



**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ**  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης**  
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**Accreditation Report**  
**for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:**  
**Applied Environmental Protection Policies and Techniques**  
**Civil Engineering**  
**University of West Attica**  
**15/12/2024**



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 Postgraduate Study Programme **Applied Environmental Protection Policies and Techniques** of the **University of West Attica** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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## **PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW**

### **I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel**

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the postgraduate study programme in **Applied Environmental Protection Policies and Techniques** of the **University of West Attica** (Institution name) comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Prof. Panos Papanastasiou (Chair)**  
University of Cyprus, Cyprus
- 2. Prof. Nikolaos Xiros**  
University of New Orleans, USA
- 3. Prof. Vasileios Koutsos**  
University of Edinburgh, UK
- 4. Emeritus Prof. George Haritos**  
University of Akron, USA
- 5. Ms Aikaterini Alexandra Chrysafi**  
PhD Candidate, Department of School of Mining and Metallurgical Engineering,  
National Technical University of Athens

## **II. Review Procedure and Documentation**

Prior to the online meetings, the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) thoroughly examined the written material supplied by the Hellenic Authority of Higher Education (HAHE). These materials included background information, guidance on the accreditation process, and detailed data related to the programme under evaluation. The programme review took place via teleconference, facilitated by HAHE in collaboration with the University of Western Attica. The review schedule and agenda were as outlined below.

### Monday, 9.12.2024

- a) Preliminary private meeting of the EEAP members. Discussion of the programme under review; assignment of writing parts of the accreditation report draft to the members of the EEAP, and related collaboration issues.
- b) Meeting with the Rector Prof. Kaldis, the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance and President of the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU also known as MODIP by its Greek acronym) Prof. Kaminari, the Head of the Department and Director of the two PSP Prof. Varelides, QAU director Dr Sigala, members of the Steering Committees and OMEA members, Prof. Reparis, Prof. Pnevmatikos, Prof. Alexakis, Assoc. Prof. Kourniatis, and Assist. Prof. Vryzidis. After a short welcome from the Rector Prof. Kaldis and Vice Rector Prof. Kaminari, the Head of the Department and director of the PSPs Prof. Varelidis presented the two PSPs 1. Architecture and Structural Restoration of Historic Buildings and Complexes and 2. Applied Environmental Protection Policies and Techniques. The presentation provided common information for the two programmes, the programmes' history, academic profile, current status, numbers of applications and students attending per year, strengths and possible areas of concern, etc. A discussion was followed with clarifications about number of students, teaching methods, learning material, educational activities etc. Emphasis was given to the degree of compliance of the programmes to the Standards for Quality Accreditation.
- c) On-line tours of classrooms, lecture halls, libraries laboratories, and other facilities related to the two PSPs was provided.
- d) Private debriefing meeting (EEAP members only).

### Wednesday, 11.12.2024

- a) Meeting with teaching staff members of the PSP: Policies and Applied Methods for the Protection of the Environment: Andreas Andreopoulos (Emer. Prof. NTUA), Dimitrios E. Alexakis (Professor), Panagiotis Dimopoulos (Emer. Prof. U of Patras), Constantinos Moustris (Professor), Anastasios Adamopoulos (Ph.D teaching staff), Nikolaos Skoulikidis (Ph.D. teaching staff), Maria Sinou (Assoc. Prof.), Ioulia Moraitou (Ph.D, teaching staff), Evgenia Tousi (Dr. teaching staff): The discussion was about professional development opportunities, mobility, workload, student evaluations; competence and adequacy of the teaching staff to ensure learning outcomes; link between teaching and research; involvement of teaching staff in applied research, projects and research activities directly related to the programme.

b) Meeting with eight (8) students of the PSP from both years of their studies: Chondrogiannis Theodor (3rd Sem.), Gardelis Georgios (5th Sem.), Kaimakami Agathi (1<sup>st</sup> Sem.), Karanastasi Georgia (1<sup>st</sup> Sem.), Lilis Vasilis (5<sup>th</sup> Sem.), Nissan-Papagiannaki Martha (3<sup>rd</sup> Sem.), Pouresfantani Nektarios – Fotios (3<sup>rd</sup> Sem.), Zannikou Vasiliki (5<sup>th</sup> Sem.). The discussion covered students' satisfaction from their study experience and facilities of the Department; student input in quality assurance; priority issues concerning student life and welfare.

c) Meeting with nine (9) graduate students of the PSP: Chatzopoulou Marilena (Architect Engineer UPatras, Freelancer), Demesticha Mariliana, (Civil Engineer, Architectural Department employee ELLINIKON METRO S.A., on posting at Deputy Minister of Ministry of the Interior), Mela Athina (PhD candidate UNIWA, Researcher and Freelancer), Metaxa Foteini (Laboratory Teaching Staff, PhD candidate, Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, UNIWA), Savva Ioanna (Surveyor Engineer at the Urban Planning Directorate of the Municipality of Athens,) Terzoudis Dimitrios (Freelancer), Tsitsis Christos (Laboratory Teaching Staff, Department of Mechanical Engineering, UNIWA), Vallianatou Carmensita, (Architect Engineer NTUA, Supervisor of Construction Project Design and Supervision Section (Technical Dpt) of Bank of Greece), Giannakopoulos Giorgos (Freelancer). The discussion was about their experience of their postgraduate studies, their career path, strengths and weaknesses of the PSP.

