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Accreditation Report
for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Religious and Pilgrimage Tourism

Department: Social Theology and Christian Culture

Institution: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Date: June 2026

Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης
ΕΣΠΑ 2021-2027
Πρόγραμμα
Ανθρώπινο Δυναμικό και Κοινωνική Συνοχή
enqa.

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Postgraduate Study Programme of **Religious and Pilgrimage Tourism** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** 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 Religious and Pilgrimage Tourism of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Law 4653/2020:

1. PSARROS NIKOLAOS (Chair)
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   Universität Leipzig
   (Institution of origin)

2. LAZARIS STAVROS
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   UMR Orient & Méditerranée (Paris)
   (Institution of origin)

3. Marsico Claudia
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   Section of Ancient Philosophy at the National Academy of Sciences of Buenos Aires
   (Institution of origin)

4. VRANAS PETER
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   Department of Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Madison
   (Institution of origin)

5. ΒΑΓΙΑΤΗΣ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΣ
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   University of the Aegean
   (Institution of origin)

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

Brief reference to the Panel preparation for the postgraduate study programme review, as well as to the documentation provided and considered by the Panel. Dates of the review, review, meetings held, and any additional information regarding the procedure, as appropriate.

The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) was constituted in May 2026 and the accreditation support material concerning the reformed Postgraduate Study Program "Religious and Pilgrimage Tourism" (PSP2) of the Department of Social Theology and Christian Culture of the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) in cooperation with the Department for Organizational Management, Marketing and Tourism of the International Hellenic University of Thessaloniki (IHU), was available via the HAHE Accreditation Management System before the accreditation visit. The review was organized by HAHE and the Department Social Theology and Christian Culture of the AUTH. The quality of the support material was excellent. Indicatively, the providing documentation included: Course Syllabi, Study Guide, the Guidelines for Academic Advisors, the Senate decision for the Quality Policy and Institutional Strategy, the Student Guide, the Internal Evaluation Report of MODIP, Teaching Staff Information, the Accreditation Proposal, etc.

During the visit, all the participants involved (MODIP, Teaching Faculty, Administrative Staff, and social partners) were very prompt to provide us with all the information we asked for. The meetings with the Department of Social Theology and the social partners, which took place on Tuesday, June 6, 2026, were conducted online utilizing Zoom video conference facilities. All meetings took place in a very friendly and cooperative spirit.

The timetable and agenda of the accreditation review were as follows:

On Tuesday, June 2nd, 2026, the EEAP members had a short meeting to organize the accreditation review and allocate the different tasks. After this preliminary discussion, later the same day, the EEAP had the preliminary welcome meeting with the following University members:

- Prof. Apostolos Kralidis, Head of the School of Social Theology and Christian Culture
- Prof. Konstantinos Christou, director of PSP1 (Greece: Ecclesiastical History and Culture)
- Prof. Soultana Lamprou, director of PSP2 (Religious and Pilgrimage Tourism)
- Assoc. Prof. Panagiotis Tzoumerkas, Member of the Academic Steering Committee of PSP1

- Prof. Athanasios G. Paparnakis, Member of the Academic Steering Committee of PSP1
- Prof. Ekaterini Tsalampouni, OMEA Coordinator
- Prof. Nikolaos Maghioros, Vice Rector of Academic Affairs and Development /MODIP Committee Chair
- Mr. Vasileios Fyntikoglou, Professor, MODIP Committee Member 9. Mrs. Alexandra Tzaneraki

Immediately afterwards, the EEAP had the opportunity to meet with the following Faculty members of the PSP regarding the classrooms, lecture halls, libraries, laboratories, and other facilities related to the PSP. We also had the chance to watch a video (duration of approx. 10 min.) n regarding the facilities and student resources. The faculty members present in this session were the following:

For PSP1
- Assoc. Prof. Demosthenis Kaklamanos, teaching staff.
- Ms. Zoe Kopaila, Head of the Secretariat, Administrative staff
- Mr. Spyridon Kalogerakis, administrative staff AUTH
- Ms. Garyfallia Pappa, administrative staff NKUA

For PSP2
- Dr. Eleni Chryssafi, teaching staff
- Mr. Miltiadis Matsoukas, administrative staff
- Mr. Vassilios Natsios, administrative staff

On Thursday, June 4th, 2026, the EEAP continued its meetings, first with following teaching staff of PSP2 “Religious and Pilgrimage Tourism:
- Prof. Spyros Avdimiotis, Knowledge Management Systems in Hospitality and Tourism, Faculty of Economics and Administration Department for Organizational Management, Marketing and Tourism, IHU
- Dr. Eleni Antonopoulou, Laboratory Teaching Staff, School of Social Theology and Christian Culture, AUTH
- Prof. Evangelos Christou, Tourism Marketing and Dean of the School of Economics & Business, Member of the Governing Board of IHU

