procedure (not exceeding 25% of the total ECTS of the PSP) may be organised through asynchronous distance learning methods. The practical training, where applicable, may be carried out remotely, provided that the host body in question supports teleworking, and that the supervision of the practical training is ensured.

Documentation/Annexes

D2.1 Brief description of the integrated distance learning system (Ministerial Decision No 18137/Z1/2023, article 3)

D2.2 Regulation of Postgraduate Study Programmes and Doctoral Studies of the Institution (concerning the distance learning PSP), as per article 4 of the Ministerial Decision No 18137/Z1/2023

D2.3 User Guide for the distance learning system (students)

D2.4 User Guide for the distance learning system (teaching staff)

D2.5 HEI Good Practice Guide for distance learning

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The educational process of the PSP is fully online. Teaching is in the English language.

The University of the Aegean operates an integrated videoconferencing and (synchronous) distance learning system, comprising the following subsystems and services:

1. Videoconferencing Software: To support videoconferencing, the University of the Aegean uses e:Presence and Zoom software.
2. Distance Learning Software: In addition to the Zoom platform, the BigBlueButton (BBB) service is also used.
3. Open e-class Asynchronous Distance Learning Platform: The Open eClass platform is an integrated Electronic Course Management System and is the proposal of the Academic Internet (GUnet) for the support of Asynchronous Distance Learning Services.
4. Virtual Campus: In addition to the distance learning infrastructure of the Institution, both PSPs will utilize the pan-European digital and inter-university campus that has been developed within the framework of the European project 3D-CIRCULAR. The Virtual Campus focuses on developing advanced knowledge and skills regarding the circular economy and serves as the central operational environment for the implementation of educational and training activities linked to the PSPs. The Virtual Campus is supported by the following specialized systems (D2.1):
 - DreamApply for admission and onboarding,
 - LearnWorlds for training delivery, assessment and certification,
 - Weglot for multilingual access,
 - accessiBe for accessibility and inclusion.

The members of the EEAP were informed repeatedly the students and lecturers in the PSPs are informed in a timely manner about the basic principles of distance learning. There are analytical documents that describe the electronic systems and user guides for teachers and students. Needless to say, such documents must be made available in English on the website.

II. Analysis

Our review of the available documents (D2.1-D2.5) and discussions with faculty and social partners indicate significant prospects for the effective organization, management, and support of the online PSP.

III. Conclusions

The prospective PSP is compliant with the specifications of criterion 2.

Panel Judgement

PRINCIPLE 2: ORGANISATION, MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT OF THE DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES	
Compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel agrees that this Programme leads to a Level 7 Qualification according to the National & European Qualifications Framework	YES	NO*
	X	

**In case of negative judgement, please justify*

Panel Recommendations

R2.1 The important documents presented in the Greek language to the members of the EEAP must be translated into English and provided on the website of the PSPs. These include especially documents D2.1, D2.3, D2.4, and D2.5.

PRINCIPLE 3: DESIGN, STRUCTURE, APPROVAL PROCEDURE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

The academic units develop their distance learning 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 of the PSP 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 distance learning PSP must consider:

- *the Institutional strategy for distance learning*
- *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 with research*
- *the relevant regulatory framework and the official procedure for the approval of the PSP by the Institution*
- *the international experience in relevant scientific fields.*

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/Annexes

D3.1 Senate Decision for the establishment of the distance learning PSP according to article 80 of Law 4957/2022 and the accompanying analytical report as per the Ministerial Decision No 18137/Z1/2023, article 5, par. 4

D3.2 PSP Internal Regulation, updated, as provided by the Law 4957/2022 and the Ministerial Decision No 18137/Z1/2023, article 4

D3.3 PSP Student Guide, including: courses, course categories, in-person and distance learning methods (synchronous, asynchronous, blended), assessment methods, the total number of ECTS of the PSP, the percentage of ECTS that are offered through asynchronous distance learning methods and the expected learning outcomes of the PSP

D3.4 Course outlines and thesis outline (as per the specific HAHE template for distance learning PSP) for all PSP courses, in a pdf file, with page numbers. The file should have a Table of Contents of all courses per semester of studies, indicating the page number for each course outline.

D3.5 Schedule and timetable of the PSP

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Panel reviewed the documentation provided for the MSc by Research in Digital Deep Tech Driven Circular Economy, including the Study Guide, Programme structure, course descriptions, learning outcomes, ECTS allocation, assessment methods, dissertation/research project information, distance learning arrangements, and relevant institutional approval documentation. The Panel also discussed the Programme with the Programme leadership, teaching staff and external stakeholders.

The Programme is positioned in an emerging interdisciplinary field, combining circular economy, sustainability, digital technologies, innovation, policy, applied research and research-led problem-solving. The Panel noted that the Programme aims to develop students' ability to engage with circular economy challenges through a research-informed and research-oriented approach.

The Programme is designed as a distance learning postgraduate programme at Level 7. Its structure includes taught components, research-oriented learning activities and a dissertation/research project. The Programme team explained that the by Research route is intended to place greater emphasis on research methodology, literature review, research proposal development, methodological design and independent research activity.

The Panel noted that the MSc and the MSc by Research are closely related in subject area and overall academic rationale. The Programme team explained that the MSc is more applied/professional in orientation, while the MSc by Research is intended to develop stronger research capability. The Panel considers this distinction appropriate in principle. However, the distinction should be made more explicit in the written documentation, particularly in relation to learning outcomes, assessment design, research outputs, dissertation/research project expectations and graduate destinations.

The Panel also discussed the inclusion of digital technologies such as blockchain within the overall circular economy curriculum. The Programme team explained that blockchain is relevant to digital product passports, material traceability, accountability and circular economy applications. The Panel considers this rationale appropriate, provided that such technologies are taught critically and linked clearly to research questions, evidence, methods, limitations and circu

II. Analysis

The Panel considers that the Programme is academically relevant and timely. The combination of digital deep technologies and circular economy is appropriate for postgraduate research-oriented study, particularly given the increasing need for evidence-based solutions in sustainability, resource management, traceability, circular business models and digital transformation.

The Programme has a suitable Level 7 orientation and provides a basis for students to develop advanced knowledge and research capability. The Panel welcomes the intention to expose students to research methodology, literature review, research proposal development and independent research activity. This is essential for a by Research award.

However, the Panel considers that the research identity of the Programme should be more clearly embedded across the full student journey. The Programme should demonstrate how students move from foundational circular economy and digital technology knowledge to research design, research ethics, methodological selection, data collection or analysis, critical evaluation and final research output. This should be visible not only in the dissertation/research project but also in earlier assessments and learning activities.

