



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Accreditation Report

for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Sustainable Management of Aquatic Environment

Department of Ichthyology and Aquatic Environment
University of Thessaly

8 June 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 of **Sustainable Management of Aquatic Environment** of the **University of Thessaly** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the postgraduate study programme of **Sustainable Management of Aquatic Environment** of the University of Thessaly comprised the following five (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Prof. Thomas Panagopoulos (Chair)**
University of Algarve, Faro, Portugal

- 2. Prof. Andreas Katsiotis**
Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol, Cyprus

- 3. Prof. Emeritus Ioannis Vlahos**
Hellenic Mediterranean University, Heraklion-Crete, Greece

- 4. Mr. Georgios Giotopoulos**
PhD Candidate, University of Patras, Patras, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In preparation for the review and assessment of the PSP **Sustainable Management of Aquatic Environment (SMAE)** of the University of Thessaly, the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEA Panel) reviewed a multitude of materials provided by the Hellenic Authority of Higher Education (HAHE), which included background information and guidance on the review and accreditation process, detailed material and data related to the programme under evaluation, such as the programme accreditation proposal and associated appendices.

The programme review was conducted via teleconference, organized and coordinated by HAHE and the University of Thessaly (UTH). The schedule and agenda of the review were as stated below.

Monday, 3/06/2024:

- a) Preliminary private meeting of the EEA Panel. Discussion of the programme under review; assignment of writing parts of the draft accreditation report to the members of the EEA Panel.
- b) Welcome meeting and short overview of the two PSPs with the Head of the Department of Ichthyology and Aquatic Environment (DIAE) Prof. Dimitrios Vafeidis, the Director of the PSP Education for Sustainability and the Environment (PSP1) Prof. Steriani Matsiori, the Director of the PSP Sustainable Management of Aquatic Environment (PSP2) Prof. Athanasios Exadactylos, the PSP2 Steering Committee member Prof. Konstantinos Skordas, the coordinator of Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) Ms Eleni Tsironi, the QAU member Ioannis Papadopoulos, the QAU staff Ms. Konstantina Founta and Ms. Dimitra Manou, the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) member Prof. Evangelia Farsirotou: Presentation of UTH quality assurance policy, current status and future developments, as well as presentations and discussion of PSP1 and PSP2 history, academic profile, current status and future developments, strengths and areas of concern, degree compliance to the quality standards for accreditation, internal procedures, course examinations, review of students' progress, course/instructor evaluations, etc.
- c) Meeting with PSP1 & PSP2 teaching staff and administrative staff members Sophoclis Dritsas, Stavroula Aifanti, Asimena Koromili, Alexandra Petrotou, Nikolaos Neofitou, Marianthi Hatzioannou: Discussion of facilities and learning resources.
- d) Private debriefing meeting (EEA Panel members only).

Tuesday, 4/06/2024:

Teleconference meetings related to PSP1.

Wednesday, 5/06/2024:

- a) Meeting and discussion with PSP2 Sustainable Management of Aquatic Environment (SMAE) teaching staff members Profs. Serafeim Papadopoulos, Georgios Gkafas, Dimitrios Klaoudatos, Georgios Michail, Apostolos Apostolidis, Grigorios Amoutzias, Nafsika Karakatsouli, Dimitrios Chatziplis, Konstantinos Tsigenopoulos, Stergios Pardalis.
- b) Meeting and discussion with five (5) current PSP2 students.
- c) Meeting and discussion with ten (10) recent PSP2 graduates.
- d) Meeting and discussion with employers and PSP2 social partners: Stergios Gounaris, Head of Thessaly Chemistry Association, Nikoleta Kravva, Head of Agricultural Economy & Veterinary Directive, Athanasios Lioutas, Hellenic Parliament, Christos Palaikostas, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Penelope Belekou, General Directory for

Fisheries of Belgium, Zoi Akrivouli, Head of Services Department, Commercial Chamber of Thessaly, Konstantina Manika, Thessaly Head Bank of Piraeus, Eirini Verioni, Fisheries General Secretariat, Ministry of Rural Development & Food, Nestoras Kapetanios, Perseus SA, Niki Matzafleri, Fisheries Department of Region of Thessaly.