- Prof. Fotis Kilipiris, Department of Organizations Management, Marketing & Tourism, IHU
- Prof. Konstantinos Kotsiopoulos, Sociology of Christianity, School of Social Theology and Christian Culture, AUTH
- Prof. Kyriakoula Papademetriou, New Testament, School of Social Theology and Christian Culture, AUTH
- Dr. Paraskevi Papademetriou, Laboratory Teaching Staff, School of Social Theology and Christian Culture, AUTH
- Assist. Prof. Vasileios Tzerpos, New Testament, School of Theology, AUTH

The EEAP discussed various topics of interest with the above mentioned faculty, e.g. the program's structure and profile, professional development opportunities, mobility, competence and adequacy of the teaching staff to ensure learning outcomes, workload, evaluation by students; link between teaching and research; teaching staff involvement in applied research, projects and research activities directly related to the program; strengths and possible areas of weakness.

The members of the teaching staff highlighted the potential of the PSP regarding the international challenges in the development of international tourism as well as the balanced approach between theoretical foundations of religious studies and the practical approach in the organization of touristic programs.

They also addressed some challenges the PSP is facing regarding bureaucratic impediments and the relationship between tourism and theology.

The next meeting was with active students of the PSP2, namely:

- Mr. Konstantinos Bardakas, Private Employee, Postgraduate Student, Second Semester
- Ms. Foteini Dimou, Private Employee, Postgraduate Student, Second Semester
- Ms. Ioanna Ferentinou, English Teacher, Postgraduate Student, Second Semester
- Ms. Eleni Ilia, Adult Educator in Tourism & Hospitality, Postgraduate Student, Second Semester
- Mr. Epameinondas Mandronis, Religion Editor, Postgraduate Student, Second Semester
- Mr. Christos Papanastasiou, Secretary of Holy Metropolis of Alexandroupolis, Postgraduate Student, D' Semester
- Rev. Konstantinos Paziokis, Priest, Postgraduate Student, D΄ Semester
- Rev. Ilias Seperis, Priest, Secretary of the Metropolitan Council of the Holy Metropolis of Ioannina, Postgraduate Student, D' Semester

- Mr. Anastasios Sotiropoulos (Ioakeim), Priest, Postgraduate Student, Second Semester
- Ms. Eleni Tzaneti, Postgraduate Student, Second Semester

All students expressed their satisfaction with the structure and the content of the program and praised the engagement and the help of the teaching staff, especially the fact that each student is assigned a study counsellor. The students were also content with the fact that the teaching in this PSP takes place exclusively via teleconference sessions.

On the negative side, the students addressed the institution of group essays and group presentations as a problem, and suggested a limitation in the size of such cooperation groups.

After the meeting with active students the EEAP had the opportunity to meet some graduates of the PSP, namely:

- Rev. Konstantinos Delichristos, Archimandrite - Priest of the Holy Church of St Athanasios Terpsitheas, Diocese of Larisa and Tirnavos
- Mr. Thomas Kaffes, Private Employee
- Ms. Vasiliki Kolokathi, Religious Education (RE) Teacher, Secondary Education Department of Messinia, Pylos Senior High School
- Ms. Stella Loti, Organization - Support Unit. Region of Central Macedonia Managing Authority
- Mr. Lykourgos Markoudis, Journalist, Program Director of the Piraiki Ekklisia Radio Station
- Ms. Kalliopi Metziki, Educational / Deputy Mayor of Nea Propontida Chalkidiki
- Ms. Sofia Pavlidou, University Registrar, University of West Macedonia
- Ms. Evgenia Pouliaki, Philologist, Assistant Principal 3rd Junior High School of Katerini. Directorate of Secondary Education of Pieria, Hellenic Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports.
- Ms. Vasiliki Toziou, Theologian, Directorate of Secondary Education of Halkidiki - Junior High School and High School of Pefkohori, Hellenic Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports

The alumni made also in general a positive evaluation of the PSP. However, te pointed out that the organization of more on-line workshops would be beneficial for the PSP

The last meeting of the EEAP was with social partners and potential employers of the PSP which included:

- His Eminence Dr. Theologos Alexandrakis, Bishop of the Church of Greece, PhD, Director of the Pastoral Training Institute (IPE) of the Holy Archdiocese of Athens
- His Eminence Ioustinos Bardakas, Metropolitan of Nea Krini and Kalamaria of the Church of Greece
- Mr. Basileios Giannakis, Mayor of the Municipality of Florina, West Macedonia, Greece
- Mr. Dimitrios Lazaridis, Official representative for Greece and Cyprus/ Jordan Tourism Board
- Ms. Despina Manta, Honorary Consul of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in North Greece
- Mr. Dimitrios Tziafas, Archimandrite of the Holy Metropolis of Thessaloniki, Director of the Office for the promotion and presentation of the Holy Pilgrimage Sites of the Holy Metropolis of Thessaloniki
- Dr. Antigoni Tzitzibassi, Head of the Department of Sculpture, Woodcarving, Ceramics, Minor Objects, Coins, Canvas and Textiles, Museum of Byzantine Culture/ Museum of Byzantine Culture of Thessaloniki
- Ms. Angeliki Varela, President of the Greek National Tourism Organization

The meeting with the employers and social partners was of a very constructive nature and all involved parties highlighted the importance and utility of the PSP. However, some of the stakeholders, especially the those representing the private sector and the National Tourism Organization expressed their concerns regarding the neglect of providing the students with practical knowledge on the management of touristic facilities and the organization touristic packages. The representative of the Greek National Tourism Organization stressed the point of the possibility of PSP graduates to obtain a license a tourist guides via specialized courses.

