



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



Εθνική Αρχή  
Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης  
Hellenic Authority  
for Higher Education

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## ΑΠΟΦΑΣΗ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ

Το Συμβούλιο Αξιολόγησης και Πιστοποίησης της Εθνικής Αρχής Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης (ΕΘΑΑΕ)

Έχοντας υπόψη:

1. Τις διατάξεις του Ν. 4653/2020 (ΦΕΚ 12/Α'/24-01-2020) «Εθνική Αρχή Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης. Ειδικοί Λογαριασμοί Κονδυλίων Έρευνας Ανώτατων Εκπαιδευτικών Ιδρυμάτων, Ερευνητικών και Τεχνολογικών Φορέων και άλλες Διατάξεις», όπως ισχύει.
2. Την υπ' αριθμ. 18135/Ζ1/7-2-2020 Απόφαση της Υπουργού Παιδείας και Θρησκευμάτων (ΦΕΚ 94/τεύχος ΥΟΔΔ/7-2-2020), περί διορισμού του Προέδρου του Ανώτατου Συμβουλίου της Εθνικής Αρχής Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης (ΕΘΑΑΕ).
3. Την υπ' αριθμ. 15650/23-04-2020 Απόφαση του Προέδρου της ΕΘΑΑΕ (ΦΕΚ 329/τ.ΥΟΔΔ/04-05-2020) «Ορισμός των μελών του Συμβουλίου Αξιολόγησης και Πιστοποίησης (ΣΑΠ) της Εθνικής Αρχής Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης (ΕΘΑΑΕ)».
4. Τη σχετική Έκθεση Πιστοποίησης της Επιτροπής Εξωτερικής Αξιολόγησης & Πιστοποίησης του ΠΜΣ Διαχείριση Έργων, Συγκοινωνιακός και Χωρικός Σχεδιασμός του Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλίας.
5. Την 34η/20-12-2023 συνεδρίαση του Συμβουλίου Αξιολόγησης και Πιστοποίησης, θέμα 2. «Έγκριση εκθέσεων πιστοποίησης ΠΠΣ και ΠΜΣ – Χορήγηση πιστοποίησης».

### ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΕΙ ΟΤΙ

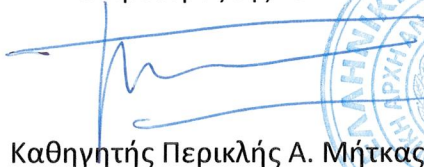
το Πρόγραμμα Μεταπτυχιακών Σπουδών

**Διαχείριση Έργων, Συγκοινωνιακός και Χωρικός Σχεδιασμός  
του Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλίας**

συμμορφώνεται πλήρως με τις αρχές του Προτύπου Ποιότητας για την Πιστοποίηση των Προγραμμάτων Μεταπτυχιακών Σπουδών της ΕΘΑΑΕ και τις Αρχές και Κατευθυντήριες Οδηγίες για τη Διασφάλιση Ποιότητας στον Ευρωπαϊκό Χώρο Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης (ESG), για το επίπεδο σπουδών 7 του Εθνικού και Ευρωπαϊκού Πλαισίου Προσόντων.

Η διάρκεια ισχύος της πιστοποίησης ορίζεται για πέντε έτη, από 20-12-2023 έως 19-12-2028.

Ο Πρόεδρος της ΕΘΑΑΕ

  
Καθηγητής Περικλής Α. Μήτκας



Επιχειρησιακό Πρόγραμμα  
Ανάπτυξη Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού,  
Εκπαίδευση και Διά Βίου Μάθηση





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

**Project Management, Transportation and Spatial Planning**

**Interdepartmental Programme of the Departments of Civil Engineering  
and Planning and Regional Development**

**Institution: University of Thessaly**

**Date: 18 November 2023**

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Postgraduate Study Programme of ***Project Management, Transportation and Spatial Planning*** of the **University of Thessaly** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

## Abbreviations

<b>UTh</b>	University of Thessaly
<b>ECTS</b>	European Credit Transfer System
<b>EEAP</b>	External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel
<b>EDIP / ΕΔΙΠ</b>	Laboratory Teaching Staff
<b>ΕΤΕΡ / ΕΤΕΠ</b>	Laboratory Technicians
<b>HAHE</b>	Hellenic Authority for Higher Education
<b>HNARIC</b>	Hellenic National Recognition and Information Centre
<b>IQAS (ΕΣΔΠ)</b>	Internal Quality Assurance System
<b>MODIP</b>	Quality Assurance Unit (ΜΟΔΙΠ)
<b>OMEA</b>	Internal Evaluation Groups/School's Internal Evaluation Committee
<b>PSP</b>	Postgraduate Study Programme
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance

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

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

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the postgraduate study programme of **Project Management, Transportation and Spatial Planning** of the **University of Thessaly** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Professor Emeritus Loukas Kalisperis (Chair)**  
Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, USA
- 2. Professor Thomas Panagopoulos**  
Universidade do Algarve, Faro, Portugal
- 3. Professor Marios C. Phocas**  
University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
- 4. Professor Theodore Stathopoulos**  
Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
- 5. Mr. Miltiadis Meliadis, PhD Candidate**  
School of Spatial Planning and Development, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) reviewed the material submitted by the Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) in ***Project Management, Transportation and Spatial Planning*** of the University of Thessaly (UTH) in advance of its '*virtual visit*' (via tele-conference) and *virtual* briefing. The Director and staff of HAHE provided the members of the EEAP with the necessary information on HAHE's mission and standards, as well as the guidelines for the review process and the national framework of the higher education institution in Greece. The EEAP met, in private, to discuss the programme review report for the Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) in ***Project Management, Transportation and Spatial Planning*** of the University of Thessaly, allocate tasks and list of issues for the site '*virtual visit*'.