- e) Private debriefing meeting (EEA Panel members only): Discussion of the outcomes and findings of the PSP1 virtual visit; preparation of oral report.
- f) Closure meeting with the Head of the Department, PSP2 Director and Steering Committee faculty, QAU President and staff, and IEG faculty members: Informal, oral presentation of the EEA Panel PSP2 key findings and clarifications.

Thursday 6/06/2024 to Saturday 8/06/2024:

Draft report writing. EEA Panel virtual meetings. Review and finalization of PSP2 accreditation draft report.

Throughout the review and evaluation process, the EEA Panel was in close communication with the University QAU staff, which were very accommodating in providing additional information requested by the EEA Panel. The EEA Panel found that the Department and the PSP2 administration, as well as the faculty, staff, current students, and recent graduates interviewed were eager and helpful in our discussions, providing valuable additional information.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The postgraduate study programme (PSP) **Sustainable Management of Aquatic Environment (SMAE)** of the University of Thessaly is organized and offered by the Department of Ichthyology and Aquatic Environment, located in Volos. The programme was initially established in 2005 and reestablished in 2018 and restructured in 2023 (Official Gazette 1699/B/20-03-2023).

The objective of the PSP is to provide advanced education and research for the adoption of optimal solutions in the protection and management of the Aquatic Environment and the development of technological methods for monitoring, restorative management and protection of natural systems. The PSP aims at the creation of competent scientists with the required skills for successful careers in the private, public and academic sectors, and the preparation for postgraduate studies at doctoral level.

Teaching in the PSP is provided by 16 faculty and teaching staff of the Department of Ichthyology and Aquatic Environment, as well as 24 external specialized scientists from academic and research Institutions. Specialized technical staff and administrative staff assist the PSP.

The programme has set at seventeen (17) the maximum number of admitted students per academic year. In the academic year 2023-2024, the number of admitted students was 25 and the number of those graduated was 3. Most of the current students and recent graduates the EEA Panel interviewed stated that the PSP Sustainable Management of Aquatic Environment (SMAE) of the University of Thessaly was among their first choice.

The PSP consists of a minimum of two (2) academic semesters study, resulting in level 7 Diploma of Postgraduate Studies. The mean length of study is 21 months. Total number of graduates is 244. There are no study tracks/specializations. To graduate, the student must have successfully completed a total of 60 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits (30 ECTS for coursework and 30 ECTS for the required thesis). There are no elective courses offered. There is no required practical training. There is no requirement for the completion of a postgraduate thesis. Lectures for the first semester and second semester are given in-person on campus and/or remotely and synchronously. The EEAP found that the number of courses offered cover advanced as well as new topics in the PSP with a focus on sustainable management of the aquatic environment.

The PSP prepares graduates for careers in both the private and public sector of the economy, such as environmental services, consulting companies, as well as aquaculture enterprises. There are strong links to the economy, which is key priority of the PSP. The Department supports doctoral studies.

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

The University has developed and implemented its Quality Assurance Policy as part of its broader strategy (<https://qa.uth.gr/quality-assurance-committee/>; https://qa.uth.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/MODIP_Politiki_Diasfalisis_Poiotitas_2022_1097625350.pdf). The

Department of Ichthyology and Aquatic Science, in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the UTH, has harmonized the quality policy of the PSP 'Sustainable Management of Aquatic Environment' with that of the University. According to the documents submitted, an internal evaluation report of the PSP was carried out by 2 members of the QAU of the university (Profs D. Kantas and I. Papadopoulos), which lead to a report with recommendations for the improvement of its educational and research process, through feedback from the students and the QAU of the university.

The Quality Assurance Policy of the PSP is publicly accessible from the Department website (<https://diae.uth.gr>; https://diae.uth.gr/Home/Texts?link=axiologiseis_5) and includes the accreditation of the Bachelor's Program of the Department, its internal annual evaluations, along with the university's quality assurance guide of studies and functions (https://diae.uth.gr/docs/files/uploads/axiologiseis/Odigos_Diasfalis_Poiotitas.pdf).