After the end of this meeting, the EEAP had their private debrief meeting, where the outcomes of the virtual visit were discussed and the oral report was prepared. Finally, in the closure meeting the EEAP gave a short preliminary report of their key findings.

In the closing meeting the following members of the University were present:

- Prof. Soultana Lamprou, Director of the PSP2
- Prof. Apostolos Kralidis, Head of the School

- MODIP members
- Prof. Athanasios G. Paparnakis, member of the steering committee
- Prof. Ekaterini Tsalampouni, OMEA co-ordinator

The EEAP wishes to thank the Department of Social Theology and Christian Culture of the AUTH for arranging and hosting these meetings and for the exceptional spirit of openness and collaboration with which it responded to the queries of the EEAP over the course of the virtual accreditation visit.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

Brief overview of the postgraduate study programme with reference to the following: history, academic remit, duration of studies, qualification awarded, employment opportunities, orientation challenges or any other key background information. Short description of the home Department and Institution, with reference to student population, campus or any other related facts.

The PSP "Religious and Pilgrimage Tourism" is offered by the Department of Social Theology at the Faculty of Theology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in cooperation with the Department for Organizational Management, Marketing and Tourism of the International Hellenic University of Thessaloniki. It is designed to provide graduates with advanced academic training through a competitive selection process, culminating in a MA Degree.

The PSP was established in 2021 and was amended in 2025 according to the provisions of law 4957/2022. Its aims are:

- Cultivation & promotion of scientific knowledge and research in the theoretical background of religious and pilgrimage tourism.
- Provision and development of skills for employment or professional engagement in the field of religious and pilgrimage tourism

The teaching takes exclusively in distance.

The main goal is to provide a high-quality Curriculum to train scientific and research personnel to meet the needs of scientists specialized in the field of religious tourism. Its main target groups are:

- educators (theologians, philologists, archaeologists, etc.),
- tourism professionals,
- ecclesiastical executives,
- executives in public, state and social institutions,

The Faculty members are dedicated to maintaining academic excellence, promoting innovative research, and contributing to the advancement of their disciplines.
The duration of studies is three (3) academic semesters, which correspond to a total of 90 ECTS credits.
The number of admitted students per year is 80. The tuition fee amounts to € 2000 payable in three installments.

The PSP accepts applicants based solely on academic criteria. Eligible candidates include:

- Holders of first-cycle degrees from the Departments of Theology and Departments of Humanities of domestic institutions.
- Holders of first-cycle degrees from other domestic universities/technical institutes.
- Graduates of the Higher Ecclesiastical Academies and Production Schools.
- Holders of first-cycle degrees from similar foreign institutions.

The admission process for applicants to the PSP “Religious and Pilgrimage Tourism” takes place at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The admission criteria are:
a. Overall degree grade: 45%.
b. Previous relevant research or writing activity or participation in student mobility educational programs: 10%.
c. Knowledge of a second foreign language, certified according to this Regulation: 10%.
d. Possession of a second degree or other postgraduate or doctoral degree: 5%.
e. Possible professional experience: 10%.
f. Oral interview: 20%.

The curriculum of the PSP “Religious and Pilgrimage Tourism” spans three academic semesters and awards a total of 90 ECTS credits. It includes a structured combination of coursework, research training, and thesis writing. The teaching language is Greek, and the attendance is mandatory and in person. The total number of credit points (90 ECTS) for obtaining the Postgraduate Diploma is distributed equally among the 8 courses (7.5 ECTS per course) and the Postgraduate Thesis (30 ECTS).

In each of the first two semesters, four compulsory postgraduate courses and one elective course (chosen from three (3) elective courses) are offered. The PSP organizes also a yearly research workshop and various excursions.

The PSP has no provisions for external internships. Additionally, the program is open to international students through the ERASMUS exchange program.

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 External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel reviewed the strategic framework supporting the establishment and implementation of the Postgraduate Study Program "Religious and Pilgrimage Tourism" of the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki in cooperation with the Department for Organizational Management, Marketing and Tourism of the International Hellenic University of Thessaloniki. The PSP commenced operation in its current form in the academic year 2024-1015. The program carries a total of 90 ECTS, delivered over three academic semesters.
The PSP is embedded in the Department of Theology of the AUTH. Its purpose is to provide high-level postgraduate specialized studies in the theoretical background of religious and pilgrimage tourism and in the provision of skills for employment or professional engagement in the field of religious and pilgrimage tourism.