The visit was conducted via online conference meetings (Zoom) and started on Monday, 06 November 2023, and lasted until 08 November 2023. The visit was common for two PSP programmes. The EEAP wrote the report in the following days (November 09-18) through collaborative meetings, held also online via the Zoom platform. The EEAP would like to express its appreciation for the efforts that the university, department, programme staff and HAHE undertook in order for the '*virtual visit*' to be a productive and effective experience. Although the EEAP was able to collect enough information for an understanding of the program, the '*virtual visit*' was not as effective and rewarding as an in-situ evaluation. The schedule for the virtual meetings was very condensed due to the fact that two postgraduate programmes were evaluated concurrently and from distance.

The EEAP met initially with the Directors of the two PSP, the Head of the Department, MODIP and OMEA members, on 06 November 2023, for a brief introductory meeting where some initial presentations of the university and the department took place. The Department Chair and the Director of the Programme gave an overview of the institution and the department and provided useful information about the department's strengths and areas of concern. The morning meetings continued with an in-depth presentation of the programme, by the Director and representatives of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) and the Internal Evaluation Group (OMEA), followed by limited discussion with MODIP & OMEA members, during which the EEAP received some additional information about the programme, the various activities of the curriculum, faculty and staff, student body, and research activities. The EEAP received further documentation and supporting material related to the presentations given by the Director that facilitated their discussions. Consequently, the meetings continued with a video and a PowerPoint tour of the facilities, and a very brief discussion followed in order to address any members' questions. Additionally, the EEAP was introduced, via PowerPoint presentations, to the individual research laboratories operating within the department by faculty members of its research group and their facilities available to the students of the PSP.

Following that, the EEAP reflected on the discussions and prepared for the subsequent sessions of the '*virtual visit*', on the second day (08 November 2023), during which it met with faculty members and student representatives. During this meeting the EEAP was given the opportunity to ask detailed questions to better facilitate the EEAP's understanding of the curriculum, internal evaluation review process, adequacy of resources and possible areas of strengths and weaknesses. The teaching staff and students provided the members of the EEAP with valuable information about their study experience, curriculum, and campus facilities. They discussed their priority issues concerning mobility, research, and career opportunities. The students were very hospitable, and helpful. They conducted themselves admirably and were excellent ambassadors of a good educational institution.

The second day, (08 November 2023), continued with subsequent meetings with programme

graduates and with employers, social partners, and external stakeholders, both groups representing impressive professional organizations, enterprises, and local authorities. During the meetings the EEAP was able to hear their experiences either during their studies at the *Project Management, Transportation and Spatial Planning* programme and/or their relations with the Department, as well as aiming to address the readiness of the graduates for the market and identify areas of cooperation between the department and employers. All participants spoke enthusiastically of the programme and their affiliation with it. It was evident that the Institution is held in a very high regard by its Alumni and external stakeholders.

The second day, (08 November 2023, third calendar day of the overall visit), concluded with a meeting with the programme directors, the faculty working on the Programme Review Report, and MODIP & OMEA, in which a quick summary of the visit was discussed. During the meeting the EEAP was able to further clarify several key points and engage in a detailed discussion on the curriculum and facilities. The EEAP requested additional information about the programme, administration, buildings & resources, library, external relations and the electronic systems for student satisfaction and student records.

The EEAP met via tele-conference, for the remainder of the “virtual visit”, in order to complete the report and submit it to HAHE on Saturday, 18 November 2023.



### III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) in *Project Management, Transportation and Spatial Planning* at the University of Thessaly (UTH) was established in 2018. This is a 3-semester (one calendar year) postgraduate programme in which students are required to complete a total of 8 courses (all required courses and no elective courses) along with the completion of the Research Thesis. The programme can also be completed in a part-time basis, in which case it can be extended to 5-7 semesters. The programme has an equivalency of 90 ECTS -- 60 ECTS for the required courses and 30 ECTS for the research thesis. All courses are of equal ECTS value. Students do not specifically identify any concentration areas in which they select their elective courses and or complete their thesis on similar thematic areas. Course syllabi are available for all courses taught online in the web page of the Programme. Students are given the opportunity to evaluate the courses they attend, and their input might be considered in adjusting course content and delivery aspects.

Students that matriculate in the postgraduate programme have a diverse educational background, primarily that of civil engineers, architects, surveyors, and environmental engineers.

Graduates of the programme can be employed in both the private and public sector and most of the graduates have been successfully placed in both sectors after their graduation, in addition to a few starting/completing doctoral studies. Throughout the academic year, limited numbers of seminars and lectures are held with professionals working in the field that provide additional information and exposure to different work environments.