However, although internal annual evaluations of the PSP in Sustainable Management of Aquatic Environment have been performed, they are not included in the corresponding website of the PSP. Also, there is no English version of the website for the PSP.

The processes and procedures used for the monitoring and continuous improvement of the quality of the PSP are as follows: a) designs, modifies and improves the curriculum with transparent quality procedures and with participation of all involved parties; b) promotes the quality and effectiveness of teaching work; c) ensures the support of the research work of the members of PSP; d) it is informed about the academic and professional career of its graduates and disseminates the information; e) ensures the quality of the secretarial support; f) informs the University authorities about deficiencies in infrastructure and the operation support services; g) ensures the efficient use of its financial resources; and h) it has posted on the website the most up-to-date Quality Assurance Policy.

The quality and effectiveness of teaching at the PSP is monitored through the course/instructor evaluation by the students, that is submitted electronically by the students centrally at the website of the QAU Information System of the university (<https://qa.uth.gr/en/modip-information-system/>). The Information System can also be accessed even outside the university's network through VPN. In the Information System the Course Evaluation and the Teacher's Report Card can be accessed.

II. Analysis

The PSP is a one-year-programme, comprised of two semesters, including 15 ECTS in each semester for conducting and writing a diploma thesis. In each semester there is a total of three (3) compulsory courses offered, each having 5 ECTS. The involvement of the student with the thesis is initiated during the first semester, during which the student must pick a supervisor, a title and write a report including, bibliography and the methodology that will be used. The goals set by the programme are achieved through the courses offered, the compulsory thesis and the continuous interaction between students and academic staff. The courses are well structured and are either in-class or remotely, taking advantage of the synchronous teaching e-class technology. No laboratory exercises are offered. All exams and final presentations are in class. Learning outcomes and qualifications of PSP graduates in Sustainable Management of Aquatic Environment meet the criteria of Level 7 European Qualification Framework.

The targets set by the Quality Assurance Policy of the PSP has three pillars: a) improvement of the structure and organization of the program; b) improvement of students' performance, and c) increase funding opportunities by the development of innovative research activities. In each

pillar there are specific targets and actions that are connected to each target. Altogether, there are thirteen (13) targets. The targets set are on the right track, including a) increase the number of graduating students on time, b) motivate students and staff mobility, c) increase of funds through competitive research programmes, d) increase the number of publications, e) enhance students' excellence, f) include laboratory tutorials. Some of those targets have also been proposed by the QAU of the university. The outline for each course is well structured and informative, but no instructors are included, and an update is necessary in some of the courses. The instructors are either academic staff of the department or, whenever necessary, specialists are invited for guest lectures, after obtaining a positive decision of the Department's Assembly. Suitable key performance indicators (KPIs) are missing. Results from the diploma thesis are presented by the students in conferences; the programme economically supports student participation to these conferences, as the academic staff informed the EEAP. A good number of the graduates from the programme continued their studies and obtained their PhD. Also, from the meeting with social partners and stakeholders, several of them were graduates from the programme.

III. Conclusions

Overall, although the PSP is a one-year program, is very well structured and balanced. The University is monitoring and evaluating annually the PSP through the QAU and communicates back to the PSP their findings and results. All parties are committed for implementing recommendations, leading to a continuous process of improvement.

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

To further enhance adherence to Principle 1, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

R1.1. Include at the website of the PSP the annual Internal Assessment Evaluations.

R1.2. Update and develop the English version of the website.

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 PSP 'Sustainable Management of Aquatic Environment' started accepting graduate students in 2018 in its current form and is one of six postgraduate programs within the Department of Ichthyology and Aquatic Environment (four of them are interdepartmental). The main objective of the programme is to provide knowledge and training to modern concepts in management of the aquatic environment and develop eco-management aquatic techniques and methodologies. All courses taught (three in each semester) are compulsory dealing with biodiversity, aquatic ecosystems, applied genomics, pollution, reproductive biology, and sustainable production. Thus, students are exposed in several topics, all related to the scope of the programme, and its graduates gain specialized knowledge and experience relevant to its subject matter.