The teaching is fully integrated into the University's institutional e-learning framework, ensuring pedagogical soundness, accessibility and GDPR compliance.

The tuition fees amount to €2000, payable in three installments.

The admission process is clearly defined, publicly available, and transparent, ensuring fairness and consistency in student selection. The PSP also benefits from collaborations with social partners and public and private organizations, e.g. education authorities, ecclesiastical authorities, the Greek National Tourism Organization as well as foreign Tourism Agencies.

The PSP has adopted a quality assurance policy aligned with the AUTH's internal quality assessment system.
The Quality Policy of the PSP is approved by the Theological Faculty, is binding and is formulated in the form of a statement, which is published on the website of the PSP and is constantly updated with the active participation of all members of the Faculty (teaching staff, students, administrative staff). Its implementation, monitoring and revision are carried out in accordance with the procedures of the Internal Quality Assurance System of the Institution.

During the academic year 2022-23, the courses were evaluated by the students. The evaluation process is carried out electronically through the MODIP system. The students were informed about the start of the evaluation process by the Department Secretariat and the teaching staff of the PSP. Of the 51 registered students of the academic year, 19 students participated in the evaluation process. The participation rate in the evaluation for the entire academic year is 37,3%. This rate is not considered satisfactory and has caused concern to both the program's quality assurance team and the PSP coordinating committee. The Curriculum Committee, in collaboration with the teaching staff, aware of the low, but consistent, participation of students in the process, decided that in future the evaluation will take place during each course. The instructors will encourage and

provide sufficient time so that all students can evaluate the course and the instructors.

Regarding the overall quality index of the Program (88.4%), it is considered satisfactory for the first year (2021-2022) of operation. It is also observed that the increased in the next academic year by 1.5 percentage points to 89.9%. The evaluation of the teaching staff is higher (92%) overall compared to that of the courses (86.3%) for the academic year 2022-2023. The same difference is observed in the first year of operation of the Program (2021-2022), where the evaluation of the teaching staff is higher (89.4%) overall compared to that of the courses (87%). For this reason, the Curriculum Committee tries to upgrade the quality of the courses through the revision of the curriculum and course content and the enrichment of the educational material by the teachers.

STRENGTHS

- Emphasis on the implementation of student-centered learning and teaching.
- Adequate guidance and support to students through the institution of the Academic Counsellor.
- Implementation of a formal procedure for the management of any student complaints.
- All necessary regulations exist and are published, which regard all issues from the beginning to the end of studies.
- The PSP website provides useful and necessary information about its activity to future and current students, graduates and other interested parties.
- The Teaching Staff has the appropriate qualifications, which are constantly cultivated through appropriate actions and policies.
- Appropriate student-teacher ratio,
- Operation of the necessary information systems to manage and monitor student data, teaching staff, course structure and organization, teaching and the provision of services to students.
- Good career chances for the graduates

WEAKNESSES

- Incomplete English web page.
- Insufficient provision of practical skills regarding the organization and running of touristic enterprises and projects.

The PSP has provided the EEAP with concrete quality targets or definitions of specific measurable goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) for the first year of operation of the renewed PSP.

Based on these findings, the PSP has proposed measures to overcome the weaknesses including the increase of the flexibility of the PSP and the encouragement of the students to participate in the evaluation process.

II. Analysis

The EEAP considers that the Program is strategically grounded and coherently integrated into the AUTH's planning for postgraduate education. The structure of the curriculum supports the achievement of learning outcomes at Level 7 of the European and National Qualifications Frameworks and enhance the PSP's academic quality and flexibility.

III. Conclusions

The PSP does meet all requirements of Principle 1. It is strategically anchored within AUTH's governance and quality framework and is supported by a fully operational Quality Assurance System linked to MODIP. The asynchronous learning strategy is integrated, technically sound and pedagogically appropriate. Staff qualifications and program structure are fully consistent with Level 7 standards.

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

- Encourage student participation in the ERASMUS internship program.
- Better identification of the needs in the market landscape.

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 PRORAMME 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 Interinstitutional Postgraduate Program (ΔΠΜΣ) titled "Religious and Pilgrimage Tourism" is jointly administered by the Department of Social Theology and Christian Culture of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) (acting as the coordinating institution) and the Department of Organization Management, Marketing and Tourism of the International Hellenic University (IHU). The program operates under a formal Special Protocol of Cooperation and was established via a coordinated legislative approval process involving both institutions' internal bodies (Assemblies, Postgraduate Committees, and Senates) and published in the official Government Gazette (ΦΕΚ τ. Β', 271/27-1-2021). Local institutional adjustments are formalized via departmental decisions, such as Assembly Decision No. 751/12-12-2023.