d) Meeting and discussion with employers and social partners of the PSP from the public and private sector: Petros Varelidis (Ph.D, Chemical Engineer NTUA, Economist, Secretary General of Ministry of the Environment and Energy, ex Environment Attaché of Greece and Cyprus), Konstantinos Dimopoulos (Ph.D, General Director of Ministry of the Environment and Energy), Adamantios Skordilis (Ph.D Environmental Engineer, Chemical Engineer, ex General Director of Hellenic Recycling Agency (EOAN), Alexandros Koulidis, (Ph.D Chemical Engineering, Director of Environmental Licensing Ministry of the Environment and Energy, Consultant of Deputy Minister), Anastasia Arfanakou (Chemical Engineer NTUA, Director of Waste Management of Ministry of the Environment and Energy, member of the Administrative Board of Hellenic Recycling Agency (EOAN)), Filippos Kyrkitsos (Ph.D Environmental Engineering, Head of Ecologic Company of Recycling (ECOREC)). During the meeting the discussion covered the relations of the Department with external stakeholders from the state and private sector, new trends in issues related to the environment, prospects and opportunities of the programme

e) Private debriefing meeting (EEAP members only): discussion of the outcomes and findings of the virtual visit; preparation of oral report.

f) Closure meeting with Closure meeting with the Director of the PSP and the Director of the QAU: The meeting was an informal, oral presentation of the EEAP key findings, and clarifications.

### **III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile**

An original version of the PSP in Policies and Applied Methods for the Protection of Environment was established in 3013 and offered as interuniversity programme between TEI Piraeus and European University of Cyprus from the academic years 2014-15 to 2020-21. The programme was re-establishment in 2021 and continued its operation since then in its current form (Government Gazette 4626/2021, University of West Attica Senate Session Decision 15/9/2021) within the Department of Civil Engineering of The University of West Attica.

The University of West Attica (UNIWA) was established in (2018) from the merging of three educational and research entities in the region of Attica, the Technological Educational Institute of Athens, the Piraeus University of Applied Sciences and the National School of Public Health. It consists of 6 Schools and 27 Departments covering a vast variety of scientific fields. The University facilities are in three campuses in the West Attica area. UNIWA has approximately 57,800 undergraduate students, 5,500 postgraduate students and 780 doctoral students, making it the third largest university in number of students in Greece. The vision of the University of West Attica is to be established as a first choice for students, modern, and progressive university, with a publicly recognized and competitive role in worldwide education and research.

The Department of Civil Engineering is one of the eight departments of the Engineering School. The Department of Civil Engineering aims to provide high-quality education and research, through undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral studies. Its undergraduate studies are structured in a 5-year programme (10 academic semesters), 300 credit units (ECTS) that includes a thesis and the possibility of Internship. It leads to the acquisition of a Diploma in Civil Engineering. The Department admits every year around 160 undergraduate students. The students have the option to choose one of the four (4) basic specializations of the Civil Engineering specialty, namely the structural, geotechnical, hydraulic and transportation specializations. The Department offers also three Postgraduate Studies Programmes (PSP) and a Doctoral Programme.

The PSP in in Policies and Applied Methods for the Protection of Environment was established aiming to cover primarily the large increase in demand for employment and services in the related environmental fields. For this reason, emphasis is given on applied approach that promotes the integration of graduates into the labour market of both private and public sectors.

The PSP provides an interdisciplinary approach to the field of environmental techniques and policies, emphasizing the implementation procedures. It is designed to address the entire range of scientific specialties related to the subject, ensuring the necessary interdisciplinary interaction and collaboration between students. It offers high-quality knowledge, develops abilities and application skills that are needed for the scientific and professional career of the graduates, according to the cultural and technological needs of the country. Among its objectives is the development of a high level of specialization and the application of techniques, technologies and policies of environmental protection as well as on the

institutional, socio-economic and management issues of environmental planning and the impacts of projects and activities in the light of the UN Sustainable Development Goals 6 to 9 and 11 to 15.

The PSP has the following characteristics that differentiates from other existing programmes in the country:

- a. it teaches a holistic approach in the field of environmental protection considering the applied techniques and technologies, in the light of managerial, regulatory, geopolitical, social and economic parameters and limitations of implementation
- b. it includes course instructors of high academic and teaching profile as well professionals from the state and private sectors that holds key positions in the formation of national and European policies.
- c. It gives emphasis on application of policies and processes.

The PSP admits approximately 20-25 students per year with the capacity to increase the number up to 35 students per year. It admits students from an interdisciplinary range of specialities which facilitates the development of research with broader interdisciplinary approaches and synergies.