Its graduates are employed at a rate of 53% in related subjects, and another 10% are pursuing a PhD degree. The stakeholders provided valuable comments and had a high opinion about the programme, some of which were graduates from the programme. The student workload is according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System for Level 7. Since this programme is a one-year-programme, with courses both semesters and a diploma thesis, it is rather intensive, and no time is left for providing work experience. However, the EEAP suggested to add 15 ECTS for summer semester credits to use them either as time to complete the thesis, or for practical training. Most of the theses are research oriented under the supervisions of the teaching staff, linking teaching and research. Along with the departmental staff, invited speakers, provide to the students an excellent exposure in up-to-date knowledge to the latest developments in the area of expertise of the instructor. Although the programme was initially designed to accept seventeen (17) students per year, there is an increasing trend in enrolments (in the current cycle the programme has twenty-seven (27) students), indicative of the popularity of the programme.

II. Analysis

The programme provides training in modern techniques for the sustainable management of aquatic environment. The courses in the programme provide overall aspects on aquatic sustainability and environment. Almost 80% of the currently enrolled students are already working and are seeking up-to-date research information and training in the latest approaches in the field. Thus, a one-year IPSP is a reasonable time to dedicate for the gain of such knowledge. All of the stakeholders were in favour of the programme, expressing positive comments.

The curriculum could be further improved from the following suggestions:

- Motivate students with mobility opportunities,
- Additional 15 ECTS for summer semester to complete thesis or practical training,
- There is no course on statistics, other than seminars provided on non-scheduled way,
- Non-employed students could benefit from practical training.

Overall, the current structure of the PSP is reasonable, and it fulfils the goals set. There are ties with stakeholders, some of which are graduates from the programme. A formal association of alumni would benefit the contact among them and the department.

The Study Guide could be improved and provide up-to-date information (there is no page with the contents, and the text does not follow updates -i.e. it is mentioned that there are four labs in the department, although five of them are described). Also, the website of the programme can be improved by adding more details about the program, the courses, providing guidelines for the thesis, helpful hints, and comments regarding access to bibliography, presenting research activities in the department etc.

III. Conclusions

Overall, the EEA Panel considers that the purpose of the programme, as was updated and described recently in the Official Gazette 1699/20-03-2023, stating that “the main purpose of the programme is for its graduates to acquire a strong scientific knowledge background, experience and know-how for applying optimal solutions and applications of new technologies in protection and management systems of aquatic environments”, is fulfilled.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To further enhance adherence to Principle 2, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

R2.1. Add a summer semester with 15 ECTS in order to either students gain practical training or complete their thesis.

R2.2. A course in biostatistics is considered essential.

R2.3. Include laboratory exercises and/or training.

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

At the end of each module, or at the end of the semester, postgraduate students are invited through an electronic application developed by the QAU of the University to evaluate the courses/teaching units they have been taught. More specifically, postgraduate students

receive in their institutional account a special automated message, relevant instructions along with one-time links and unique codes for each course/teaching unit of the semester they attend, with which they are invited to fill in a relevant questionnaire anonymously and remotely.

The detailed results (per question and group of questions) and the results extracted from the application are sent by the Quality Assurance Unit to the director of the PSP as well as to the person in charge of the course/teaching unit. Each teacher, receiving the detailed results of the courses/teaching units evaluated, can draw conclusions regarding the improvement of his/her teaching and the courses. The course director also has the obligation to inform its co-teachers about the results by highlighting the positive points (highlighting good teaching practices) and to take initiatives to mitigate the negative. The evaluation report according to the current legislation is taken into account by the members of the electoral bodies who evaluate the work of the teaching faculty members both in their selection and development processes.

In order to manage and deal with any form of student complaints, which may be the result of the educational process or the administrative operation of the Postgraduate Program, students can meet with the staff of the PSP and express their complaints asking for a solution to any problem they face. The statutory committees operating in the department undertake to address students' problems and propose solutions to issues related to educational issues. The Director of the PSP receives students who express any complaints in the office and in cooperation with the respective ethics committees of the Department works to resolve them. Regarding students who fail multiple times the final examination of a specific course, a special examination committee can be formed in accordance with the current legislation, and in even larger and/or recurring problems, the student can be assisted by the Head of the Department and/or by the student's advocate at University Foundation level.