There are 8 core faculty members that support the educational and research activities of the programme and most have doctoral degrees from institutions abroad or in Greece. Faculty members are from the Department of *Planning and Regional Development* and the Department of Civil Engineering of the University of Thessaly with one additional member of the teaching staff from the School of Architecture of the University of Thessaly and another from the Agriculture University of Athens. An issue of impending concern is the somewhat large number of courses that each member of the faculty is involved in both the undergraduate and post graduate programmes. The faculty members involved in the programme have a commendable number of publications and some research activities, both in projects and funds. The Programme has not been externally evaluated but an internal evaluation and some of the recommendations of the report have been addressed or are in the process of being addressed. The Programme mostly follows the required procedure for establishing some quantitative metrics that define its progress, as well as target goals to be achieved in the near future.

## 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 EXTERNALSTAKEHOLDERS) 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**

The interdepartmental Postgraduate Study Programme on *Project Management, Transportation and Spatial Planning* has an interdisciplinary curriculum geared towards the professional preparation of engineers with different backgrounds involved in the field of transportation and spatial planning both individually and in combination, to include and combine technical knowledge in planning, organizing, and monitoring the implementation of relevant projects.

## II. Analysis

The academic staff, mainly from the two host Departments of the University of Thessaly, is highly qualified and motivated. It appears also that there is a very good and productive collaboration and teamwork among the faculty that ensures, supported by a high teaching staff / student ratio, a very good result in terms of quality of the Programme's alumni. The faculty is respected and appreciated by the students and mentioned by the students and graduates as a primary source for the successful provision of knowledge and skills in the areas of the programme of study.

Research output is good, especially considering the conditions of the Department of Planning and Regional Development and the Department of Civil Engineering of the University of Thessaly (small number of staff with high teaching load). The Programme does have its own *Research Committee* as well as relying on the services of the Research Committee of the University of Thessaly.

The contents of the curriculum are characterized by the individual disciplines involved in the Programme and horizontally interconnected to provide an integrated context of analysis and development. In enhancing the character of the Programme, the advancement of interdisciplinary collaborations among the students themselves in the development of their research is commented. Furthermore, the expansion and use of the labs of the host Departments is expected to forge the Programme's emerging identity.

The Programme claims a continuous quality monitoring. However, there are no yearly or 4-year Evaluation Reports at the external level.

## III. Conclusions

Concluding, the Programme's QA policy is fully compliant with the HAHE policy and guidelines and the EU QA standards on Higher Education. Its curriculum has many commendable and innovative features. However, the Programme must develop further its identity to achieve best results in terms of an interdisciplinarity approach in Project Management, Transportation and Spatial Planning.

The updating of the curriculum and the Programme should be perceived as a continuous and dynamic internal evaluation process that involves several constituents including faculty, students, alumni, and external partners.

The Programme participates in *Erasmus+*. Its internationalization through organization of international conferences and workshops at the University of Thessaly, collaboration with academic staff from other Universities, as well as the students' and graduates' employment and activities must be improved. Equally important must be the acknowledgment by the quality assurance body of the faculty research activities, sabbatical leaves, and participation in international conferences. However, due to economic constraints and beyond the control of the Programme, there is **very limited** financial support for the faculty's research activities.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that:

- R1.1** An external review of the Programme's identity / branding, vision, and goals, through an independent advisory board, ad-hoc expert panels and/or a dedicated international workshop. Annual internal reviews need to be further institutionalized by the Programme, as well as external evaluations, organized by the Programme itself every 4 years.
- R1.2** The Programme's internationalization through organization of international conferences and workshops at the University of Thessaly, collaboration with academic staff from other Universities, as well as the students' and graduates' employment and activities.

## 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 interdepartmental Postgraduate Study Programme on *Project Management, Transportation and Spatial Planning* has been operating by the Department of Planning and Regional Development and the Department of Civil Engineering of the University of Thessaly since 2018. The Programme is hosted in the main premises of the Departments in Volos (Pedion Areos main building of the School of Engineering) and in Larissa (Gaiopolis facilities). The programme of study has a minimum duration of three semesters and leads to the Postgraduate Diploma in Project Management, Transportation and Spatial Planning.

The Programme's specific contents, objectives and aims comply with the academic and scientific guidelines set by the University. The programme of study refers to the management, design and planning of urban, civil projects and technical infrastructure, the majority of which are transportation projects. The specific programme is unique in Greece in providing a comprehensive postgraduate education and an interdisciplinary approach to the production of civil infrastructure, while combining spatial and transportation planning as well as project management with an emphasis on economic and technical aspects. Furthermore, the Programme aims at strengthening the technical subject of engineering at a strategic and operational level, covering the range of assignments that students will be asked to undertake in the labour market.

The majority of the teaching staff is from the two host Departments of the University of Thessaly. A limited number of teaching staff is from other Departments of the same University or other Universities in Greece. The students entering the programme have different backgrounds, mainly in the disciplines of Civil Engineering and Spatial Planning.

In the first two semesters, the curriculum covers all three thematic areas, with four respective compulsory courses each semester. The 3<sup>rd</sup> semester consists of the Thesis project. Since the individual courses and the Thesis project are primarily of applied nature, the students with different backgrounds are capable to attend the courses of the Programme without need for other preparatory courses.

The quality assurance body and the faculty as a whole support the existing identity of the Programme as formulated above. The EEAP believes that this identity is presently adequately reflected in the structure of the programme of study. Presently, the sequence of the compulsory courses is clearly defined regarding the contents, levels of advancement and pedagogical objectives and the individual courses in each semester act synergistically to the final Thesis project.

The Programme reflects the interests and specializations of the faculty and is comparable with only few similar Programmes that exist internationally. Following the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and in line with the measures for the limitation of the further spread of the virus worldwide, in 2020, the Programme is presently offered in hybrid mode through on-line and physical participation of the students in the courses. Certain benefits associated to the hybrid mode of participation refer to a wide-spread geographic location of the students attending the programme and the increase of enrolments to the programme.

### **II. Analysis**

The EEAP noted the lack of elective courses within the programme which is particularly critical given the different backgrounds of the students. This would enable further specialization in a specific area

of interest or enrichment of knowledge in areas outside one owns background prior to the completion of the Thesis project. Furthermore, a possible extension of the minimum duration of study in four semesters could be considered by the faculty to accommodate the breadth of knowledge and skills to be acquired by the students. The EEAP understands that such amendment needs to further consider issues related to the finances of the Programme and its competitiveness to other similar postgraduate degrees internationally.

The EEAP notes that the hybrid mode of the programme of study and the group assignments in individual courses cultivate the advancement of interdisciplinary collaborations among the students themselves in the development of their research. This issue was also raised by the current students and graduates of the Programme in their meetings with the EEAP. Such opportunity to enhance the interdisciplinary nature of the programme of study would not have been equally possible following a remote mode of operation of the Programme.

Furthermore, some courses of the Programme and the final Thesis Project may facilitate collaborations in project developments and applications with social bodies of competence and community authorities. This was also confirmed in the respective meeting of the EEAP with the Social Partners of the Programme, who would be willing to participate in such collaborations and support the Programme's development and practice-based component. This will also provide financial and otherwise resources, in order to maintain the future development and sustainability of the Programme and can be a mechanism to forge its emerging identity. Presently, the labs remain practically unexploited due to the remote location of the teaching facilities of the Programme in Larissa. Thus, the implementation of laboratories and communal infrastructure of the host Departments is highly recommended. In particular, the labs of the Departments need to be further expanded to also serve in support of the acquisition and implementation of research projects, the achievement of diversity within the discipline and potential for interdisciplinary research activities.

There are procedures and regulations for the revisions of the programme, and the EEAP was made aware that the programme of study has been internally monitored and assessed periodically. External consultations and collaborative activities with the private and civil sector are realized in systematic but unofficial way. Students have contributed by submitting course and faculty evaluations.

### **III. Conclusions**

In conclusion, the Study Programme is fully compliant with the HAHE policy and guidelines. The curriculum needs to be updated to increase flexibility in the pathway of studies given the different backgrounds of the students. In addition, collaborations in project developments and implementations with social bodies of competence and community authorities need to be facilitated, as well as the web site of the Programme needs to be developed.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that:

- R2.1** The curriculum committee should consult, with all stakeholders, and should have a tight time schedule of meetings and consultations. The central administration should facilitate such endeavours.
- R2.2** Elective courses should be considered for inclusion in the curriculum given the different backgrounds of the students.
- R2.3** The possibility of an extension of the minimum duration of study in four semesters should be considered by the faculty to accommodate the breadth of knowledge and skills to be acquired by the students.
- R2.4** The labs of the host Departments need to be expanded to also serve in support of the acquisition and implementation of research projects, the achievement of diversity within the discipline and potential for interdisciplinary research activities.
- R2.5** Collaborations in project developments and implementations with social bodies of competence and community authorities need to be facilitated.



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

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

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

*The student-centred learning and teaching process*

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

*In addition*

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

#### **Documentation**

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

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **I. Findings**

The Postgraduate programme in Project Management, Transportation and Spatial Planning is a three-semester academic programme. The majority of the students' background is engineering. The first two semesters contain 4 courses each, and the final semester is dedicated to a thesis project. Each semester has 30 ECTS and each course has 7.5 ECTS, except the thesis (30 ECTS). The programme does not include a thesis preparation seminar or a Research Methods course. The courses are mainly conducted through lectures, while it is worth mentioning that some of them contain laboratory exercises, but it is reported that additional laboratory exercises and more sophisticated and contemporary software could be helpful. The Thesis Project,

as implemented, can either be research-associated or literature-based and the choice is up to each student, but the majority, if not all, choose a literature-based thesis.

According to the curriculum guide, the predominant method of course assessment are short-answer questions, closed-book questions, and multiple-choice questions. In some courses there is a mandatory practical exercise using a sophisticated computer program. The exam period takes place at the end of each semester and the successful completion of each course is mainly based on the performance on these final exams, except the ones with the exercise.

The university provides students with an evaluation system at the end of each academic semester. The evaluation system is given in the form of a questionnaire, where students can rate the courses, lecturers, lecture content etc. The same platform provides an opportunity for students to express any complaint, dissatisfaction, or even harassment.

The teaching staff takes into account the diversity of the postgraduate students, who come from different Schools and have different knowledge backgrounds. The lectures and their content are quite understandable to the student population, and the lecturers do not hesitate to respond to any questions.

## **II. Analysis**

The curriculum of this postgraduate courses includes a wide variety of courses covering current and topical issues in the fields of Project Management, Spatial Planning, Project Appraisal, Statistical Analysis. Consequently, the theoretical training of the students at the end of the PSP degree is quite satisfactory since they will have expanded and specialised their knowledge in this field. With respect to the acquisition of practical experience, during the labs, the curriculum includes various laboratory exercises in the context of specific courses, internships, and thesis projects. Through the combination of all of these, following this PSP degree, the student should have gained a satisfactory level of experience in both the professional and research areas of their particular subfields. At this point it is worth mentioning that most of the students and graduates suggested the need for additional laboratory training in various contemporary software, in order to be better prepared for the work market.

Despite the heterogeneity of the students, who come from different departments and have different backgrounds, the comprehension of the courses is generally satisfactory. As the students stated, the teaching staff has adapted the content of their courses to accommodate the broad audience, and they are always available to respond to any questions and queries. Unfortunately, most courses are not Erasmus friendly, as they are taught in Greek.

The courses' and teachers' evaluation system are widespread among students. Unfortunately, a very small percentage of students participate in the internal evaluation process. Those completed the questionnaires did not express any major dissatisfaction.

The majority of students and graduates informed the EEAP that most of them chose this PSP in order to be more successful at work or to find a job thanks to this diploma. Many students wanted to participate in Erasmus+ or an internship but due to their personal life and work problems, this was not possible.

## **III. Conclusions**

The curriculum of the postgraduate programme Project Management, Transportation and Spatial Planning is mostly in line with the standards of the HAHE, as it is of very good quality. Graduates are provided with strong knowledge and experience in both the professional and research fields.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that:

- R3.1** More small assignments during the semester that encourage critical thinking could be considered.
- R3.2** Encouragement should be made to the students to carry out a research thesis, as this would help to develop more contacts and relationships with other universities or institutes.
- R3.3** A one-day conference to connect graduates with the market be organized annually.
- R3.4** The student theses should be posted on the webpage of the programme.
- R3.5** Invitation for lecturing to several word leaders in the field (from abroad or from Greece) be considered.
- R3.6** More and better laboratories and more sophisticated computer programs be acquired.

## **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**

Student admission for this specific PSP is restricted to 30 per year. Eligible for admission are graduates from various fields of studies of engineering studies.

This PSP started its function in 2018 and offers the diploma of “Project Management, Transportation and Spatial Planning”. Acceptance to the programme is restricted based on a well-defined selection procedure. The selection of the applicants is based on their undergraduate performance, recommendation letters, followed by candidates’ interviews by an established academic committee. These procedures are clearly described in the required supporting documents, which also contain information for the student rights and obligations, and ways allowing to monitor their progression. Research ethics regulation, regulation of studies, internship, mobility, and student assignments are also provided.

The ratio of women/men is balanced. Many applicants have a part time / full time job, and they attend the PSP as an additional load. This problem is accommodated by offering some flexible attendance requirements. A hybrid method of teaching exists, live and remote, which is helpful.

The duration of the PSP is one and a half year (three semesters, 90 ECTS in total). Students are evaluated at the end of each semester. Students are also required to write a thesis, which can be either research-based or a literature survey. Members of the PSP show understanding and flexibility for students that are employed in professional office or public agencies. The PSP diploma allows to the students to get a job in the public or private sector (research institutes, private companies etc) with specific requirements, or to further develop themselves by pursuing a PhD degree.

There is very good communication between the students and faculty members of the PSP, who are constantly available in helping the students and provide the necessary information. Progress of the students of the PSP is followed closely by the faculty members.

The programme provides literature-based knowledge and practical training in labs.

The meeting of the EEAP with current and past students of the PSP provided a positive impression of the quality of this PSP. All participants were enthusiastic and positive concerning their experience and knowledge received. Several past students are excelling in private companies in good positions, and this indicates the importance of this PSP. Several current and past students requested more practical training courses. Concerning the quality and number of courses, students pointed out that courses are well-structured and easy to follow. Similarly, all students and faculty members emphasised that the PSP is rewarding, greatly helping to their development.

The mobility of the students is not satisfactory, even though Erasmus+ and other mobility platforms are available.

The degree certificate template is provided electronically to the students upon completion of the PSP.

## **II. Analysis**

This PSP provides an important and interesting basis for further studies in the fields of “Project Management, Transportation and Spatial Planning”. The PSP fulfils an important need for education and training of allied Polytechnic Schools.

The length of studies of this PSP is generally considered satisfactory from the EEAP. However, the EEAP thinks that more sophisticated software is necessary, especially for simulation purposes.

The EEAP considers that students’ mobility is very limited.

An issue is that many students of the PSP have full or part time jobs. This plays a significant role in the length of studies and the availability of the students when close interactions between students and faculty members are necessary. Although online teaching is more desirable in general by working students, the EEAP considers the need for collaborative work and face-to-face consultation as critical.

## **III. Conclusions**

This is a well-organized and designed PSP on the fields of Project Management, Transportation and Spatial Planning. The laboratory training, as well as the length of the studies for graduation are satisfactory. An effort should be made to use Erasmus+ more actively and other existing mobility platforms.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that:

- R4.1** More efforts towards the recruitment of additional students highlighting the benefits of completing the programme should be made.
- R4.2** The creation of a more extensive library of thesis topics, from which the students could select should be implemented.
- R4.3** The organization of an informative day where the various stakeholders could explain the possibilities of mobility, job opportunities, and the like should be considered.

## **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 found that the Teaching staff of the PSP on Project Management, Transportation and Spatial Planning has excellent qualifications to teach the syllabus of the programme. Both current students and graduates interviewed were unanimous in their appreciation for the faculty's qualifications to teach promptly and in the appropriate depth for a post-graduate programme. Students are also assisted with their projects by all Teaching staff, although the remote delivery of the programme presents extra difficulties in this regard. There was no specific reference to training programmes for the faculty, although marginal support is available through a recently established Centre for Teaching and Learning. This Centre provides support to the Teaching staff by responding to questions and organizing teaching seminars in regular intervals. Sabbatical leaves are available, but they are generally underutilized for various practical and economic reasons.

### **II. Analysis**

The student-teaching ratio in this PSP is very low, in the order of 1 to 2. Although this makes the programme rather expensive, it is very advantageous for the student learning process. The EEAP noted that there is a significant interest in research activities. A small number of students graduated from this programme follow doctoral studies with their project supervisors. This is an

excellent by-product of this programme contributing to the academic targets of the faculty members to promote their academic objectives and obtain research funding via various European programmes (e.g., Horizon). This in turn promotes the increase of the volume and quantity of the research output from the Department of Civil Engineering. In fact, the research output of some academics teaching in this programme is outstanding.

### III. Conclusions

The EEAP found that the workload of the Teaching staff is generally satisfactory, although the distribution may not be completely uniform – some faculty members may supervise more final programme projects than others. More resources should be allocated to the professional development of teaching staff to avoid self-financing of participating in conferences, workshops, and the like. There is room to increase the recruitment efforts for this program.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that:

- R5.1** Enhance the collaboration with stakeholders in the professional development of teaching staff.
- R5.2** The importance of professional development and the provision of resources for this purpose should be emphasized.



## 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 Department of Planning and Regional Development and the Department of Civil Engineering and the PSP have building and laboratory facilities generally adequate for their mission, although their maintenance and development would require additional resources. It should be noted that all spaces are easily accessible to individuals with disabilities. The human resources of the PSP consist of the Teaching and Research Staff, which is well distributed in terms of senior and junior academics. Additionally, there are 2 non-academic members supporting the Laboratory and IT sectors of the program. To support the students in various administrative matters, the Secretariat of the host Departments (in the city of Volos) has experienced and specialized administrative staff. The main service for supporting learning and academic activities is the network of libraries within the institution, especially the Library of the University. Education is supported by an online learning management system. Some courses have their own virtual classrooms where various materials, announcements, and bibliographic resources are posted. Both current students and graduates of the programme spoke highly about the programme and found it advantageous when joining the workforce after their graduation.

## II. Analysis

Some further analysis of all detailed findings revealed that the lack of elective courses and a relatively low exposure to the current conditions in the outside of academia world might be some issues. Given that students entering this PSP are mostly engineers, the compatibility of level of background knowledge seems to be satisfactory. Additional support and opportunities to explore their future career environment and, at the same time, acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them to compete more effectively in the professional field would be clearly desirable. Regarding the lack of adequate participation to the course evaluation questionnaires, some students complained that they never received them – this is something that could be addressed rather easily by requesting the students to confirm receiving them by a specific date and resending it to them or making it available electronically to download it. The needs of all students in this PSP are considered and all learning resources and student support are adequate.

## III. Conclusions

The EEAP has concluded that the programme has carefully considered and planned for all aspects of university resources and student support needed for the implementation of the PSP. However, it became also clear that the programme does not utilize the services of the stakeholders, who spoke so highly about the tremendous potential of this programme and would be willing to assist them in terms of curriculum development and organization of recruitment services to increase the number of students, their retention, and their employment upon graduation.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that:

- R6.1** Course evaluation procedures should be improved to increase their effectiveness.
- R6.2** An External Advisory Board (EAB) be instituted to enhance the further development and delivery of the programme and to create a permanent link with the outside professional world.

## 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**

Through the application of respective information technology services provided by the University (e.g., eUniversity, Open eClass, MS Teams, information system of quality assurance body, students' practice experience), a comprehensive information system of data collection and recording has been developed regarding the overall operation of the institution. The data refer to the academic faculty, the administration, and the students. Further data have been collected by the research financial services and the library. The information obtained from the satisfaction surveys by the students and the graduates databank is limited. Information about Key Performance Indicators is not available of the students and staff and there are no graphs displaying student numbers evolution and success to visually display trends. Additionally, limited data were provided for student satisfaction during several years of evolution in all courses as well as Indicators about professor's performance.

The EEAP was provided with a table of long-term targets for the programme but without performance indicator as the length of the targets runs to the end of the calendar year.

Some relevant data are presented on the web sites of the Programme, including related

announcements, and the information of the courses.