The studies duration is three (3) semesters. A number of mandatory and elective courses is offered in the first two (2) semesters followed by a thesis in the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester. The total number of ECTS credits required per semester is thirty (30), which translates to ninety (90) ECTS credits to obtain a degree. The language of instruction for courses is Greek. A hybrid educational system is adopted with the combination of synchronous distance and in-person teaching. In-person teaching and training is organized in the University campus of Ancient Eleonas.

The awarded degree (MSc) is equivalent to level 7 according to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). It corresponds to the second cycle of higher education and signifies advanced knowledge and specialized skills in a specific field. The awarded titles are “Master's Diploma in Policies and Applied Methods for the Protection of the Environment”.

The graduates become familiar with solving realistic, complex and demanding problems of environmental policy and protection, within an interdisciplinary framework, with assuming responsibility in complex technical or professional activities as well as with the formulation and implementation of new strategies for the management of environmental problems.

The prospects of employment of the graduates of the PSP are very good, driven by the continuous increase in demand in the environmental field due to population increase in urban areas, the increase consumption of goods, the climate change and the European policy on environmental problems that dominates the economic and political agenda of the EU and the needs to comply at a national level. Opportunities for employments span across large cross-sectoral economic areas worldwide, such as industry, tourism, fossil fuels, shipping, etc. that strive to improving and promote the social and business profile through friendly practices in protecting the environment. Public and private organizations include new autonomous environmental departments with increasing needs.



## PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Documentation**

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

#### **Study Programme Compliance**

##### **I. Findings**

Relevant documentation provided the EEAP included the Quality Assurance Policy and the Quality Goal Setting Strategy of this postgraduate study programme (PSP). Moreover, the

EEAP examined a number of additional documents available to assess other important factors such as the suitability of the structure and organisation of this PSP.

Both the Quality Assurance Policy and the Quality Goal Setting Strategy are presented on the websites of the Department of Civil Engineering and of the PSP, and it is publicised to the members of the teaching and administrative staff, as well as to the students. The Quality Assurance Policy presents a detailed discussion of quality processes and provides a list of specific goals. A more detailed version of the Quality Assurance Policy is presented in the Accreditation Proposal for this PSP. The main quality-related processes/actions relate to the organisation and structure of the PSP, the learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (level 7), the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching, the qualifications of the teaching staff, the formulation of annual quality goals for the improvement of the PSP, the level of demand of the acquired qualifications of the graduates in the labour market, the quality of support services, and the efficient utilisation of resources. It also provides for an annual internal evaluation and review to assure the continuing quality of this PSP which is conducted with the collaboration of the University's QAU members and staff and the Department's OMEA.

The Quality Goal Setting Strategy of the PSP defines specific strategic priorities and quality objectives. The strategic aims defined include the following: the active participation of students in the educational process; the continuous review and, as necessary, improvement of the educational materials; the promotion of mobility and the enhancement of external/international links and presence. Special emphasis is placed on the quality of the students' MS theses, as well as that of resulting publications in approved scientific journals and conferences.

The Quality Assurance Policy is clearly written and provides a solid basis for planning and implementation in relation to achieving quality standards. Overall, the academic unit has established an excellent Quality Assurance Policy that is appropriate for this PSP and serves as a guideline and a point of reference for future planning, decision making, and continuous improvement. It strongly emphasises and promotes the continuous pursuit of improvement in both teaching and research excellence. It encourages and tracks the mobility of both faculty and students nationally and internationally.

## **II. Analysis**

The Panel carefully examined all information contained in the relevant documents, as well as the information provided by the Department Chair and several PSP faculty members. The Panel is confident that the academic unit is committed to the implementation of the Quality Assurance Policy, as well as to the continuous improvement of the same. The goals set forth for this PSP are also carefully thought out. All, current students, graduates, and stakeholders expressed their satisfaction with the structure and organisation of the curriculum. Stakeholders clearly indicated that there exists a great need for this PSP's graduates both in the private and the public sectors. Without exception, current and past students expressed their satisfaction with the qualifications of the teaching staff, and with both the effectiveness of teaching and the ready availability of both the faculty and the administrative staff when

they needed support. Moreover, all graduates interviewed by the Panel expressed their satisfaction with the opportunities for employment and/or consulting upon completion of this degree.

The EEAP also found that the specified learning outcomes for this PSP agree with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. Specific quality goals are defined, discussed, and reviewed on a systematic and continuous basis. These goals are judged relevant, appropriate, and measurable. The academic unit has clearly demonstrated its commitment to the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching and research, as indicated by Department actions, policies and initiatives, and student/graduate/stakeholder opinions. Income from fees, though limited, appears to be managed effectively.

This PSP also benefits through the collaboration with appropriate, well-equipped laboratories operated by the Department of Civil Engineering (in which the PSP is housed) whose Directors and Members are among the teaching staff of this PSP.