The PSP operates a Committee of Academic Advisors which aims at the continuous and effective assistance of students in matters of study. The main objectives are a) To assist in the completion of studies through meetings with assistance and / or guidance but also to try to solve problems related to them b) To assist postgraduate students in choosing a Master's degree c) To assist in issues of students' choices after the completion of their postgraduate studies. The Academic Advisors process and propose to the Coordinating Committee of the PSP, proposals that arise through the actions of the committee and the issues or concerns raised by students on study issues, while they are in collaboration with the Internal Evaluation Team for the same purpose.

A significant number of teachers use modern teaching tools (experiential exercises, entrepreneurship - debate and computer software). The courses are conducted with a combination of lectures, workshops, laboratory exercises, outdoor laboratory exercises, tutorials and assignments, and the aim of all teachers is to develop constructive discussions. Teachers are free to apply at will any way of examining their courses and modify it whenever they deem necessary. According to the teachers' answers in the context of the self-evaluation, it emerged that the examination of courses is mainly done through written examinations, but other methods are also largely used (oral examination at the end of the semester, discharge work, assignment with participation in the final grade, progress, presentation of work, and/or

examination in the laboratory). All the above methods ensure transparency in the evaluation of student performance.

II. Analysis

There is no option for part-time studies at the PSP. Admissions do not prioritize vulnerable groups or low-income individuals, nor are they entitled to free textbooks. There is also no provision for internships; any practical training occurs during the preparation of the diploma thesis, if the thesis includes such a task.

Evaluations, conducted through comprehensive questionnaires, enable the identification of good and bad practices, the recognition or criticism of behaviours, and the assessment of infrastructure, course materials, effectiveness, and other educational factors. However, the optional nature of these evaluations often leads to low participation, resulting in some courses being inadequately assessed or not assessed at all. The Study Program Committee reviews the evaluations of all courses and teachers to identify ways to improve the quality of teaching, methods, and resources. There are no elective courses.

For handling student complaints and objections, the process begins with hearing the student's concerns, followed by mediation and administrative review. If the issue remains unresolved, an objection can be submitted using the "complaint and/or objection submission form."

III. Conclusions

The EEA Panel considers that in general the PSP functions adequately concerning teaching, and assessment. On the other hand, the Panel believes that learning is not entirely student-centred but can be improved by adopting the suggestions presented below so that its implementation becomes even more effective.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To further enhance adherence to Principle 3, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

R3.1. Embrace alternative pedagogical approaches from all the academic staff like flipped classrooms, inquiry-based learning, and project-based learning to actively engage students in the learning process.

R3.2. Introduce elective courses.

R3.3. Introduce practice in the field and/or experiential learning.

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 PSP "Sustainable Management of Aquatic Environment" is open to graduates of Departments of Schools of Agriculture, Engineering, Environmental, Natural and Economic Sciences and other Departments of Universities in Greece and equivalent recognized institutions abroad, as well as graduates of Departments of Higher Education of a related subject. The evaluation of candidates is carried out by a Postgraduate Student Selection Committee, according to the criteria set by the Internal Regulation of the PSP. The Director of the PSP announces and registers on the website of the PSP a call for expression of interest. This includes the application requirements, the supporting documents to be submitted and the deadline for their submission, which should allow students graduating after both the June and September exams to apply.

In order to receive the Postgraduate Diploma of the Postgraduate Program, no practical training is required.

For the better education of students in the PSP, a sufficient number of lectures or individual meetings are included in the context of the preparation of the dissertation, referring to research methodology and ethics as well as data analysis tutorials. In the daily contacts with postgraduate students, extensive information is provided on ethical issues and the code of ethics of the PSP is distributed to students, which is fully harmonized with that of the University.

In addition, students of the PSP participate in research programs of faculty members. The PSP has been designed and organized according to modern international perceptions of the way of studies related to the subjects of aquatic production and management of the aquatic environment. It is inextricably linked to the development and economy of our country as well as good business. Also, with the elaboration of the Master's Thesis in collaborating bodies within the country with synergies with other Universities or Institutes, as well as the Erasmus+ placement, the essential connection of education with production - working environment is achieved.