The Panel considers that the Programme would benefit from clearer specification of the expected research outputs. For example, students could be expected to produce a research proposal, structured literature review, methodological plan, ethics application, empirical or applied study, technical/digital prototype, policy analysis, framework, case-study analysis or conference-style paper. The expected nature and level of research contribution should be clearly articulated.

The interdisciplinary nature of circular economy is appropriate and valuable, but it also creates design challenges. Students may enter from diverse academic and professional backgrounds. The Programme should therefore ensure that the research pathway is accessible without reducing Level 7 expectations. Students should be supported to develop both domain understanding and research capability.

The Panel also considers that the distance learning mode is suitable for the Programme, particularly for working professionals and geographically dispersed learners. However, asynchronous and synchronous learning activities should be

clearly structured to support research development, supervision, peer learning, academic writing and independent enquiry.

III. Conclusions

The Panel concludes that the Programme is appropriately designed as a distance learning postgraduate programme with a research orientation. It addresses a relevant and timely interdisciplinary field and has the potential to develop graduates capable of undertaking research-informed and applied research work in digital circular economy contexts.

The Panel also concludes that the Programme would be strengthened by clearer documentation of the by Research identity, including differentiated learning outcomes, research outputs, assessment tasks, dissertation/research project expectations and progression towards independent research capability.

Panel Judgement

PRINCIPLE 3: DESIGN, STRUCTURE, APPROVAL PROCEDURE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES	
Compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R3.1. Make the distinction between the MSc and the MSc by Research more explicit in the written documentation, particularly in relation to aims, learning outcomes, assessment design, research expectations, dissertation/research project requirements and graduate destinations.

R3.2. Strengthen the research pathway across the full student journey, showing how students progress from foundational knowledge to research design, literature review, methodology, ethics, data analysis and independent research output.

R3.3. Develop or strengthen a clear curriculum mapping document showing the relationship between programme learning outcomes, course learning outcomes, research skills, assessment methods, assessment criteria, ECTS workload and Level 7 expectations.

R3.4. Ensure that technologies are presented in the courses critically, including their relevance, evidence base, limitations, environmental implications and suitability for circular economy applications. E.g., blockchain and similar technologies.

PRINCIPLE 4: STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT IN THE DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE THAT DISTANCE LEARNING PSP PROVIDE THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE LEARNING PROCESS. THE ASSESSMENT METHODS SHOULD REFLECT THIS APPROACH AND ATTEND TO THE SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR THE REMOTE ONLINE EXAMS AND ASSESSMENT OF THE STUDENTS.

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 curriculum implementation and of 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*
- *investigates the students' background knowledge and adjusts teaching accordingly*
- *considers and uses different modes of teaching, where appropriate*
- *flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods that promote active learning*
- *regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of teaching, learning and assessment through regulatory interventions, 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:

- *Assessment is implemented through written or oral examinations carried out either in person or remotely, or through alternative methods, such as submission of assignment or conduct of practical test. The Institution should ensure the credibility and the integrity of the assessment procedure.*
- *More specifically, the written or oral remote examination may be conducted using technological means and similar systems/applications for remote online exams, ensuring the participant's authentication, his/her personal identification and the proctoring of the exam process, where necessary.*
- *Where special technical equipment is required for the assessment process, this should be stated in the PSP call for applications.*
- *The academic staff members are familiar with the existing distance learning system and assessment 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/Annexes

D4.1 (N/A for the initial accreditation) Evaluation by the students: a) sample of fully completed questionnaire for the evaluation of the PSP courses / teaching staff by the students b) statistical results of all the questionnaires, per question, for two academic semesters. Commenting on results and proposals on how to address weaknesses

D4.2 Questionnaire of the evaluation of the courses/teaching staff by the students

D4.3 Regulation for students' complaints and appeals

D4.4 Regulation for academic advisors

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The documentation reviewed, together with the information and clarifications provided during the meetings with representatives of the University of the Aegean on Tuesday, 23 June 2026, indicates that the M.Sc. by Research in Digital Deep Tech Driven Circular Economy has been designed around a student-centred and research-oriented educational approach.

The programme is delivered through distance education and combines synchronous and asynchronous learning. This mode of organisation supports flexible participation and enables students facing geographical, professional or social constraints to undertake postgraduate studies. The programme's digital environment is intended to promote student autonomy, continuous engagement, communication with teaching staff and collaboration with other students and researchers. The University's Open eClass platform supports asynchronous learning, while Microsoft Teams and Cisco Webex support synchronous teaching and communication. The programme will also use the 3D-CIRCULAR Virtual Campus as a central environment for learning, interaction, assessment and certification.

The student-centred character of the programme is strengthened by its distinctive research orientation. Rather than relying exclusively on conventional course-based instruction, the programme places significant emphasis on the development of research competence, independent inquiry, critical thinking and the ability to design and implement research activities. The curriculum includes compulsory courses in Research Methodology and EU Research Funding and Proposal Development, together with an elective course selected from seven specialised subject areas. The elective options include fields such as deep-tech energy transformation, digital health, sustainable manufacturing, artificial intelligence, blockchain, circular supply chains, resilient cities and data-driven social economy. Students may also select an

International Conference/Bootcamp in Digital Deep Tech Driven Circular Economy.

This structure provides students with an opportunity to shape part of their learning pathway according to their academic interests and intended research direction. The programme connects methodological training with specialised scientific content and the wider research ecosystem of the 3D-CIRCULAR project. This facilitates exposure to contemporary research questions, international academic collaboration and applied challenges in the fields of digital technology, sustainability and the circular economy.

Academic guidance is supported through the institution of the Academic Advisor. The relevant regulation establishes an institutional framework for assisting students with the organisation of their studies, understanding academic requirements, monitoring their progress and addressing difficulties that may arise during their studies. This mechanism is especially important for an online research programme, in which students require structured communication and continuing academic guidance.

The institutional regulatory framework also contains provisions relating to student assessment and examinations, including arrangements for students with disabilities or special educational needs, students unable to participate in scheduled examinations and the reliable and transparent conduct of assessment procedures.

A formal procedure has been established for students to evaluate courses and teaching staff. Before the completion of each semester and before the examination period, students will be invited to complete an electronic questionnaire through the University's Quality Assurance Unit information system. The process is anonymous and takes place in a secure electronic environment.

The questionnaire includes both closed and open-ended questions, allowing students to evaluate course content, teaching methods, educational material and teaching effectiveness, while also submitting comments and proposals for improvement. Students receive an email containing links to the questionnaires for the courses in which they are registered. The evaluation period normally lasts between two and three weeks, as determined by the Quality Assurance Unit.

The Programme Director and the individual members of the teaching staff have access to the evaluation results concerning their courses. This arrangement provides a basis for reviewing teaching practices, identifying weaknesses and introducing improvements to the educational process. The programme also foresees periodic comparison with similar research-based programmes offered by recognised institutions in Greece and abroad.