## **II. Analysis**

The updating quality of the Department's and programme's site and electronic presence is not at the level that it should be and the completeness of the sites, especially for the English version, is not satisfactory. The information obtained from the satisfaction surveys by the students and the graduates is very limited. The EEAP became aware of some concerns that students and teaching staff expressed with the electronic platform delivery of courses (eClass) and the lack of appropriate mechanisms for electronic management and administration of distance education. Key Performance Indicators should be presented for several years (since 2018); the information should be analysed annually and targets for improvement in the future should be established.

The EEAP believes that the Programme has made efforts to achieve students' participation in the evaluation of the teaching staff. Unfortunately, the level of participation is very low after the transition to electronic questionnaires. Additionally, the EEAP feels that there should be further incentives and measures that would apply to all students in the Programme, in order to collect a strong and representative sample of feedback.

## **III. Conclusions**

The Programme and the relevant Departments involved in it should evaluate the data collected and present some of the results in quantifiable measures in terms of the programme, and key performance indicators. The data should assist in the preparation of internal evaluation reports and related improvement proposals.

There is ample evidence for the immediate need of additional resources necessary for the operation of the Secretariat and the digital and network operation of the Programme.

The development of an alumni body has also been proposed by the graduates of the programme in their meeting with the EEAP members.

### **Panel Judgement**

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

### **Panel Recommendations**

The EEAP recommends that:

- R7.1** The programme formalizes the organizing of its alumni via platforms of social media, such as *LinkedIn* and others.
- R7.2** The University re-evaluate the platform for delivery of coursework and enhance the programme's resources for upgrading the network and electronic record keeping systems.

## **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**

Vital information about the University of Thessaly, the department and the PSP are available online. The University of Thessaly website is organised in 4 categories. The main tabs consist of the following:

- Studies, which includes the PSPs and online services
- Research
- International
- Life (student welfare, Career, Culture Support)
- The University (Contacts, News, Organization, and the Quality Assurance Unit).

The top of the University of Thessaly PSPs is grouped in Schools and Departments. The PSP Project Management, Transport and Spatial Planning (interdepartmental PSP with the Department of Civil Engineering) is presented in School of Engineering at the Department of Spatial Planning, Urban Planning and Regional Development. The link of the PSP webpage is: [http://www.prd.uth.gr/m\\_pmtsp/](http://www.prd.uth.gr/m_pmtsp/)

The independent webpage of the PSP has compact information in the following link: <https://pmtspmaster.uth.gr/>

#### **II. Analysis**

The departmental websites offer sufficient information in Greek and lacks on the English side. Most of the information is provided and covers institutional activities such as the post-graduate program, intended learning outcomes for every module, degree awarded, graduate employment perspectives, teaching-learning procedures used and announcements. It also covers basic information about e-services, academic calendar, teaching timetable, infrastructure, research laboratories, and other information about the Departments and the PSP.

Content is available both in Greek and English, however a discrepancy is found on the information quantity. Also, the information is more difficult to be discovered at the English website.

Active LinkedIn, twitter and Facebook profiles for the Department and the PSP have been set up, raising visibility of events, lectures and accomplishments of students and staff.

Accessibility options (Text to Speech, Text Readability, Colour Contrast) are not provided. It will be useful to be added by pressing an appropriate button, making the website accessible to vision or hearing-impaired visitors.

There needs to be more information about public transportation to the institution's facilities. It is difficult to find information about the professors and other staff of the PSP because this information is organized at the two webpages of the Departments and the independent webpage of the PSP is incomplete.

The independent webpage of the PSP should not mention the word MSc, but only Postgraduate programme as it is mentioned at the Institutional and Departmental webpages. The release of all information is subject to a quality control of QAU of the Department, being responsible for the curation of the material.

The EEAP encourages the use of virtual platforms/social media to enhance student participation and engagement. An inclusion of individual courses and the Thesis project results on the Programme's web site would further enhance the visibility of the work accomplished throughout all stages of the programme of study. This will allow the students and other stakeholders to access efficiently both, the academic and non-academic resources of the Programme and the University.

### III. Conclusions

Although the Department provides information about both teaching and departmental activities in Greek, the website could be more thorough and contain more content in English. The independent webpage of the PSP is misleading and should not mention the word MSc. The independent website of the Post-graduate Programme could have more marketing information about the programme's usefulness, job opportunities and testimonies on Alumni. The brief curriculum of the teaching staff should be more visible specifically for the professors coming from the Department of Civil Engineering.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that:

- R8.1** Google Scholar, Web of Science, ORCID and/or Scopus ID for each Staff member be included on the webpage of the PSP. Homogenization is needed of all accessible information regarding faculty: education, published work, collaborations, research areas of interest.
- R8.2** The web site of the Programme be developed in order to promote the work of the students and faculty more adequately.
- R8.3** Relevant information for prospective incoming ERASMUS+ students be developed. In particular, this information should be simple to locate the English courses offered each semester. An "International/Exchange students" button could be used.

## **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 self-assessment of the programme is based on procedures and continuous improvement of the level of educational offerings along with supporting the learning environment, ensuring the current character of the programme, and the strategic goals of the Institution. Factors considered for the assessment include students' workload, students' expectations, and the assessment of the students. Also, scientific, and technological developments, societal and job market needs, and national, European, and international environmental policies are considered. The programme director collects information from the delivery of the programme, along with scientific, technological, business, and societal developments. The Director collects all requests for changes to the programme, such as changes to the course content, course schedule and calendar, faculty workload, proposals for new courses, etc. Using the student course/instructor evaluations along with requests related to suggested changes, a proposal is submitted to the School (two Departments) assembly.

The annual report is submitted to QAU for review, and recommendations are shared with the School general assembly. Decisions are made at the end of the academic year and are implemented at the beginning of the following academic year.

## II. Analysis

Through the process of internal review and continuous improvement plan, the positive aspects of the programme are reinforced, such as by adding new topics based on scientific developments. The collected information is analysed, and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up to date. There is a strategically designed consideration for improving courses using the course evaluations by students. Programme weaknesses are immediately addressed when problems are identified with the programme in students' evaluation. Remediation of knowledge gaps of the students was achieved through special seminars, extended office hours for the faculty to assist students, in addition to the availability of the academic advisor.

The PSP is reviewed and revised regularly but without the direct involvement of students and other stakeholders. Extension of collaborations with international laboratories and further involvement in external activities such as conferences should be common practice. Seminars from alumni and international researchers should be promoted.

## III. Conclusions

The self-assessment procedure of the programme should take place annually.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that:

- R9.1** The students' participation and the involvement of external stakeholders in the study programme revisions should be enhanced further.
- R9.2** Enrichment and update of learning materials should be more frequent.



## **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 PSP of “Project Management, Transport and Spatial Planning” does not have an external evaluation. Following the instructions of HAHE to this Principle, the EEAP utilised the IQAS Accreditation Report (2019) of the University of Thessaly. Although, the original submission to HAHE did not include an adequate response to the previous External Evaluations, the relevant information was provided, upon the request of the EEAP.

### **II. Analysis**

The PSP provided a detailed response about the previous external evaluations and the Programme has taken into consideration those relevant recommendations and is willing to proceed with the implementation of all recommendations for the PSP.

The recommendation of development of procedures for the sustainable and continuous engagement of stakeholders has not yet been implemented.

The recommendation about uniform format of Biographies for all Faculty members should be described and identified but it was not fully implemented. These should include degrees and institutions attended, areas of research interests, and current research work.

Include alumni and students in continuous improvement was not fully implemented.

### **III. Conclusions**

The recommendation from the previous external evaluations were not fully considered. The EEAP concurs with the previous recommendations. A point-by-point response to the previous evaluations and a time schedule about when they will be fulfilled should also be mentioned.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that:

**R10.1** The Programme should materialize the recommendations of the IQAS Accreditation Report in 2019.

## PART C: CONCLUSIONS

### I. Features of Good Practice

- High quality of educational process and curriculum, following the best contemporary practices.
- Excellent collaboration between teaching staff, administrators, and students.
- The preparation that the programme affords their alumni which manifest itself in excellent and remarkable professional careers.
- Good balance between academic research, professional work, and projects.
- Ratio of academic staff to students.

### II. Areas of Weakness

- Interaction with the local community partners, both in the public and private sectors.
- **High** workload for some of the teaching staff.
- Updating and improvement of existing infrastructure.
- Conditions for appropriate faculty development, systematic self-evaluation process, and opportunities for mobility.
- Disparity of programme delivery locations.

### III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Establish an External Advisory Board (EAB) to enhance the further development and delivery of the programme and to create a permanent link with the outside professional world.
- Consult with all stakeholders in the development of the curriculum on an annual basis, at a minimum. Encourage research thesis project, in collaboration with partners and stakeholders. Enhance the collaboration with stakeholders in the professional development of teaching staff. Create an extensive library of thesis topics, from which the students could select.
- Institutionalize annual internal reviews, as well as external evaluations, organized by the Programme itself every 4 years. Implement promptly the evaluation recommendations.
- Organize international conferences and workshops at the University of Thessaly and collaborate with academic staff from other Universities. Invite several word leaders in the field, from Greece or abroad, to lecture.
- Implement annual one-day workshops (colloquia) in order to connect graduates with the market.
- Collaborate with social bodies of competence, community authorities and stakeholders for project development and implementation.
- Consider the inclusion of elective courses in the curriculum given the different backgrounds of the students and the possibility of an extension of the minimum duration of study to four semesters, in order to accommodate the breadth of knowledge and skills required.
- Provide funding for additional and better equipped laboratories and the acquisition of contemporary software.
- Develop a proper electronic presence which would include:
  - students' theses
  - organizing of its alumni
  - Google Scholar, Web of Science, ORCID and/or Scopus ID for each Staff member
  - relevant information for prospective incoming ERASMUS+ students

- Re-evaluate the platform for delivery of coursework and enhance the programme's resources for upgrading the network and electronic record keeping systems.
- Enhance the recruitment of students highlighting the benefits of completing the programme.
- Emphasize the importance of faculty professional development and provide resources for this purpose.
- Improve course evaluation procedures to increase their effectiveness.

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **7, 8, 9, and 10.**

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: **None.**

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: **None.**

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

## The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

1. **Professor Emeritus Loukas Kalisperis (Chair)**  
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