The successful completion of studies at the Postgraduate Programme requires the preparation of a compulsory thesis. The Thesis is listed in the Diploma Supplement issued in Greek and English. In order to obtain the degree of the Postgraduate Programme it is mandatory to prepare a Thesis, which is experimental (field or bench) or bibliographic meta-analytical character. The number of credits (ECTS) of the Thesis is 30.

Upon successful completion of the Programme, the PSP awards the title of Postgraduate Studies Diploma. The graduation ceremony for postgraduate students is performed by the Dean of the School of Agricultural Sciences. In addition to the Postgraduate Diploma, a Diploma Supplement is given in Greek and English.

II. Analysis

The diploma thesis is an original study in a specific scientific area of a cognitive subject. The aim of the postgraduate thesis is on one hand to introduce and / or help consolidate the experience already gained by the student in research, and on the other hand to enable the PSP to develop research by activating its own human resources.

The program coordinator and the organizing committee of the PSP should consider possible changes in the allocation of workload and ECTS credits between the thesis and the courses taught in the two semesters.

III. Conclusions

The EEA Panel considers that in general the PSP functions adequately concerning student admission, progression, recognition of postgraduate studies and certification. On the other hand, the Panel believes that student mobility and participation in European programs can offer an added value to the existing PSP, if it is advertised to the students in an attractive way.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To further enhance adherence to Principle 4, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

R4.1. Enhance student mobility and participation in European programs.

R4.2. The PSP should consider possible changes in the allocation of workload and ECTS credits between the thesis and the courses taught in the two semesters.

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 PSP Sustainable Management of Aquatic Environments is organized by the Department of Ichthyology and Aquatic Environment of the School of Agricultural Sciences of the University of Thessaly and has been running since the academic year 2004-2005 being one of the first postgraduate Programme of the University. Following the legislation reforms in the Higher Education the Programme was reestablished in 2018 operating since then as a one-year Programme.

The Programme is supported by permanent and external teaching staff. The selection and the hiring procedure of staff is according to the State legislation and the Programme coordinators propose to the PSP coordinating committee, the staff to be hired. Efforts are made to attract and hire lecturers, professors and researchers who own a PhD degree with proven high-quality standards in teaching and research. The teaching staff of all categories are not reimbursed for their teaching as has been the case since the foundation of the Programme in 2004.

At the end of each academic year the coordinating committee of the Programme convenes and discusses the results of student's questionnaires, their progress and decides for any revisions of the curriculum and proposes the hiring of new staff if necessary.

The mobility of staff although encouraged by the Programme is not considered satisfactory partly due to the workload and the limited duration of the PSP. However, incoming mobility by inviting lecturers from cooperating universities and institutions abroad have taken place occasionally.

In the present academic year, a total of 37 members of staff and external lecturers are teaching.

The official workload is 8 hrs. per week however the real workload for some staff ranges from 12 to 15 hrs. per week not including the workload relating to thesis supervision. These undertaken by students involve research work in the laboratories of Marine biology, Hydrobiology, and Ichthyology.

II. Analysis

The PSP coordinating committee selects and appoints the teaching staff in accordance with the rules of the Department. Every effort is made in order to attract well qualified people for teaching specialized courses required by the curriculum. This is not always an easy task as finding and hiring staff in certain fields of specialization are not available as many scientists are working abroad.

The staff which is hired annually for the Programme are all well qualified and are suitable for providing the graduate students with the required knowledge in the field of Aquatic Environments and their sustainable management. The majority of staff are involved in research projects carried out in the laboratories of the Department and other experimental areas in the field.

All staff members are readily available for advice and communicate willingly with students throughout the two semesters of studies acting not only as thesis supervisors but also as advisors for any matters that may arise. Students need advice and help. The lectures during the first semester are held online remotely two days every week.

III. Conclusions

The PSP Sustainable Management of Aquatic Environments is supported by staff who meet the requirements in the fields of specialization that the Programme requires. All staff is well qualified and meets the requirements of the Programme.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEA Panel has no recommendations for Principle 5.

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 PSP Sustainable Management of Aquatic Environment uses the premises of the Department of Ichthyology and Aquatic Environment of the School of Agricultural Sciences and has access to a classroom with a capacity of 60 persons, fully equipped with audiovisual media. However, this classroom is rarely used nowadays as after the covid period and the flooding of last fall, most lectures are online remotely.

For the laboratory work, required for carrying out of students' theses, the two laboratories of the Department, Hydrology-Ichthyology and Marine Biology are utilized by the students. The students of the PSP during their enrolment to the Programme and until they graduate and receive their diploma, they are provided with a student card (pass) and are also eligible to receive medical care if needed. They also have access to the same services provided by the Department to undergraduates, namely, the Erasmus program, the counselling and the career advisory services. Students also use the platform of e-Class and the MS-Teams for

their education and communication with the teaching staff. The administration of the PSP is supported by a secretariat of 2 persons who is always available to support and serve the students' needs. At the start of the academic year, the PSP organizes a welcome session for the newly enrolled students and provides them with the information regarding the Programme, the premises, their obligations, and rights as well.

The students' tuition fees (excluding the obligatory deduction of 30% by ELKE) are the main source of financing and supporting the Programme. The staff do not receive any reimbursement for their teaching services, a policy of the Programme from its establishment, therefore the fees are utilized for the operational costs, the consumables for laboratory use and in general the programs tuitions fees contribute substantially to the needs of the Department as well.

II. Analysis

During the interviews the EEAP held with students and graduates we had the opportunity to discuss and analyse their opinions and views regarding the Programme, their experiences, and suggestions for improvements.

All students expressed their overall satisfaction with the Programme and the services provided to them. The scheme of remotely held lectures seems to suit the needs of the students as 80% of them reported that they are currently working, therefore the twice a week delivery of lectures is quite in accordance with their needs.

However, even though students expressed their satisfaction with the present scheme, they would favour at least one or two days of a field trip either for collection of relevant data or for visiting a company or related enterprises to get a hands-on experience.

III. Conclusions

The PSP Sustainable Management of Aquatic Environments runs a well-balanced Programme that provides its graduates with up-to-date information on the issues of sustainability of aquatic environments. Students have expressed their satisfaction with the way lectures are held, the flexibility of the Programme and the infrastructure of the PSP in general. They were quite happy with the quality and the scientific background of the teaching staff and the good contact and relationship that develops during their studies.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To further enhance adherence to Principle 6, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

R6.1. The PSP coordinators should consider introducing a couple of field trips and visits to areas of aquatic environments in nature and/or fish farming operations so students can get a real life in situ experience along with their online education.

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 e-Class, MS-Teams, information system of quality assurance body, students' surveys), a comprehensive information system of data collection and recording has been developed regarding the overall operation of the institution and the PSP. 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 PSP utilizes several information management platforms for the collection and processing of data concerning students and their progress through the PSP. Current students and recent graduates generally expressed satisfaction for their ability to access information relevant to their studies.

II. Analysis

The PSP utilizes the information collection and processing platforms that support the Department and are related to the evaluation of educational work by students, and

students participating in the PSP (e.g., number of applicants, number of active students, grades, number of graduates). Student satisfaction surveys are conducted each semester. Faculty reported that they evaluate the results and take them into account for self-evaluation and self-improvement, meanwhile it is difficult to recognize who should improve because in each course participate a high number of teaching staff. Key Performance Indicators regarding student population profile, student progress and satisfaction are presented for several years, and the information is analysed annually.

III. Conclusions

The PSP evaluate the data collected and present the results in quantifiable measures in terms of the programme, and key performance indicators. The data assist in the preparation of internal evaluation reports and related improvement proposals.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To further enhance adherence to Principle 7, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

R7.1. The student satisfaction surveys should be made for each one of the teaching staff of each course.

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 PSP communicates with its students and the public through its official website (<http://www.smae.diae.uth.gr/>) and the official social media of the University as well as email. The information disseminated concerns both the structure of its curriculum, as well as the various activities and events organized in it (conferences, workshops and hands-on workshops) but also the vacancies advertised (faculty members, contract employees, research staff, PhD students, postgraduate scholars and teaching assistants). Also, on the website of the PSP there is a link / form for communication with its graduates and the public. The students of the PSP are informed directly by the relevant announcements posted on the website but also by the websites of the courses on the special e-class platform of the University of Thessaly, by the video conferencing / e-learning platforms MS Teams, which are used by most teachers, but also by the Secretariat of the PSP.

II. Analysis

The official website is not up to date in terms of News and Announcements. Also, there is no corresponding page in English.

Reference is made to the official social media of the University, which, however, do not concern the specific postgraduate Programme.

The official website of the Master is generally functional and user friendly.

There are no other social media such as Facebook or Instagram in order to have more direct contact with both older and younger audiences.

III. Conclusions

The websites of the University, the Department and the PSP provide information about both teaching and departmental activities in Greek, although the lack of the English language concerning the PSP site is obvious.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To further enhance adherence to Principle 8, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

R8.1. The PSP website, as the only electronic means of communication, should be frequently updated. It should also be made in English.

R8.2. Consider making a Facebook page in Greek and English.

R8.3. Consider creating an Instagram page as this medium has a wide appeal to young audiences.

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. Finding

The self-assessment of the PSP 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 the student's workload, the 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 PSP director collects information from the delivery of the programme. 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 PSP assembly. The annual report is submitted to QAU for review, and recommendations are shared with the Department 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 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. The PSP is reviewed and revised frequently but without the direct involvement of external stakeholders.

III. Conclusions

The self-assessment procedure of the programme is well established.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEA Panel has no recommendations for Principle 9.

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 has not undergone an external evaluation before. Following the instructions of HAHE to this Principle, the EEAP utilised the IQAS Accreditation Report (2019) of the University of Thessaly. Also, the EEAP used information from the external evaluation of the University of Thessaly in 2015.

II. Analysis

The PSP has responded to some issues from the previous external evaluations, and the Programme has taken into consideration those relevant recommendations and is willing to proceed with their implementation. The recommendation of development of procedures for the sustainable and continuous engagement of alumni and stakeholders in continuous improvement has not yet been implemented. The English version of the PSP website should be improved to incorporate most of the features and information included in the Greek version.

III. Conclusions

The recommendation from the previous external evaluations of the University 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	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

To further enhance adherence to Principle 10, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

R10.1. The PSP should act upon the recommendations of the previous Institutional external evaluations.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- The PSP has the necessary procedures for monitoring quality assurance.
- The faculty and staff are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and dedicated to their mission.
- Employment potential of the new PSP graduates is high.
- The programme is addressing an area of need in the Greek society, both at local and national level.
- Good interactions with stakeholders and alumni after graduation.

II. Areas of Weakness

- Limited mobility of students, faculty, and other teaching staff.
- Transparency in the teaching staff recruitment
- Balanced allocation of ECTS in the two semesters regarding the Thesis workload.
- Lack of practical training
- Website lacking English version.
- Lack of elective courses.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Embrace alternative pedagogical approaches from all the academic staff like flipped classrooms, inquiry-based learning, and project-based learning to actively engage students in the learning process.
- Adding a course in biostatistics is considered essential.
- Introduce elective courses.
- Include laboratory exercises and/or training.
- Introduce practice in the field and/or experiential learning.
- Add a summer semester with 15 ECTS in order to either students gain practical training, or complete thesis.
- The PSP should consider possible changes in the allocation of workload and ECTS credits between the thesis and the courses taught in the two semesters.

- Consider introducing a couple of field trips and visits to areas of aquatic environments in nature and/or fish farming operations so students can get a real life in situ experience along with their online education.
- Enhance student mobility and participation in European Programmes.
- The PSP website should be frequently updated. It should also be made in English.
- Include at the website of the PSP the annual Internal Assessment Evaluations.
- Consider making a Facebook page in Greek and English.
- Consider creating an Instagram page as this medium has a wide appeal to young audiences.
- The PSP should act upon the recommendations of the previous external evaluations.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **3, 8, 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	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

- 1. Prof. Thomas Panagopoulos (Chair)**
University of Algarve, Faro, Portugal
- 2. Prof. Andreas Katsiotis**
Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol, Cyprus
- 3. Prof. Emeritus Ioannis Vlahos**
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- 4. Mr. Georgios Giotopoulos**
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