Because this is a new programme undergoing initial accreditation, completed student questionnaires and statistical results covering two academic semesters are

not yet available. The submitted D4.1 document explicitly states that such evidence is not required at this stage because the programme has not yet commenced full operation.

II. Analysis

The design of the programme reflects the main elements of student-centred education. The combination of distance delivery, flexibility in the selection of a specialised elective and a strong emphasis on independent research provides students with opportunities to take responsibility for their academic development.

The research-based identity of the programme is a particularly significant feature. The compulsory courses in research methodology and research-proposal development are directly relevant to the programme's purpose and provide an appropriate foundation for independent postgraduate research. The elective component also allows students to align their studies with their individual research interests.

The programme's participation in the wider 3D-CIRCULAR academic and research network provides opportunities for students to interact with researchers and institutions from different countries and scientific fields. This can enrich the student experience and reinforce the relationship between teaching, current research and real-world applications.

The digital infrastructure appears capable of supporting the planned educational activities. The combination of synchronous and asynchronous systems provides flexibility without removing opportunities for direct communication. The Virtual Campus can further support an integrated student journey, including onboarding, learning, communication, assessment and certification.

For a research-based programme, however, student-centred learning depends not only on technological platforms but also on the quality and regularity of research supervision. The programme should therefore ensure that each student receives appropriately matched supervision, regular formative feedback and clearly defined research milestones.

The Academic Advisor provides an additional and distinct form of support. The academic advisor can assist with overall progress and programme-related issues, while the research supervisor should concentrate on the development, implementation and completion of the individual research project. The respective responsibilities of these two roles should be clearly communicated to students.

The course and teaching evaluation procedure is appropriately designed and ensures anonymity. The inclusion of open-ended questions is positive because it allows students to raise issues that may not be captured through numerical ratings. In the case of this programme, the evaluation process should eventually extend beyond taught courses to cover the quality of research supervision, access to research resources, the usefulness of feedback and the overall research experience.

Assessment should be aligned with the research-oriented learning outcomes of the programme. Students should be assessed not only on their acquisition of knowledge but also on their ability to formulate research questions, review relevant literature, select appropriate methodologies, analyse evidence, address ethical considerations and communicate research findings.

Clear criteria should be made available for all significant research outputs. These should include research proposals, progress reports, presentations and the final research work. Students should also receive timely and constructive feedback at clearly identified stages of the research process.

Since the programme is new, its effectiveness has not yet been confirmed through operational evidence. The first cycles of implementation should therefore be monitored carefully, particularly in relation to the frequency of supervisory contact, timely completion of research milestones, student workload, satisfaction with supervision and the consistency of assessment across different research areas.

III. Conclusions

The M.Sc. by Research has established an appropriate framework for student-centred learning, teaching and assessment. Its distance-learning organisation supports flexibility and access, while its research-based curriculum promotes autonomy, critical inquiry and individual academic development.

The curriculum's emphasis on research methodology, proposal development and specialised research fields is consistent with the programme's stated identity. The Academic Advisor framework provides an additional mechanism for supporting student progress, while the institutional evaluation system enables students to assess courses and teaching staff anonymously.

The absence of completed evaluation results is justified because the programme is undergoing initial accreditation. Nevertheless, after implementation, the programme will need to demonstrate that student feedback, supervisory monitoring and assessment outcomes are systematically used to improve the student experience.

Overall, the programme has made satisfactory provision for student-centred distance learning at the design stage. Particular attention should be given during implementation to structured research supervision, transparent research-assessment criteria and the evaluation of the students' overall research experience.

Panel Judgement

PRINCIPLE 4: STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT IN THE DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES	
Compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R4.1. Detailed assessment criteria and rubrics should be published for research proposals, progress reports, presentations and the final research work.

R4.2. The student questionnaire should include specific questions concerning the usefulness of feedback and access to research resources.

R4.3. The programme should document the actions adopted in response to student evaluations and communicate significant improvements to the student body.

PRINCIPLE 5: STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION OF DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES, 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*
- *policies and procedures for the recognition of students' background knowledge*
- *the terms and procedures 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/Annexes

D5.1 Institutional Research Ethics Regulation

D5.2 PSP Regulation of studies (including special section for the remote online examination and assessment of students as per the Ministerial Decision No 18137/Z1/2023, article 6), internship, mobility, and students assignments

D5.3 PSP Degree template

D5.4 PSP Diploma Supplement template

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Panel reviewed the documentation relating to student admission, progression, recognition and certification for the MSc by Research in Digital Deep Tech Driven Circular Economy. This included information on admission requirements, study stages, progression arrangements, dissertation/research project procedures, recognition of studies, research ethics and certification.

The Programme is designed to attract students from diverse academic and professional backgrounds. During the discussions, the Programme team acknowledged that circular economy is interdisciplinary and that students may come

from different fields, including engineering, business, legal, policy, environmental, technological or other professional backgrounds. The Panel considers this appropriate for the subject area, but notes that the by Research route requires particular attention to research readiness.

The Panel noted that the Programme intends to support students through common foundational knowledge, structured learning materials, synchronous and asynchronous support, academic advising, interaction with teaching staff and access to the virtual learning environment. The Programme team also referred to mechanisms such as knowledge checks, student communication channels and opportunities for academic support.

The Panel discussed dissertation/research project arrangements with the Programme team. It was explained that dissertation/research project topics may be proposed by teaching staff, while students may also suggest their own topics. Topics are expected to be considered in relation to Programme learning outcomes, student interests, feasibility and available supervisory expertise.

The Panel noted that the by Research route requires students to develop independent research capability. This includes the ability to identify a research problem, engage critically with literature, design a suitable methodology, address ethical considerations and produce a final research output at Level 7.

II. Analysis

The Panel considers that the arrangements for admission, progression, recognition and certification are broadly appropriate. However, for a by Research programme, admission criteria should make explicit not only general academic eligibility but also research readiness, academic writing expectations, methodological preparedness and the capacity to undertake independent enquiry.

The interdisciplinary nature of the Programme is a strength, but it also creates variation in student preparedness. Students may have different levels of prior knowledge in circular economy, digital technologies, research methods, sustainability, business models or academic writing. The Programme should therefore ensure that students are supported through induction, diagnostic activities, preparatory material or bridging support where needed.

The Panel welcomes the use of academic advising and support. In a by Research programme, the distinction between academic advising and research supervision should be clear. Students should understand who supports general academic progression, who supervises their research project, how often supervision takes place, how progress is recorded and what is expected before they proceed to the dissertation/research project stage.