The postgraduate program is structured over three (3) academic semesters of full-time study, totalling 90 ECTS, with a standardized workload ratio of 26 hours per 1 ECTS. More precisely, the first and second semesters are structured around coursework, each requiring four compulsory modules and one elective module, for a total of ten courses (60 ECTS total, with 6 ECTS per module). Each standard course comprises 39 academic hours of synchronous distance learning, totalling 150 hours of student workload per module. Semesters 1 and 2 require completion of three compulsory courses and one elective, respectively, covering themes such as sacred geography, ecclesiastical history, and monument management. Semester 3 is entirely dedicated to the composition and public defense of a Master's Thesis with a minimum length threshold of 25,000 words, which carries a weight of 30 ECTS credits.

The program establishes operational self-funding through tuition fees set at €1,800 per full cycle. Physical and digital assets include dedicated ecclesiastical geography laboratories, specialized libraries, and e-learning platforms.
The learning outcomes and competencies defined within the program are explicitly mapped to Level 7 of both the National and European Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. Course syllabi are systematically drafted using the specific evaluation templates provided by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education. The curriculum targets professional integration across public, private, and ecclesiastical sectors, focusing on cultural heritage management, non-governmental organizations, and tourism development. The curriculum design process integrates feedback from students, alumni, and collaborating external bodies "within the scope of feasibility". To solidify external collaboration, the

program mandates at least one major academic event per year that engages public, private, local government, and ecclesiastical stakeholders.

II. Analysis

The architectural design of the curriculum effectively addresses an identified market mismatch: tourism professionals frequently lack adequate theological context, whereas ecclesiastical or amateur tour organisers lack technical administrative skills. By synthesizing theological knowledge from AUTH with the management, marketing, and digital business expertise of IHU, the program constructs a robust interdisciplinary speciality rather than a standard commercial derivative.

Workload tracking is functionally secure under the standardized ECTS framework, guaranteeing a balanced distribution of academic gravity across the first two semesters (30 ECTS per semester / approximately 900 hours of student labour). Educational delivery is tailored to non-traditional and working students by scheduling lectures in the evenings and at weekends.

Course outlines satisfy international scannability standards, transparently detailing descriptive-level indicators, specific Bloom's taxonomy learning objectives (knowledge, skills, and autonomous capabilities), weekly breakdowns, and structured evaluation portfolios (combining group presentations, written projects, and oral examinations).
The 2,000-euro tuition fee, including 200 euros for registration, secures financial independence by covering operational and infrastructural costs, ensuring they are not reliant on the central university budget.

III. Conclusions

The program fully satisfies the requirements of Principle 2. It demonstrates a legally compliant, structurally sound approval and modification pathway. Its curriculum design presents a highly integrated, interdisciplinary model that is directly aligned with Level 7 professional and research standards, supported by clear credit-allocation metrics and sustainable integration with external stakeholders.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None

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 Panel reviewed the PSP's documentation and held detailed discussions with academic and administrative staff, current students and alumni on the principle of Student-Centred Learning, Teaching, and Assessment. The programme creates the conditions for students to take an active role in the learning process, respecting their diversity, individual needs, and expectations. Teaching methods promote active participation, assessment procedures are clear and transparent, and both the complaints mechanism and the Academic Advisor system support students throughout their studies.

II. Analysis

The PSP embraces a student-centered approach, taking into account students' diverse learning needs and making use of their varied academic backgrounds within an interdisciplinary learning environment. Teaching staff adopt a student-centered approach in their teaching, applying a range of methods such as continuous interaction among students, encouragement of questions, and small group work, all of which were recognized by students as very positive. Teaching has also contributed to the development of both research and professional skills, as was evident from alumni feedback.

However, it was noted that the incorporation of virtual tours of monuments during courses would further strengthen students' professional readiness. Similarly, social partners and employers requested the enrichment of courses with updates and visits from tourism bodies. Student assessment is at a satisfactory level and students have expressed a positive stance, noting that a number of their suggestions have been taken on board. Regarding communication with faculty, students and alumni noted that instructors are readily accessible and provide support and guidance throughout the preparation of the postgraduate thesis. Assessment methods and the weighting of each component are described in detail in the course outline of each module. The Academic Advisor regulation has been established and, based on feedback from both faculty and students, contributes positively to their academic journey. A complaints and appeals regulation is also in place, with a faculty member designated as the responsible complaints officer for the program.

III. Conclusions

The Panel concluded that the PSP demonstrates a strong commitment to student-centred learning and teaching, and is fully aligned with the related principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Enhance students' professional readiness by enriching the teaching process with activities such as virtual tours of monuments and the introduction of presentations and visits from tourism bodies.

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 Panel reviewed the PSP's documentation and held detailed discussions with academic and administrative staff, current students and alumni on the principle of Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Postgraduate Studies, and Certification. A number of regulations governing the operation of the PSP have been developed to support students throughout their studies, contributing to transparency and the smooth functioning of the programme.

II. Analysis

In accordance with the institutional framework, the Study Regulation has been developed and is publicly available on the PSP's official website (https://msc-religioustourism.web.auth.gr/). It covers a range of matters related to student studies, including the governing bodies, the selection criteria and process for prospective students, the duration and conditions of study, students' rights and obligations, and the curriculum and ECTS credits.