### III. Conclusions

The EEAP has found that the Department has established and applies a Quality Assurance Policy for this PSP which ensures that the PSP is monitored and evaluated on a systematic basis. The process also provides a well-defined process to ensure continuous monitoring and improvement. Without exception, all students, graduates, and stakeholders the Panel interviewed expressed their satisfaction with the curriculum and organisation of the PSP, as well as the existing need for the knowledge and skills the graduates of this PSP possess.

In conclusion, the EEAP finds that the University of West Attica's "Policies and Applied Methods for the Protection of the Environment" PSP is Fully Compliant with Principle 1.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

- Collect feedback from graduates and external stakeholders regarding the PSP in a manner that is both more efficient and structured.

## PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

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

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

*In addition, the design of PSP must consider:*

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

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

### **Documentation**

- *Senate decision for the establishment of the PSP*
- *PSP curriculum structure: courses, course categories, ECTS awarded, expected learning outcomes according to the EQF, internship, mobility opportunities*
- *Labour market data regarding the employment of graduates, international experience in a relevant scientific field*
- *PSP Student Guide*
- *Course and thesis outlines*
- *Teaching staff (name list including of areas of specialisation, its relation to the courses taught, employment relationship, and teaching assignment in hours as well as other teaching commitments in hours)*

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings**

The submission contains all the necessary documentation including the following documents: Senate decision for the establishment of the PSP, the PSP curriculum structure: courses, course categories, ECTS awarded, expected learning outcomes according to the EQF, internship, mobility opportunities, Labour market data regarding the employment of graduates, international experience in a relevant scientific field, PSP Student Guide, Course and thesis outlines, Teaching staff details. The PSP comprises an excellent selection of appropriate courses that are taught competently by well-qualified members of staff and external collaborators with relevant expertise and experience.

During the discussion with external stakeholders from the labour market and the public sector it became clear that the PSP does not take advantage of all possible opportunities, including links to private companies that could allow options of providing work experience to students. We propose establishing a formal industrial board which advises the PSP in these directions appropriately.

### **II. Analysis**

The postgraduate study programme follows a well-defined and well thought out procedure. The Civil Engineering Department of the University of West Attica has described the academic profile and orientation of the programme well. The research character of the programme is explained well. The scientific objectives have an interdisciplinary character and this is reflected well in the taught courses as described in the documentation.

The structure, content and organisation of courses and teaching methods are oriented towards the deepening and widening of knowledge in the subject matter of Policies and Applied Methods for the Protection of the Environment. The courses, research projects, industrial visits and related activities enrich and deepen the corresponding skills. The programme contains an appropriate mix of theoretical and applied material as manifested by the described research methodology, participation in research projects, and completion of a thesis with a strong research component. Owing to the continuing updates and changes of environmental policies that the private sector needs to be compliant with, there are excellent prospects for students' professional development and new job opportunities. These job market for environmental policy experts is expected to multiply in the future as climate change and urbanisation necessitate the introduction of new environmental legislation and related regulations which are often complex and require the attention of specialised expertise.

The expected learning outcomes are determined based on the European and National Qualifications Framework, and the Dublin Descriptors for level 7; the anticipated student workload follows appropriately the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System for level 7. The expected learning outcomes and the feedback of the learning process are assessed by well-defined evaluation criteria by the department and are made public as appropriately. The institutional strategy allows the participation of a wide range of students with varied

scientific background. The available course options and projects are appropriate. The programme promotes the active involvement of students and also integrates well the linking of teaching and research. The programme follows the relevant regulatory framework and the official procedure for the approval by the Institution and the necessary compliance with the basic requirements of the Standards by the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).

### III. Conclusions

The PSP is of high quality and fulfils well its purpose combining well innovative teaching methodologies and links between teaching and research. There are well-defined written processes for all aspects of the programme involving all participants. The teaching objectives, the expected learning outcomes and the employment prospects are set out well in the programme design. The achievement of the learning outcomes are continuously assessed and are integrated within the programme's structure appropriately, Furthermore, they are well detailed and published in the student guide.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

- Establish a formal industrial board which advises the PSP in these directions appropriately.
- Institutionalise the collection feedback from graduates and external stakeholders regarding the PSP in a manner that is both more efficient and structured.
- Encourage students to make use of Erasmus+ for training and experience.
- Introduce more practical scenarios and worldwide best practices, especially in cases of risk management.

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

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

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

*The student-centred learning and teaching process*

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

*In addition*

2. *The academic staff are familiar with the existing examination system and methods and are supported in developing their own skills in this field.*
3. *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.*
4. *Student assessment is conducted by more than one examiner, where possible.*
5. *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and conducted in accordance with the stated procedures.*
6. *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
7. *The function of the academic advisor runs smoothly.*

#### **Documentation**

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

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **I. Findings**

The submission contains all the necessary documentation including the following documents: a collection of fully completed questionnaire for the evaluation of the PSP by the students, regulations for dealing with students' complaints and appeals, regulations for the function of academic advisor, description and references to the teaching modes and assessment methods. There is an excellent approach to teaching and in particular student-centred learning. The relatively small number of students aids on this direction and all students feel valued and directed well and appropriately as found in the relevant discussions with both current and past students.