The Panel considers that the dissertation/research project process is appropriate in principle. Allowing students to select from proposed topics or suggest their own topics can support motivation and alignment with professional interests. However, the approval process should be clearly documented. Criteria should include alignment with Programme learning outcomes, research originality or contribution, feasibility, methodology, research ethics, data availability, supervisory expertise and Level 7 expectations.

The Panel also considers that progression monitoring is particularly important in the by Research route. The Programme should include clear milestones before students move to the dissertation/research project stage. These could include approval of a research proposal, literature review, methodology plan and ethics approval where required.

III. Conclusions

The Panel concludes that the Programme has appropriate arrangements for admission, progression, recognition and certification. The Programme is suitable for an interdisciplinary student population and provides a basis for supporting students through distance learning and research development.

The Panel also concludes that further enhancement would be achieved through clearer documentation of research readiness expectations, academic advising and supervision arrangements, dissertation/research project approval criteria, research ethics procedures and progress milestones.

Panel Judgement

PRINCIPLE 5: STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION OF DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES, AND CERTIFICATION	
Compliant	
Partially compliant	X
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R.5.1. Clarify the expected student profile and admission expectations for the by Research route, including academic background, research readiness, language requirements, academic writing ability and preparedness for independent study.

R.5.2. Provide clear induction and preparatory guidance for students from diverse academic and professional backgrounds, particularly in relation to circular economy concepts, digital technologies, research methods, academic writing and research ethics.

R.5.3. Clearly distinguish the role of the academic advisor from the role of the research supervisor, including allocation processes, expected contact, progress monitoring and escalation routes. Define assessment of individuals in group-based dissertations.

PRINCIPLE 6: TEACHING STAFF OF DISTANCE LEARNING 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 and their training in respect of good practices in distance learning; 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/Annexes

D6.1 Table of the teaching staff (name list including subject area, taught courses, employment relationship, teaching assignment, as well as other teaching commitments in hours, documented teaching record in distance learning programmes)

D6.2 Summary report of teaching staff performance in scientific-research and teaching work, based on internationally recognised research databases and research metrics (e.g. Google Scholar, Scopus etc.)

D6.3 Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment and policies in place for the recruitment of highly qualified teaching staff

D6.4 Working rules or employment contracts, teaching staff duties

D6.5 Published policy and projects for the support and development of the teaching staff with regard to distance learning

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Panel reviewed the documentation relating to the teaching staff of the MSc by Research in Digital Deep Tech Driven Circular Economy, including staff profiles, areas of expertise, teaching roles, research interests and information provided about

distance learning delivery. The Panel also met with members of the teaching team and discussed staff expertise, professional development, research activity, distance learning experience, workload, supervision and student support.

The Programme benefits from an interdisciplinary teaching team with expertise relevant to circular economy, digital technologies, sustainability, innovation, business, policy and applied research. The Panel noted that the teaching team includes staff with experience from different institutions and professional contexts, which is appropriate for a research-oriented Programme in an interdisciplinary field.

During the discussions, the teaching team explained that the by Research route is intended to place greater emphasis on research methodology, literature review, research proposal development and independent research activity. Staff also referred to the need to provide students with a common foundational understanding before moving into more specialised research activity.

Members of the teaching team described experience in online, blended or distance education. Examples were provided of virtual teaching, online delivery at other universities, professional training environments and international teaching. The Programme team also referred to a train-the-trainers model intended to support consistency in online delivery and to ensure that staff are familiar with the virtual learning environment and distance learning pedagogy.

The Panel noted that the Programme relies on a distributed and interdisciplinary teaching team. This can be a strength, particularly for a research-oriented programme, but it requires clear coordination, supervision planning, workload management, consistent assessment expectations and shared standards for Level 7 research supervision.

II. Analysis

The Panel considers that the teaching staff have appropriate academic and professional expertise to support the delivery of the Programme. The interdisciplinary composition of the team is suitable for a by Research programme in digital deep tech driven circular economy, as the field requires knowledge across technology, sustainability, business, policy, innovation, research methods and applied problem-solving.

The Panel welcomes the research and professional expertise of the teaching team. However, for a by Research programme, it is important that staff expertise is mapped explicitly to research supervision areas, dissertation/project themes and expected student research outputs. This will help ensure that students are matched with supervisors who have appropriate methodological, disciplinary and applied expertise.

The Panel also considers that supervision capacity should be monitored carefully.

Distance learning research supervision requires regular contact, timely feedback, methodological guidance, support with ethics, academic writing and progress monitoring. These activities should be recognised in workload planning, particularly if student numbers grow.

The Panel welcomes the evidence that staff have experience in online or blended delivery and that the Programme team has considered training and coordination for distance learning. However, the Panel considers that this should be more systematically documented. The Programme would benefit from a clear record of staff experience and professional development in distance learning pedagogy, online supervision, digital assessment, student engagement monitoring and inclusive online teaching.

The Panel considers that consistency across the teaching and supervision team is essential. Where staff are drawn from different institutions or professional contexts, there should be common expectations for Level 7 standards, research quality, assessment criteria, feedback, supervision frequency, ethics, academic integrity and student support.

III. Conclusions

The Panel concludes that the Programme has a suitably qualified and interdisciplinary teaching team. The staff expertise is appropriate for the research-oriented academic profile of the Programme and provides a suitable basis for supporting students in digital circular economy research.

The Panel also concludes that the Programme would be strengthened by more systematic documentation of distance learning CPD, explicit mapping of staff expertise to research supervision areas, clearer supervision workload planning, and consistent processes for assessment, feedback, research ethics and dissertation/research project supervision.

Panel Judgement

PRINCIPLE 6: TEACHING STAFF OF DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES	
Compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R6.1. Ensure that each student is matched with a supervisor whose expertise aligns with the research topic, methodology and applied context of the dissertation/research project.

R6.2. Maintain a systematic record of staff experience and professional development in

distance learning, including online pedagogy, online supervision, digital assessment, student engagement, accessibility and use of the virtual learning environment.

R6.3. Continue to strengthen the link between teaching, research and applied practice through case studies, current research, policy developments, industry problems, externally informed research topics and professional engagement.

PRINCIPLE 7: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT FOR DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER THE TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS OF THE DISTANCE LEARNING PSP. THEY SHOULD -ON THE ONE HAND- PROVIDE SATISFACTORY PHYSICAL, TECHNOLOGICAL AND DIGITAL 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. PHYSICAL OR DIGITAL LECTURE ROOMS, PHYSICAL OR VIRTUAL LABORATORIES, PHYSICAL AND ONLINE LIBRARIES, NETWORKS, CAREER AND SOCIAL 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 online libraries with the possibility of access to electronic databases, digital study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information 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 or international 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 and evaluate the effectiveness of the support they receive.