Special reference is made to the assessment of students' knowledge, which takes place at the end of each semester through written or oral examinations, assignments, or a combination of the above, as well as through distance assessment methods and alternative approaches such as the submission of papers and practical assessments.

In addition, a Mobility Regulation and a Thesis and Assignment Regulation are in place, covering coursework and the postgraduate thesis. The preparation of all written work is governed by the university's Research Ethics Regulation. Finally, the diploma supplement is issued in both Greek and English, ensuring accessibility and clarity for all graduates.

III. Conclusions

The Panel concluded that the PSP has put in place solid procedures and regulations regarding student admission, progression, and recognition, ensuring a

structured and transparent management of academic processes that supports the overall quality of the programme.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

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 teaching staff of the PSP "Religious and Pilgrimage Tourism" consists of 28 faculty members: 16 full professors, 4 associate professors, 5 assistant professors, and 3 laboratory teaching staff. (There are also 3 non-faculty teaching staff members.) Twenty-one of those 28 faculty members are affiliated with the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, six with the International Hellenic University, and one with the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. Eleven faculty members (5 full professors, two associate professors, one assistant professor, and all 3 laboratory teaching staff) are women. The research and teaching interests of the teaching staff cover a large variety of areas, ensuring that the courses of the PSP can be adequately taught.

II. Analysis

Faculty members typically supervise students of the PSP at the dissertation stage each term. This results in a rather heavy teaching workload, which might not allow for very extensive engagement in research activities. The publication record of the teaching staff is extensive, and its international impact is significant. According to data provided by the Department (see the Department's comments on the preliminary report), ten staff members have an h-index greater than 2 (range: 4 to 50), and 12 members have Scopus h-index greater than 0 (range: 1 to 18). The teaching staff is regularly evaluated by the students through electronic surveys, and the results of those surveys are made available to the faculty members and are taken into account (in addition to the research performance of the faculty members) in promotion decisions.

III. Conclusions

Based on the above analysis, the EEAP finds that the PSP "Religious and Pilgrimage Tourism" substantially complies with Principle 5.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Make efforts to publish more in international, peer-reviewed venues, especially those indexed in Scopus.

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 LEARING 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, 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 Panel reviewed the PSP's documentation and engaged in detailed discussions with academic and administrative staff, current students and alumni on the principle of Learning Resources and Student Support. The PSP operates within a well-structured framework of infrastructure and services, offering a wide range of resources that support the learning process, including academic and administrative staff, physical facilities, support services, access to library resources, and a broad range of digital tools and services.

II. Analysis

As part of the Department of Social Theology and Christian Culture of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, in cooperation with the Department of Organization Management, Marketing and Tourism of the International Hellenic University, the PSP has established a comprehensive framework of services and infrastructure to enhance the quality of learning and student support. As the PSP is delivered exclusively online, both departments make use of a wide range of technological infrastructure, including an e-learning platform and videoconferencing tools, to support the learning process. In addition, students are provided with a range of digital services, such as an institutional email account, VPN connectivity and wireless network access through eduroam. Students have access to the libraries of both participating universities, which hold an extensive collection of books relevant to the PSP's subject area.

Alumni noted that continued access to electronic academic resources following graduation would be valuable, as it would support their ongoing research activities. In addition, students benefit from a broad range of support services, including the Career Office, the Psychosocial Support Unit, the Accessibility Unit of Students with Disabilities, the Student Ombudsman, the Foreign Language Teaching Centre, the Student Cultural Association. Students are made aware of the PSP's academic and research resources through various channels, including orientation meetings at the start of each semester and the official websites of the PSP and the participating universities.

Both students and alumni indicated that these services are well known, easily accessible, and meet their academic needs. Regarding administrative support, students noted that staff respond to their requests quickly and efficiently. Digital administrative services are also in place to support students throughout their studies. Finally, the PSP carries a tuition fee of €2,000 while a tuition utilization plan is in place outlining the PSP’s income and operational expenses. Fee exemptions are also available in accordance with the applicable legal framework.

III. Conclusions

The PSP demonstrates a clear commitment to offering students a wide range of services and resources, utilizing its available assets effectively, and fully meeting the requirements of the principle of Learning Resources and Student Support.

Panel Judgement

Principle 6: Learning resources and student support	
Fully compliant	**X**
Substantially compliant	

Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Explore, within the available institutional and regulatory framework, the possibility of providing alumni with continued access to academic electronic resources, in order to support their ongoing research activities.

PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

INSTITUTIONS BEAR FULL RESPONISBILITY FOR COLLECTING, ANALYSING AND USING INFORMATION, AIMED AT THE EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED ACTIVITIES, IN AN INTEGRATED, EFFECTIVE AND EASLILY 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

There are established mechanisms and procedures for the collection, storing, management, and monitoring of data regarding students, teaching staff, learning resources, and services. Several methods are used to collect information, including the administration of questionnaires. The data collected includes key performance indicators, student population profiles, progression, and student satisfaction. Students and administrative and teaching staff are involved in providing and analyzing information. Student records are diligently kept.