## **II. Analysis**

The student-centred learning and teaching are ensured by the continued and direct involvement of students making them active stakeholders of the PSP. Many students have extensive work experience and are mature enough to implement well their role as active learners. The group and individual project, the relevant presentations, the links between research and teaching play an important role in enhancing students' motivation, their self-evaluation, and their active participation in the learning process. There is appropriate consideration of EDI principles as manifested by the respectful approach to the needs of a diverse cohort of students (including working mature students, working mothers, single parents) by adopting appropriately flexible learning paths, different modes of delivery, and a variety of pedagogical methods. Such methods are regularly evaluated and adjusted as per students' needs. The modes of delivery and pedagogical methods are evaluated regularly and improved continuously as per students' surveys. The PSP clearly strengthens the students' sense of autonomy while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teaching staff, promotes mutual respect in the student-teacher relationship, provides counselling and guidance for the preparation of the thesis, and applies appropriate procedures for dealing with the students' complaints. The academic staff are familiar with the existing examination system and methods and are supported in developing their own skills in this field. The assessment criteria and methods are published in advance. The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary is linked to advice on the learning process. The courses are taught by multiple members of staff and the student assessment is conducted by more than one examiner as much as possible. The 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 and the function of the academic advisor has been applied well and runs smoothly.

## **III. Conclusions**

The PSP provides the necessary conditions to encourage students to take an active role in the learning process. The assessment methods, feedback and support mechanisms reflect this approach in their entirety.



### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

- Introduce a formal EDI policy and publicise it.
- Introduce more field exercises and seminars.

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

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

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

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

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

### **Documentation**

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

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings**

The submission contains all the necessary documentation including the following documents: Internal regulation for the operation of the Postgraduate Study Programme, Research Ethics Regulation, Regulation of studies, internship, mobility, and student assignments, Degree certificate template. There are clear procedures for the student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

### **II. Analysis**

There are appropriate internal regulations governing all issues from the beginning to the end of studies. These regulations cover the students' admission procedures, the students' rights and obligations, and their progression monitoring. Regulations also cover the obligatory granting of scholarships, the procedures and terms for the drafting of assignments and the thesis, the procedure of award and recognition of degrees, the duration of studies, the progression conditions and for the progress assurance of students in their studies including the terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility. The information is public and contained in the Student Guide.

### III. Conclusions

The Institution has developed and applied published regulations covering all aspects and phases of studies including admission, progression, thesis drafting, recognition and certification.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

- Enhance the mobility of the students further to become more internationally oriented by taking advantage of opportunities such as the ERASMUS exchange programme.
- Keep updated information in the PSP website

## PRINCIPLE 5: TEACHING STAFF OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

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

### **Documentation**

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

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings**

The EEAP was provided detailed relevant documentation on the recruitment, obligations, responsibilities, and expected performance of the teaching staff members. A set of criteria and procedures for the recruitment, selection, and employment is in place, and it follows pertinent rules and regulations as dictated by applicable laws and the University rules and regulations. Lists of teaching staff members – both internal and external, are maintained and were provided to the Panel. They include information addressing the professional qualifications and areas of expertise of the teaching staff pertaining to their specific teaching and research duties, their teaching load, as well as their research performance and output to date. The teaching staff for this PSP consists of 14 DEP and EDIP members plus 30 External Collaborators (Specialist Scientists, Invited Teaching Staff, and Emeriti/ae, and Retired Professors). The EEAP Panel considers the Teaching Staff for this PSP highly qualified, well prepared, well-motivated, and sufficient for educating the number of students typically enrolled – typically 30 - 35.

During the interviews, additional information was provided by various faculty members regarding opportunities for professional development regarding both their teaching and research activities. Faculty frequently participate in National and International Conferences and Symposia, visit other Universities worldwide and collaborate with faculty there, utilizing Programs such as ERASMUS+. The EEAP learned that even though limited by the COVID pandemic over the past few years, several Department Faculty participated in these external broadening opportunities (27 over the past 5 years).

The Panel found that the teaching staff members are carefully selected, typically from pools of highly qualified applicants, and they are very well prepared to carry out their assigned teaching and research duties.

All teaching staff and the courses they teach are regularly evaluated by students at the end of each semester through evaluation surveys. The results of these surveys are carefully considered by the faculty and by the Department Chair. However, the Panel learned that the percentage of students participating in these evaluations has decreased as the method used for their completion has changed over the years. This is an area that needs attention.

The PSP faculty members are involved in research activities which include publication of articles in journals and presentations at academic conferences, both national and international. During meetings with the Panel the teaching staff appeared positive with the opportunities available for professional development, both in teaching and research. The Panel learned that faculty members are eligible for a sabbatical semester with pay every three years, provided the Department can cover the courses they are responsible for.

Assessment records of the teaching staff's research output utilizing internationally recognised systems of evaluations were also provided to the Panel. These are based on their scientific contributions nationally and internationally and are carefully maintained and regularly updated.