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/Annexes

D7.1 Detailed description of the infrastructure and services made available by the Institution to the department for the PSP, for the support of learning and of the academic activities (human resources, facilities, services, etc.), and the corresponding firm commitment of the Institution to financially cover these infrastructure and services from state or other resources

D7.2 Information material on the services available to the students

D7.3 Feasibility Study for the PSP operation, including tuition fees utilization, where they exist

D7.4 Name list of the PSP administrative staff (posts, qualifications, duties, training in distance learning)

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The documentation reviewed, together with the information and clarifications provided during the meetings with representatives of the University of the Aegean on Tuesday, 23 June 2026, indicates that the M.Sc. by Research in Digital Deep Tech Driven Circular Economy is supported by an extensive range of physical, technological, digital, research, administrative and student-support resources.

The Department of Cultural Technology and Communication makes available to the programme its teaching facilities, computer rooms, videoconferencing facilities and research laboratories. The Department's newer facilities include classrooms equipped with computers, projection and audio systems, accessible infrastructure for persons with disabilities and dedicated computer laboratories. The research laboratories and computing facilities are particularly relevant to the programme because of its strong emphasis on independent research, data analysis, digital technologies and the preparation of a substantial research dissertation.

Students also have access to the University Library and its physical and electronic collections, databases and academic information services. Remote access is supported through the University's VPN and electronic authentication services, enabling distance-learning students to access resources that would normally be available through the institutional network. This provision is essential for students undertaking literature reviews, developing research proposals, analysing scientific evidence and preparing publications and dissertations.

The University provides a broad range of institutional electronic services, including:

- institutional email;
- electronic student registry and secretariat services;
- VPN access;
- Microsoft 365 and Microsoft Azure;
- electronic announcements and discussion services;
- Zoom and e-Presence;
- remote electronic signature and electronic document-management services.

Distance-learning delivery is supported through Open eClass, Microsoft Teams, BigBlueButton and Moodle, together with the 3D-CIRCULAR Virtual Campus. The Virtual Campus is intended to provide an integrated environment supporting admission, onboarding, learning, collaboration, online assessment, access to laboratories and certification. The wider technological design also includes facilities for multilingual access and digital accessibility.

The University provides students with a comprehensive range of support services. These include the Student Welfare Office, healthcare and accommodation-related support, psychological counselling, scholarships, Erasmus+ services, the Career Office, the Academic Advisor, the Student Ombudsman, the complaints service and the Teaching and Learning Support Office. The services are described in the

information material prepared specifically for the programme's students.

Additional institutional structures are particularly relevant to students conducting research. These include the Research Ethics Committee, the institutional ethics framework, the Gender Equality Committee, the Data Protection Officer and the Technology Transfer and Innovation Unit. These structures can support students in addressing research ethics, personal-data protection, equality, intellectual property, knowledge transfer and the potential exploitation of research results.

At the beginning of each academic cycle or semester, the programme plans to organise an orientation event for students. The event will cover the academic calendar, registration procedures, the structure of the programme, assessment criteria, official communication channels, electronic platforms and available academic and support services. The student-information document also states that assessment criteria and course outlines will be communicated at the beginning of the semester.

The operation of the programme is supported by specifically identified administrative and technical personnel. The qualifications and experience presented in the documentation are relevant to the functions assigned to these staff members.

The available documentation foresees activities that are particularly relevant to a research-based programme, such as:

- awards for the best postgraduate research dissertation;
- awards for students publishing peer-reviewed research articles in collaboration with programme teaching staff;
- scientific events organised with industry, social organisations and professional associations;
- summer schools in specialised interdisciplinary fields;
- the provision of additional academic books and research material to students.

II. Analysis

The available infrastructure and services adequately address the principal requirements of Principle 7. The Department provides physical facilities, research laboratories, computer equipment, library resources and digital services that are appropriate for a postgraduate programme delivered at a distance.

The research orientation of the programme makes access to academic databases, specialised software, computing resources and research laboratories especially important. The documentation demonstrates that these resources are institutionally available. Nevertheless, the programme should clarify for every research project which software, datasets, laboratory facilities and other specialised resources will be required and how students located outside Mytilene or outside Greece will obtain access to them.

The combination of institutional learning systems and the 3D-CIRCULAR Virtual Campus provides a sufficiently comprehensive environment for distance education. It supports synchronous and asynchronous communication, access to learning material, collaboration and online academic activities. However, the coexistence of several platforms may create complexity for students. The programme should therefore define clearly the primary platform for each function and provide a single point through which students can access the relevant systems.

The availability of VPN, electronic secretariat services, cloud applications and remote communication tools is a significant strength. These services reduce the need for physical presence and are appropriate for an international distance-learning student population.

The programme offers a broad range of welfare, academic, administrative, career and psychological support services. The dedicated student-information document and the planned orientation event provide an appropriate means of making students aware of these services. Since many institutional services were originally developed for campus-based students, the programme should ensure that distance and international students can access them remotely and, where needed, in English.

The identified administrative and technical personnel appear to possess suitable qualifications and relevant experience. The presence of staff with previous experience in distance-learning postgraduate programmes is a positive feature. Nevertheless, the sufficiency of staffing should be reviewed after the programme begins operating, particularly in relation to the number of enrolled students, the international character of the programme and the volume of research and technical-support requests.

The sustainability study provides evidence of adequate initial funding and a planned allocation of resources. Funding from the 3D-CIRCULAR project during the first three cycles reduces the financial risk during the programme's initial operation. The later reliance on registration and tuition-fee income will, however, require regular monitoring of enrolment, expenditure and the actual cost of supporting research activities.

The planned use of tuition income for research awards, publications, events, summer schools, books and educational material is consistent with the identity of an M.Sc. by Research. The programme should ensure that these expenditures are implemented transparently and that students receive clear information about the research-support opportunities available to them.

Because the programme is new, the adequacy and effectiveness of its resources can currently be assessed only at the design level. Evidence from actual operation will be needed to confirm that students can access research resources promptly, receive

effective technical and administrative assistance and use institutional services regardless of their physical location.

III. Conclusions

The M.Sc. by Research in Digital Deep Tech Driven Circular Economy is supported by an appropriate and comprehensive framework of learning resources and student-support services.

The University and the Department provide physical facilities, research laboratories, computer infrastructure, library resources, academic databases, digital learning systems and remote-access services. The 3D-CIRCULAR Virtual Campus and the programme's international research network offer additional opportunities for digital collaboration, research interaction and access to specialised expertise.

The programme also provides access to administrative, technical, welfare, psychological, career and academic-support services. Institutional structures for research ethics, data protection, equality and technology transfer further strengthen the support available to students undertaking substantial independent research.

The programme has identified qualified administrative and technical personnel and has submitted a detailed sustainability and tuition-utilisation plan. Adequate funding appears to be available for the first three cycles through the 3D-CIRCULAR project, while a financial model has been developed for subsequent cycles.

At the initial-accreditation stage, the planned resources and support mechanisms are appropriate. Their practical effectiveness should be assessed after implementation through evidence concerning accessibility, platform reliability, use of research resources, staffing adequacy, response times and student satisfaction.

Panel Judgement

PRINCIPLE 7: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT FOR DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES	
Compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R7.1. The programme should define measurable standards for support services, including response times, system availability, resolution of technical problems and student satisfaction.

R7.2. The programme must publish transparent criteria for allocating financial support for research publications, conferences, summer schools, fieldwork and awards for student research.

PRINCIPLE 8: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT FOR THE DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS BEAR FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTING, ANALYSING AND USING INFORMATION, AIMED AT THE EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF DISTANCE LEARNING 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 PSP 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 postgraduate study 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 in planning follow-up activities.

Documentation/Annexes

D8.1 (N/A for the initial accreditation) Reports from the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) for the operation of the programme to date (export in pdf format. Section: PSP)

D8.2 (N/A for the initial accreditation) Assessment of the NISQA quality data report (section PSP) of the last 5 years by the QAU and suggestions for improvement

D8.3 Operation of information system for the collection of administrative data of the PSP (student records), as well as other tools and procedures designed for the collection of data related to the academic and administrative operation of the academic unit and the PSP

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) is supported by an integrated institutional information management infrastructure centred on the UniverSIS Student

Information System. This platform manages key academic and administrative processes, including student registration, programme and course administration, examinations, grading, and the fulfilment of graduation requirements. Comprehensive student records are maintained throughout the entire academic journey, covering admission, enrolment, academic progression, temporary suspension, and completion of studies.

The information system provides effective mechanisms for monitoring student performance and progression while enabling the central management of programme structures, course specifications, teaching allocations, and assessment records. Academic staff have access to relevant student information, attendance data, assessment outcomes, and performance indicators, whereas administrative personnel can generate reports, monitor student status, and oversee programme administration efficiently. In addition, the Learning Management System (LMS) incorporates communication tools that facilitate timely interaction among students, academic staff, and administrative services.

Student feedback on courses and teaching staff is systematically collected and incorporated into the University's quality assurance processes. Institutional data from multiple information systems are consolidated through the University Quality Assurance Information System (MODIP), which supports the generation of performance indicators, statistical analyses, and quality assurance reports. The platform also enables continuous monitoring of student progression and academic performance over time.

Relevant information is automatically transferred to the OPESP quality assurance platform, providing reliable evidence to support institutional decision-making and strategic planning. Additional institutional systems, including Nautilus, Octopus, Rescom, and Turnitin, complement the core infrastructure by supporting admissions management, dissertation administration, plagiarism detection, financial management, research activities, and the promotion of academic integrity. Collectively, these systems comply with institutional requirements for interoperability, accessibility, and data protection.

Overall, the University has established a well-developed information management framework that supports the effective administration, monitoring, and continuous enhancement of the PSP. As the programme is newly established, historical evidence relating to key performance indicators, student progression, completion rates, graduate outcomes, and student satisfaction is not yet available. Nevertheless, the existing infrastructure demonstrates a strong institutional capacity to collect, analyse, and utilise reliable information in support of evidence-based quality assurance and the ongoing development of the programme.

II. Analysis

The documentation indicates that the University of the Aegean has established a comprehensive institutional information management environment that is well positioned to support the administration, monitoring, and continuous enhancement of the PSP in Digital Circular Economy by research. Although the programme has not yet generated historical performance data, the proposed information infrastructure appears fully operational and capable of supporting the systematic collection, processing, and analysis of the data required for internal and external quality assurance.

A notable strength is the close integration of the UniverSIS Student Information System with the University's Quality Assurance Information System (MODIP). The interoperability of these platforms facilitates the automated exchange of information relating to students, academic staff, curricula, assessment processes, and institutional quality indicators. By consolidating data within a unified environment, the University enhances the accuracy, consistency, and reliability of the information used to support academic management and institutional decision-making.

The information systems support the complete student lifecycle, encompassing admissions, registration, academic progression, assessment, dissertation management, graduation, and alumni records. This integrated approach provides an appropriate framework for monitoring student achievement, retention, completion, and future progression trends once the programme is fully operational. Furthermore, the availability of real-time academic information enables the timely identification of students who may require additional academic or pastoral support. However, limited information has been provided on monitoring progress of research in each course, through individual tutoring meetings and action plan. There is a need to track progress against an agreed research plan and will escalate support when a candidate misses agreed milestones.

The institution also demonstrates a strong commitment to quality assurance through the capabilities of the MODIP platform. The system facilitates the administration of course and teaching evaluations, monitoring of institutional services, generation of quality indicators, student performance analysis, and production of comprehensive analytical reports. These features indicate that institutional data are actively utilised to support evidence-informed decision-making and the continuous enhancement of academic provision rather than serving solely administrative purposes.

In addition, the availability of integrated reporting tools and performance metrics provides the University with the capacity to evaluate programme effectiveness, monitor student satisfaction, assess resource utilisation, and track key institutional indicators. Automatic data transfer to the OPESP platform further strengthens compliance with national quality assurance requirements while supporting institutional transparency and accountability.

The University's information management framework is further enhanced through complementary systems, including Nautilus, Octopus, Rescom, and Turnitin. These applications extend institutional oversight to areas such as admissions administration, dissertation management, financial operations, research activity, and the safeguarding of academic integrity. Collectively, these systems demonstrate a coordinated and institution-wide approach to information management that supports both academic and administrative functions.

While the institutional infrastructure provides a solid basis for data collection, monitoring, and reporting, the provided documentation offers relatively limited evidence regarding programme-specific performance benchmarks, quantitative targets, and the formal processes through which analytical findings are translated into improvement initiatives. As the programme matures and operational data become available, the definition of measurable key performance indicators together with structured review and action planning processes would further reinforce the effectiveness of the quality assurance system and support continuous programme enhancement.

III. Conclusions

The information management infrastructure is comprehensive and well aligned with quality assurance requirements. The primary priority for the programme should be the transition from data collection capability to systematic use of data for monitoring performance, evaluating outcomes, and driving continuous improvement once operational data become available. This will ensure that the programme fully realises the potential of its robust digital infrastructure and develops a strong culture of evidence-based quality enhancement.

Panel Judgement

PRINCIPLE 8: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT FOR THE DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES	
Compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R8.1. Implement early warning and student retention mechanisms.

R8.2. Consider the risk of student research isolation.

R8.3. Benchmark performance against similar programmes with suitably defined KPIs.

PRINCIPLE 9: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE DISTANCE LEARNING PSP 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 distance learning 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/Annexes

D9.1 Means and channels of communication for the publication of information and the promotion of the PSP

D9.2 List of special personalised web applications for the students

D9.3 Special segment on the Department's website for the promotion of the PSP (link). Bilingual (Greek and English) version of the webpage of the PSP, accessible to people with disabilities, with complete, clear and objective information

D9.4 Procedure for the maintenance and update of the Programme's webpage

D9.5 **(N/A for the initial accreditation)** Results of the assessment of the functionality and the content, as well as of the maintenance and update of the PSP webpage

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The evidence presented, demonstrates that the Institution has established a comprehensive and well-organised framework for publishing information relating to the distance learning PSP. Information is disseminated through multiple official channels, including the dedicated bilingual Programme website, the University of Piraeus website, the Department of Digital Systems website, the EU-iNSPIRE project website, and official social media platforms. The Programme website serves as the primary source of information and provides direct access to details regarding the curriculum, admission procedures, regulations, academic staff, announcements, learning resources, student services, and contact information. The communication strategy ensures that information is first validated through official institutional procedures before being disseminated across complementary communication channels, thereby promoting consistency, transparency, and accessibility.

The documentation further demonstrates that the published information is supported by an extensive digital infrastructure designed to facilitate both public

information and student access to personalised services. The Programme provides direct access to digital learning platforms, student information systems, virtual learning environments, synchronous teaching tools, academic administration services, library resources, welfare services, technical support, and numerous institutional electronic services through a dedicated "Services for Students" section. The website is available in both Greek and English and incorporates accessibility features for users with disabilities, while documented procedures govern content management, periodic review, software maintenance, security updates, and quality control, ensuring that publicly available information remains accurate, objective, secure, and up to date.

The Institution has implemented clear governance arrangements for the production, verification, maintenance, and dissemination of information, supported by robust digital platforms and comprehensive communication mechanisms. Although the Programme has not yet completed a formal evaluation of website effectiveness due to its recent establishment and initial accreditation process, the documented procedures for continuous maintenance and quality assurance provide a solid foundation for ensuring the long-term reliability, accessibility, and continuous improvement of publicly available information. Future enhancement could be achieved by publishing additional evidence-based information on student progression, completion rates, graduate employability, and other performance indicators as these become available.

II. Analysis

The findings indicate that the Institution has established a comprehensive and well-governed framework for publishing information related to the distance learning PSP. Public information is disseminated through multiple official channels, including the dedicated Programme website, the University and Department websites, the EU-iNSPIRE project website, and official social media platforms, ensuring broad visibility and accessibility. The communication strategy is supported by clearly defined governance arrangements that regulate the creation, validation, approval, and dissemination of information, thereby promoting accuracy, consistency, and transparency. This coordinated approach demonstrates that public information is managed as an integral component of the Programme's quality assurance system rather than as an isolated dissemination activity.

The analysis also highlights the Programme's strong digital orientation, which extends beyond the provision of general information to include an integrated portfolio of personalised electronic services supporting prospective and enrolled students. The dedicated "Services for Students" section consolidates access to learning management systems, student information systems, synchronous and asynchronous learning platforms, library resources, welfare services, technical support, research services, cloud applications, and academic administration. The

bilingual website, accessibility features, and structured navigation significantly enhance usability for diverse stakeholder groups, reflecting good practice in supporting distance learning environments through comprehensive digital information management.

The procedures for website governance, maintenance, and continuous updating further strengthen the reliability of the published information. Responsibilities for content management are clearly allocated, while formal processes exist for content verification, multilingual updates, software maintenance, cybersecurity, backups, and periodic review of website functionality. Although the Programme has not yet completed a formal evaluation of website effectiveness because it is newly established and undergoing its initial accreditation, the existing governance framework provides a solid basis for continuous improvement. As the Programme matures, the publication of additional evidence-based indicators, such as student progression, completion rates, graduate employment outcomes, and user satisfaction data, would further enhance transparency and demonstrate the effectiveness of the Programme to prospective students and other stakeholders.

III. Conclusions

The programme is aligned with the HAHE requirements regarding the accessibility, transparency, and dissemination of public information. It provides comprehensive information on the programme, digital learning environment, student services, and communication channels through multiple official platforms. The bilingual and accessible website represents good practice for distance learning provision. Therefore, this criterion is considered as with high compliance

Nevertheless, compliance would be strengthened by publishing additional evidence-based information on intended learning outcomes, the awarded qualification, student performance indicators (pass and completion rates), and graduate employability outcomes.

Panel Judgement

PRINCIPLE 9: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES	
Compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R9.1. The institution must provide graduate employment perspectives in terms of graduate employment statistics, alumni destinations must be provided, when the programme starts.

PRINCIPLE 10: ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC INTERNAL EVALUATION OF DISTANCE LEARNING 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 DISTANCE LEARNING 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 distance learning 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:

- *the content of the curriculum in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the PSP is up to date*
- *the changing needs of society*
- *the students' workload, progression and completion of the postgraduate studies*
- *the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students*
- *the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *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/Annexes

D10.1 (N/A for the initial accreditation) Results of the annual internal evaluation of the PSP by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) (QAU minutes including findings and potential proposed preventive/corrective actions), along with the relevant correspondence with the academic unit

D10.2 Procedure for the review, adjustment and update of the curriculum and the determination of the degree of achievement of the expected learning outcomes, conducted by the academic unit, in cooperation with the QAU

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The new postgraduate study programme (PSP) for MSc by Research in Digital Deep Tech Driven Circular Economy will be evaluated and reviewed regularly by an established process documented in “D10.2_new Διαδικασία αναθεώρησης και

The review process involves the unit of internal assessment (OMEA) that processes the output of the evaluation process and feedback from the community and external stakeholders, the director of the PSP who makes proposals to the coordinating committee of the PSP, the coordinating committee of the PSP who obtains and integrates additional data from the department and other stakeholders into proposals for review, and the board of the department who engages in decision making.

Review on the level of individual modules is performed by the teaching team of each module based on data that include student engagement and performance, module evaluation, the job market, and developments on the taught topic.

Review on the level of the PSP is performed by OMEA, who assess the extent that the learning outcomes are achieved, that quality standards are observed, and that the PSP remains relevant in the academic, professional and societal context. This involves a number of steps: (1) evaluation of the PSP by OMEA, (2) collection of feedback from the coordinating committee of the PSP, (3) formulation of review proposal, (4) approval of review, and (5) implementation.

II. Analysis

On the level of module review, there is a list of considerations that the teaching team takes into account in the review process. If radical changes become necessary based on the assessment, a proposal will be put forward to the coordinating committee of the PSP and will be discussed widely. If there are more minor adjustments, it appears that those are discussed and decided within the teaching team of the module. The process of communicating and discussing any non-radical changes across all involved in the teaching of the PSP could be discussed and documented.

On the level of PSP review, this is coordinated by OMEA who triggers the process of review taking into consideration feedback from external parties including alumni. It appears that the list of parties involved in the external consultation is indicative and non-exhaustive. A more comprehensive list of external parties providing feedback and the process by which they will be engaged could be documented. Parties and types of academic conferences who could inform the research side reviews could also be identified.

III. Conclusions

The PSP for MSc by Research in Digital Deep Tech Driven Circular Economy is compliant with principle 10 but could be further improved with better documentation of some aspects of the review process.

The members of teaching staff are aware of the importance of the monitoring, evaluation and review process and of its significance.

Panel Judgement

PRINCIPLE 10: ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC INTERNAL EVALUATION OF DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES	
Compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R10.1. Document the process of annually communicating and discussing any radical and non-radical changes across the teaching team of the PSP to foster discussion, exchange on best practice and further ensure alignment across modules with the PSP learning outcomes.

R10.2. Document a more comprehensive list of external stakeholders who can provide feedback on the PSP and document the process by which they will be engaged; e.g., annual Industrial Advisory Board, external council, alumni networks, communities of conferences in relevant research areas.

PRINCIPLE 11: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

The HAHE is responsible for administrating the distance learning PSP accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by panels of independent experts. The 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 distance learning PSP acts as a means for the determination of the degree of compliance of the Postgraduate Study Programme to the current 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 consider the conclusions and the recommendations submitted by the panels of experts for the continuous improvement of the Programme.

Documentation/Annexes

D11.1 (N/A for the initial accreditation) Progress report of the academic unit, on the response to the recommendations included in the last Accreditation Report of the PSP, and on the achievement of the relevant targets towards the improvement of the PSP

D11.2 Procedure for the external evaluation of the Programme

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The new postgraduate study programme (PSP) for MSc by Research in Digital Deep Tech Driven Circular Economy will be evaluated externally by an established process documented in “D11.2 Διαδ. εξωτ. αξιολόγησης ΠΜΣ.pdf” (D11.2).

To a large extent this process is driven by HAHE (ETHAAE) and MODIP (unit of quality assessment) of the University. MODIP communicates with ETHAAE and coordinate the processes for the data collection and the portfolio that needs to be submitted for the external evaluation process.

Coordination between ETHAAE and MODIP for visits, implementation of any adjustments and of completion of the process of certification is envisaged and documented.

There is commitment by the University to employ this process as a substantial mechanism for improvement of the programmes and alignment with European ESG standards.

II. Analysis

The process of external evaluation is largely informed by regulation and formalised in how MODIP coordinates and liaises with the University and with ETHAAEE for the process. The part concerning the internal collection of data described in step 4 and of the quality assurance process described in step 5 must be better detailed or explained. This could have already been covered in the document “Εσωτερικού Συστήματος Διασφάλισης Ποιότητας (ΕΣΠΔ) του Πανεπιστημίου Αιγαίου” that is cited in the the document D11.2. However, the provided link (https://modip.aegean.gr/system/files/%CE%95%CE%A3%CE%94%CE%A0_%CE%95%CE%B3%CF%87%CE%B5%CE%B9%CF%81%CE%AF%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%BF%202024.pdf) appears to be invalid.

III. Conclusions

The documentation cited for steps 4 and 5 of the process is unavailable.

The members of the team are were of the importance of the external evaluation and accreditation and how it contributes to the improvement and continued relevance of the programme.

Panel Judgement

PRINCIPLE 11: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF DISTANCE LEARNING POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES	
Compliant	
Partially compliant	X
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R11.1. Provide the work flow of how MODIP collects data and the steps of the quality assurance process that are followed for the engagement in external evaluation (steps 4 and 5) in document D11.2, ensuring access to the cited documentation and including a summary of the process.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

Innovative thematic area combining principles of sustainability, circular economy, digitalization and innovation.

Teaching fully in English making both online PSPs also accessible to foreign students.

Use of an innovative extensive, inclusive digital platform (Virtual Campus) to facilitate all functions of the Programme.

Exposure of the students to different lecturers from various organizations across several countries.

Planned access to industrial labs of partners.

Attraction of external funding to cover the expenses of the PSPs for the first three cycles.

Cohesion, passion, enthusiasm of the leaders for the programme.

II. Areas of Weakness

Potentially big numbers of students will affect the workload of the core team primarily in the Department (which has the overall responsibility for the programme of studies and issues the degrees).

Student profiles, especially for the MScRES, are inadequately defined. There is no indication of the level of English proficiency required for study.

The admission criteria of the two programmes are inadequately differentiated.

The differentiation in the teaching methods between the two PSPs is inadequately defined.

The evaluation processes of the PSPs is not fully should defined. This is especially important due to the reliance on a number of international partners to deliver the programme.

The documentation of distance learning continuing professional development (CPD) must be improved, explicit mapping of staff expertise to research supervision areas, clearer supervision workload planning, and consistent processes for assessment, feedback, research ethics and dissertation/research project supervision.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

R1. Be mindful of the organizational pitfalls of extensive consortia where the core organization does not have extensive leverage over bigger well established partners beyond a limited number of committed individuals.

R2. Create a risk mitigation plan for the potential impact of the end of the 3D-CIRCULAR project on commitment of the external teaching staff, platform availability, industrial lab access, and student recruitment.

R3. The defined upper limits of students in the two new PSPs are excessive for a Department of this size.

R4. Better articulate the distinction in teaching approaches between the MSc and the MScRES.

R5. Clarify the expected student profile and admission expectations for the MScRES, including academic background, research readiness, language requirements, academic writing ability and preparedness for independent study.

R6. Create an Advisory Board for both PSPs engaging the external stakeholders in regular reviewing of the teaching programmes.

R7. Engage in regular benchmarking of programme performance against similar programmes with suitably defined KPIs.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where compliance has been achieved are:

1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

5, 11

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:

NONE

Overall Judgement	
Compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel agrees that this Programme leads to a Level 7 Qualification according to the National & European Qualifications Framework	YES	NO
	X	

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

VONORTAS NICHOLAS

Angelaki Erasmia

Dagiuklas Tasos

TIROPANIS THANASSIS

Vasileiou Ismini

Signature

Signed by VONORTAS NICHOLAS

Signed by Angelaki Erasmia

Signed by Dagiuklas Tasos

Signed by TIROPANIS THANASSIS

Signed by Vasileiou Ismini