II. Analysis

The electronic procedures for monitoring admission, enrollment, attendance, and student welfare are reliable and efficient. The protection of student data, intellectual rights, and ownership of student work is secure. There are also clear

rules and procedures for registering and resolving issues and complaints. Overall, the EEAP has the clear impression that the procedures and mechanisms of data collection and management are straightforward, reliable, well-performing, and feeding data into the internal system of quality assurance.

III. Conclusions

Based on the above analysis, the EEAP finds that the PSP fully complies with Principle 7.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None

PRINCIPLE 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Joint MSc "Religious and Pilgrimage Tourism" maintains dedicated web pages within the website of the Department of Social Theology and Christian Culture as well as a dedicated programme website. Information is available in both Greek and English and includes programme objectives, admission procedures, study regulations, curriculum structure, course descriptions, academic staff, student support services and contact details. The programme has established a formal procedure for website maintenance and updating. Responsibilities for content management are clearly assigned to designated members of staff, while technical maintenance is supported by the university's electronic governance services. The procedure specifies regular monitoring, updating of announcements, revision of content, management of digital resources and verification of links. Website content is reviewed at least monthly to ensure accuracy and relevance. Public information is further supported through institutional quality assurance systems, electronic study guides, programme regulations, e-learning platforms and dissemination activities organised by the programme and the participating institutions. During the interviews, the students and graduates confirmed that the information is always available and accurate.

II. Analysis

The program demonstrates a clear commitment to transparency and public accessibility of information. The existence of dedicated program websites in both Greek and English enhances accessibility for different categories of stakeholders and supports the visibility of the program beyond its immediate academic environment. Particularly positive is the existence of a documented and operational procedure for website management. Responsibilities are clearly assigned and periodic review mechanisms are established, contributing to the

reliability and currency of publicly available information. The documentation demonstrates that information concerning program organization, curriculum, regulations, admissions and student support is publicly available and regularly updated.

Public information appears consistent with the documentation submitted for accreditation and is supported by institutional digital infrastructures. While the program provides extensive information regarding its operation, greater visibility of graduate outcomes, alumni achievements, employability data and international collaborations could further strengthen the informative value of the website for prospective students and external stakeholders.

III. Conclusions

The programme provides comprehensive, accurate and regularly updated public information through multiple channels. Information management responsibilities are clearly assigned and supported by formal procedures. Public information adequately supports transparency, accountability and informed decision-making by prospective students and other stakeholders.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Strengthen the systematic updating of information in both Greek and English, including news about graduate achievements, employability outcomes and international collaborations.

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 programme operates within the Internal Quality Assurance System of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and makes systematic use of institutional information systems for the collection, management and analysis of quality-related data. These include the Student Information System (SIS), the Quality Management System (MODIP), e-learning platforms, institutional repositories and academic statistics databases. Data are collected regarding admissions, student progression, course evaluations, student performance, teaching activities, research outputs and administrative processes. The programme uses both institutional indicators established by the HQA/ETHAAE framework and additional quality indicators developed by the university. The documentation demonstrates

that information collected through the quality assurance system is analysed and used to support programme management and improvement. Annual analyses are performed and include identification of strengths and weaknesses, monitoring of quality indicators and formulation of corrective actions. Examples include actions aimed at increasing student participation in evaluations, supporting student progression and monitoring programme demand. The programme's internal quality assurance procedures involve several governance bodies, including the Programme Committee, the Coordinating Committee, Academic Advisors and the Internal Evaluation Group (OMEA). These bodies analyse the collected information and formulate improvement plans and follow-up actions. The internal evaluation report prepared by MODIP confirms compliance with the accreditation standards and documents systematic monitoring activities across all quality assurance dimensions. At the same time, it identifies student participation in evaluation procedures as an area requiring further attention. During the interviews, the MODIP responsible offered valuable information about protocols, and the students and graduates confirmed their participation in regular evaluations and the response of the programme to their opinions and suggestions.

II. Analysis

The program has established a structured and operational framework for ongoing monitoring and periodic review. Information is collected through reliable institutional systems and analyzed through clearly defined quality assurance mechanisms. The evidence demonstrates that quality assurance activities are not limited to data collection but are integrated into decision-making and program management processes. A notable strength is the existence of documented examples showing how quality indicators are used to identify areas for improvement and to define corrective actions. The program monitors key indicators related to student satisfaction, progression, admissions, teaching quality and program demand and uses these data to support continuous enhancement.

The program also benefits from the extensive quality assurance infrastructure of the university, which provides robust information management tools and facilitates evidence-based governance. As the program was established in 2021, evidence regarding long-term outcomes and longitudinal trends remains naturally limited. Furthermore, participation rates in student evaluations, while improving, remain moderate and constitute an area where additional efforts may be beneficial.