The Department's Administrative personnel should be commended for meticulously collecting and cataloguing the publications of all faculty members. Over the last 10 years, the teaching staff delivering the instruction for this PSP have amassed 1,505 publications, which have been cited 24,054 times.

In summary, faculty recruitment, employment regulations and contracts, and advancement policies processes appear to be highly effective in achieving successful teaching and learning outcomes. There are clear provisions for the systematic evaluation of staff members.

## **II. Analysis**

The EEAP reviewed and considered all documents submitted on file, including the updated documents and presentations made during this virtual accreditation visit and considered the discussions with the University and Department leadership and the Teaching Staff regarding the processes in place for staff recruitment, training, as well as the existing supporting strategies for the advancement of the scientific work of the faculty. It also took into consideration discussions held with students, graduates, and stakeholders, such as employers of graduates, and social partners of the PSP on the relevance of this PSP to the National objectives in the areas it covers. The EEAP found that the University and the Department

provide a supportive environment that promotes the advancement of the faculty's scientific work. Also, they apply appropriate, fair, and transparent practices for the recruitment and development of the faculty.

### III. Conclusions

In summary, the EEAP found that this PSP has recruited high quality Teaching Staff who, with no exception, were highly praised by all current students, graduates, and stakeholders interviewed. The existing HOU processes for the recruitment of faculty are judged fair and transparent and in line with National Laws and Regulations.

The program faculty are performing well at both the National and International scientific research domains and integrate current, cutting-edge research results into their teaching, as appropriate.

The EEAP also recognises that this PSP produces graduates who can contribute to partially addressing a critical National need. Efforts to grow this PSP would be in the National interest.

In conclusion, the EEAP finds that the University of West Attica's "Policies and Applied Methods for the Protection of the Environment" PSP is Fully Compliant with Principle 5.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

- The PSP will benefit from the hiring of more permanent members of staff based on the host institution.
- Collaborate with the Teaching & Learning Centre of UNIWA, to improve teaching effectiveness of the teaching staff, especially of the inexperienced newcomers.
- Course teaching load should be transparent to avoid the appearance of "double counting" in cases of co-instruction.
- Continue encouraging faculty mobility through the Program ERASMUS+ and the utilization of the sabbatical leaves for collaborations with other Universities for the development of their research.
- Publicise individual academic staff achievements like securing an important grant with international partners, election to an important international society executive position, and important awards for teaching.
- Keep high standards in research by publishing in high quality journals.

## PRINCIPLE 6: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

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

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

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

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

### **Documentation**

- Detailed description of the infrastructure and services made available by the Institution to the academic unit for the PSP, to support learning and academic activity (human resources, infrastructure, services, etc.) and the corresponding firm commitment of the Institution to financially cover these infrastructure-services from state or other resources
- Administrative support staff of the PSP (job descriptions, qualifications and responsibilities)
- Informative / promotional material given to students with reference to the available services
- Tuition utilisation plan (if applicable)

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **I. Findings**

The EEAP conducted a virtual tour of the facilities of the postgraduate program and the University of West Attica. From this tour and discussions with students, it was evident that all classrooms in the postgraduate program are equipped with computers the necessary installed software for course instruction. The Panel also virtually visited the offices providing student support services.

Students benefit from a wide range of services offered through the PSP. These include access to the university's lending and electronic academic libraries, as well as study and computer rooms located across the campuses. Additionally, the university provides a restaurant available to both academic staff and students. Various sports and cultural activities are organized, enhancing student life. Furthermore, students have access to primary health care and treatment services, along with mental health support for those in need.

The Panel also learned from students about other services provided by the university, such as Career Services and international mobility opportunities through programs like ERASMUS. Beyond the virtual tour, the Panel sought students' opinions on the facilities. Students expressed high satisfaction with the facilities and services available to support their academic and personal development.

## II. Analysis

The University provides all the essential infrastructure to support students effectively, including electronic management of requests, a shared Wi-Fi network, libraries, and more. The existing facilities and resources adequately meet the operational requirements of the PSP, offering building spaces, laboratories, auditoriums, specialized equipment, internet access, and software with asynchronous distance learning capabilities.

From the discussions with students, it emerged that the PSP offers considerable flexibility in terms of attendance, taking into account the daily and professional needs of the students. Additionally, discussions with graduates revealed that the postgraduate program played a crucial role in their professional development. Students are informed about the available services and facilities at the start of their studies, and these services are operational and easily accessible to them.

## III. Conclusions

The program effectively fulfils the criteria set out in this Principle. The institution's facilities and financial assets efficiently support the program's demands. Students and graduates alike gain from the diverse array of services, laboratories, and departments available, offering valuable support and guidance.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 6: Learning resources and student support</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

- Revisit and update teaching methods by introducing project-based learning opportunities
- Invite graduates from industry to explain their work and career paths.
- Secure resources to ensure student mobility.
- Plan for upgrading critical lab facilities and modern computer-based tools.



## PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Documentation**

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

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings**

The academic unit established procedures for the collection of data regarding the following:

- Student body
- Teaching methods
- Student progression
- Employability and career paths of graduates

Particularly the supporting institution, University of West Attica, operated an integrated information management system related to Student Registry, websites for Faculty and Staff, the QAU and the Department of Interconnection, Mediation and Innovation (for career liaison and innovation); there are other support software modules too. Particularly the Student

Registry allows students to enrol in courses, access and obtain transcripts etc.; it further enables instructors to manage their teaching incl. grades, exams etc.

## **II. Analysis**

Provisions are built in to appropriately communicate and use toward improvements the information obtained e.g. by satisfaction surveys. Indeed, the information items are systematically analysed through National Information System for Quality Assurance (NISQA or OPESP as transcribed from the acronym in Greek) to procure Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) regarding the following:

- Educational and teaching effort
- Student performance
- Research achievements
- Human resources
- Infrastructure
- Services for students
- Finances and funding allocation

The system fully supports authorized access for each user class incl. but not limited to instructors, students, administrators, QAU etc. Data flow is enabled seamlessly which in turn promotes data analysis and rapid, precise and efficient decision making and adjustments to be implemented.

## **III. Conclusions**

The evaluation and analysis of the data pertaining to resource allocation and availability is based primarily on the (online electronic) student assessments, the financial services portal and the online (electronic) classroom management system.

### **Panel Judgement**

<b>Principle 7: Information management</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### **Panel Recommendations**

- Work out a detailed plan for Cybersecurity in the future as well as privacy and identity theft protection.
- Data should be processed to generate summary graphs and tables that clearly show trends making easier the extraction of conclusions.
- Establish a formal procedure for stakeholders and alumni to give feedback; this could help the collection of data regarding graduate career advancement as well as obtaining recommendations for enhancing and updating the PSP.

## **PRINCIPLE 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES**

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

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

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

### **Documentation**

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

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings**

The institution's website is well-structured and provides comprehensive details about the PSP, including general information on its structure, study topics, assessment criteria, curriculum, course descriptions, teaching staff, advisory board, Scientific Committee, tuition fees, and student e-services like asynchronous distance learning, email, and VPN access. The alumni network section is still under development. Moreover, the Policy for Quality Assurance of the academic unit is not available online in English on the PSP website. The website's content is accessible in both Greek and English language

The current website of the postgraduate program is quite simple and lacks the modern features expected of an academic platform. Its outdated design and limited functionality do not adequately reflect the program's quality or appeal to potential students. Furthermore, there is little to no promotion of the website or the program through social media, missing an opportunity to engage with a broader audience and enhance its visibility. Modernizing the website and incorporating a strong social media strategy are essential steps to address these shortcomings.

### **II. Analysis**

All the information published in the PSP website is clear and beneficial for students, academic staff and stakeholders. The website provides comprehensive information about the overall structure of the program, as well as the structure and content of each individual course.

### III. Conclusions

The Program adheres substantially to Principle 8 by offering accessible and transparent information about its PSP. The website presents all necessary details in a clear, bilingual format, ensuring it effectively serves its target audience. However, the quality assurance policy section is not currently available online in English, and it is recommended to include it.

It is recommended to redesign the program's website, and promoting the program through social media platforms is also suggested to attract more prospective students.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

- Improve contact channels with the alumni
- Organise seminars and annual events where stakeholders explain job opportunities, present faculty's research and give the opportunity to graduates to showcase best theses.
- Improve presence in social media channels (Facebook, X, LinkedIn, YouTube channel, etc).

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

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

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

*The above comprise the evaluation of:*

- a) the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the PSP is up to date*
- b) the changing needs of society*
- c) the students' workload, progression and completion of the postgraduate studies*
- d) the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students*
- e) the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- f) the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the PSP in question*

*Postgraduate study programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date.*

### **Documentation**

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

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings**

The academic institution and the unit offering the postgraduate program “Policies and Applied Methods for the Protection of the Environment” obtains an internal quality assurance system in the framework of which it implements checks and balances and implements the annual internal assessment of the programme. In result, achievement of programme objectives is made possible through ongoing feedback control and continuous readjustments, leading to continuous improvement of the student experience and programme delivery.

### **II. Analysis**

The internal program evaluation is a periodically repetitive process in which instructional faculty as well as program students are actively participating. Particularly students fill out

questionnaire forms, get interviewed and take part in group meetings and deliberations. Statistical data analysis follows that allows instructors to:

- Identify potential shortcomings in their teaching and course/content delivery
- Research ways to overcome aforementioned shortcomings
- Introduce improvements and more efficient teaching approaches
- Enrich course delivery with techniques that enhance student participation
- Improve the communication and understanding between students and instructors

The annual cycle of evaluation and assessment is completed with a Self-Study Assessment Report by the supporting Academic Unit. The coordinating committee of the postgraduate program “Policies and Applied Methods for the Protection of the Environment” reflects on the self-study outcomes and presents the academic unit’s faculty assembly with recommendations and suggestions for corrective action.

### **III. Conclusions**

The postgraduate program “Policies and Applied Methods for the Protection of the Environment” implements a consistent and transparent plan pertaining to PRINCIPLE 9: ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC INTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES. An abundance of statistical data and associated analysis is published through the information management system of the institutional QAU that enables not only thorough assessment of established practices and procedures but also promotes deliberations and reflections leading to further improvements for the program and the student experience and its content/course delivery.

#### **Panel Judgement**

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

#### **Panel Recommendations**

- Engage an external advisory board in a transparent organized manner for annual evaluation of the program
- Work out a more detailed plan for introduction of new topics, subjects and courses as well as content to keep the program up to date with trends in technology like e.g. advances in process modelling and simulation as well as legislation, regulations and new national and international rules pertaining to the environment and its protection.

## PRINCIPLE 10: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

### **Documentation**

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

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **I. Findings**

The postgraduate study program of the University of West Attica “Policies and Applied Methods for the Protection of the Environment” regularly undergoes evaluation by panels of external experts set by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE), aiming at accreditation. The term during which the accreditation remains current and valid is decided by HAHE.

#### **II. Analysis**

Periodic external evaluation of the program is implemented by HAHE. Particularly, HAHE assigns external expert panels to assess whether accreditation is deserved. The findings of the panel are employed to improve and enhance the program as well as the supporting academic unit and institution. The process consists of the following steps/phases:

- 1) Compliance commitment to the panel recommendations: The program and the supporting academic unit confers with the panel and notes down required actions and measures aiming to improvement
- 2) Reflection on panel findings and recommendations: The supporting academic unit records the full set of the panel recommendations. It then works with the QAU to finalize which part of the recommendations can or should be adopted for implementation.
- 3) Formulation of action plan: The academic unit then proceeds to develop an action plan to comply with and implement the recommendations of the external assessment panel. The action plan defines the particular actions and measures to be implemented, the required



resources, as well as the timeline of implementation. After the academic unit complete their plan, they submit it to the institutional Quality Assurance Unit for approval and implementation.

4) Monitoring of action plan implementation: Two years past the accreditation date, the academic unit reassesses the actions implemented so far and the progress attained by implementing the aforementioned action plan. A table in form of a checklist is conducted in the process showing:

- a. Outcomes attained so far
- b. Degree of achievement of outcomes above
- c. Actions implemented to comply with the external panel recommendations

5) Progress report: The next stage is to conduct a progress report for the Program. At the end of a two-year period after the program's accreditation a Progress Report is prepared and sent for review and approval by the institutional authorities and Quality Assurance Unit. The report is an essential part of the quality assurance plan of the entire institution and its related policies. It also enables a reflection of the external evaluation outcomes and the degree to which they are utilized.

### III. Conclusions

A consistent follow-up process is in place allowing the postgraduate study program of the University of West Attica "Policies and Applied Methods for the Protection of the Environment" to ensure that it is periodically evaluated and assessed.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

No concerns, weaknesses or deficiencies were identified.

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

### **I. Features of Good Practice**

- The holistic, integrated, multidisciplinary knowledge of contemporary environmental issues offered by PSP allows graduates to be involved in environmental impact assessment exercises and protection policies after graduation, which makes it popular among Environmental Companies and Public services
- It addresses existing employment needs in public and private sectors that work on environmental protection and climate change policies.
- The use of course instructors with good academic qualifications, practical and up-to-date experience in environmental policy and issues.
- The PSP is well perceived among the stakeholders, especially the Environmental Services of the Public Sector.
- It is offered in a hybrid manner which allows more applicants with full time jobs to attend.

### **II. Areas of Weakness**

- Lack of special provisions in the curriculum to ensure the learning outcome for the enrolled students that attend remotely.
- The Panel is concerned regarding the diverse background of the students, whether they can follow advanced scientific and engineering concepts

### **III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions**

- Add an introductory remedial course (non-credit) on basic sciences to secure a minimum level of knowledge and uniformity among the students
- Revise the courses' syllabi and curriculum to ensure the learning outcome for the remotely attending students.
- Establish a formal procedure for stakeholders and alumni to give feedback; This could help the collection of data regarding graduate career advancement as well as obtaining recommendations for enhancing and updating the PSP.
- Organise a formal external advisory board for the ongoing annual evaluations
- Introduce more field exercises and practical scenarios.
- Consider the introduction of a course on ESG (Environment, Social, Governance) that may increase the employability of the graduates

- Encourage students to make use of Erasmus+ for training and experience.
- Organize annual meetings where stakeholders explain job opportunities, the faculty to present their research and to give the opportunity to graduates to showcase best theses.
- Improve the presence in social media channels (Facebook, X, LinkedIn, YouTube channel, etc).
- Seek ways to increase the visibility and further promote the program.

#### **IV. Summary & Overall Assessment**

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1,3,4,5,6 and 10**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **2,7,8 and 9**

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## **The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel**

**Name and Surname**

**Signature**

1. Panos Papanastasiou
2. Nikolaos Xiros
3. Vasileios Koutsos
4. George Haritos
5. Aikaterini Alexandra Chrysafi