III. Conclusions

The program has established effective mechanisms for continuous monitoring and periodic internal review. Information is systematically collected, analyzed and utilized to support quality enhancement and informed decision-making. Internal quality assurance processes are well integrated into program governance structures and contribute positively to program development.

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

- Further develop program-specific longitudinal indicators, particularly regarding graduate trajectories and professional outcomes.

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 program's Quality Policy contains an explicit, institutionalized commitment to facilitate and support all external evaluation and accreditation processes managed by external authorities. These efforts are designed to be executed in close cooperation with the university's overarching Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP).
Formative review structures are embedded via an annual internal evaluation cycle conducted by the Departmental Evaluation Committee (OMEA) in partnership with MODIP. This internal mechanism actively incorporates guidelines issued by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education.

The program has formalized its quality metrics in a finalized "Academic Accreditation Proposal" (Πρόταση Ακαδημαϊκής Πιστοποίησης) dated December 2023, specifically designed to meet HAHE's external certification protocols.
Regular programmatic quality assessments rely on an automated digital framework managed via MODIP's electronic platform (qa.auth.gr). Students are prompted during the final month of each semester to submit anonymous course and instructor evaluations.

The provided programmatic texts do not contain empirical data, specific calendar dates, or qualitative feedback derived from previously completed external independent review panels or finalized HAHE external audit reports.
Internal metrics reveal a severe faculty gender asymmetry, indicating a historical male-to-female ratio of 12:1. Data also show prolonged graduation timelines, with

students frequently extending their studies beyond the standard 3 semesters.

II. Analysis

The program displays an advanced level of preparation for external oversight. Its systematic integration of HAHE templates within course designs ensures that external auditors can readily assess the program against national benchmarks.

The internal evaluation data gathered via MODIP serves as a regular diagnostic tool. These metrics are reviewed during dedicated sessions of the Postgraduate Program Committee to inform corrective actions for subsequent academic terms, ensuring the curriculum remains adaptive before formal external scrutiny.

The institutionalization of mandatory research seminars directly targets the interdisciplinary deficit by introducing cross-field peer evaluation. The enforcement of the Academic Advisor role establishes a targeted monitoring mechanism to stabilize graduation kinetics, particularly for students active in the labour market.

The prioritization of female visiting scholars serves as an appropriate short-to-medium-term corrective tool for the 12:1 faculty gender imbalance. This measure, alongside the mandatory English portal update, addresses the deficits in international visibility noted during historic quality reviews.

III. Conclusions

The program achieves functional and procedural alignment with the structural requirements of Principle 10. It has established the necessary data-collection channels, institutionalised annual internal reporting, and successfully compiled its formal Academic Accreditation Proposal in accordance with HAHE standards. Full satisfaction of the principle is structurally evident, though documented qualitative outcomes from completed external independent reviews are absent from the provided texts.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- Emphasis on the implementation of student-centered learning and teaching.

- Adequate guidance and support to students through the institution of the Academic Counsellor.

- Good career chances for the graduates.

- Course outlines satisfy international scannability standards, transparently detailing descriptive-level indicators, specific Bloom's taxonomy learning objectives, weekly breakdowns, and structured evaluation portfolios.

- Student-centered approach, taking into account students' diverse learning needs and making use of their varied academic backgrounds within an interdisciplinary learning environment.

- The electronic procedures for monitoring admission, enrollment, attendance, and student welfare are reliable and efficient.

II. Areas of Weakness

- Incomplete English web page.

- Insufficient provision of practical skills regarding the organization and running of touristic enterprises and projects.

- The provided material does not contain empirical data, specific calendar dates, or qualitative feedback derived from previously completed external independent review panels or finalized HAHE external

audit reports.

- Internal metrics reveal a severe faculty gender asymmetry, indicating a historical inequality in the male-to-female ratio of 12:1.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Encourage student participation in the ERASMUS internship program.
- Better identification of the needs in the market landscape.
- Enhance students' professional readiness by enriching the teaching process with activities such as virtual tours of monuments and the introduction of presentations and visits from tourism bodies.
- Make efforts to publish more in international, peer-reviewed venues, especially those indexed in Scopus.
- Explore, within the available institutional and regulatory framework, the possibility of providing alumni with continued access to academic electronic resources, in order to support their ongoing research activities.
- Strengthen the systematic updating of information in both Greek and English, including news about graduate achievements, employability outcomes and international collaboration.
- Further develop program-specific longitudinal indicators, particularly regarding graduate trajectories and professional outcomes.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

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

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

5

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
PSARROS NIKOLAOS	Signed by PSARROS NIKOLAOS
LAZARIS STAVROS	Signed by LAZARIS STAVROS
Marsico Claudia	Signed by Marsico Claudia
VRANAS PETER	Signed by VRANAS PETER
ΒΑΓΙΑΤΗΣ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΣ	Signed by ΒΑΓΙΑΤΗΣ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΣ