ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC

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Accreditation Report

for the New Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Communication

Department: Journalism and Mass Media

Institution: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Date: 21/06/2025

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the New Postgraduate Study Programme of Communication of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki for the purposes of granting accreditation.

TABLE **OF** CONTENTS

Part A: Background and Context of the Review **4**

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel 4

II. Review Procedure and Documentation 5

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile 8

Part B: Compliance with the Principles **11**

Principle 1: Strategy, Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Goal Setting for the New Postgraduate Study Programmes 11

Principle 2: Design and Approval of New Postgraduate Study Programmes 15

Principle 3: Regulations for Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Postgraduate Studies, and certification 19

Principle 4: Teaching Staff of New Postgraduate Study Programmes 23

Principle 5: Learning Resources and Student Support 27

Principle 6: Initial Internal and External Evaluation and Monitoring of New Postgraduate Study Programmes 30

Part C: Conclusions **33**

I. Features of Good Practice 33

II. Areas of Weakness 33

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions 34

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment 35

PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the new postgraduate study programme of Communication of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. MICHAILAKIS DIMITRIS (Chair)
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   University of Linköping
   (Institution of origin)

2. CHRISTIAS PANAGIOTIS
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   Τμήμα Γαλλικών και Ευρωπαϊκών Σπουδών, Σχολή Ανθρωπιστικών Επιστημών, Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου
   (Institution of origin)

3. KARAKASIDOU ANASTASIA
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   Wellesley College
   (Institution of origin)

4. ROUDOMETOF VICTOR
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   Τμήμα Κοινωνικών και Πολιτικών Επιστημών, Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου
   (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 new postgraduate study programme review, as well as to the documentation provided and considered by the Panel. Dates of the review, review schedule, meetings held and any additional information regarding the procedure.

The Postgraduate Study Programme “Communication” that is planned to be offered by the Department of Journalism and Mass Media of the School of Social and Economic Sciences of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, was evaluated and accredited by an External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP).

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the New Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) "Communication" hosted by the Department of Journalism and Mass Media of the School of Social and Economic Sciences of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020.

EXTERNAL EVALUATION & ACCREDITATION PANEL
1. Prof. Dimitris Michailakis, University of Linköping, Sweden (Chair)
2. Assoc. Prof. Victor Roudometof, University of Cyprus, Cyprus
3. Prof. Anastasia Karakasidou, Wellesley College, United States of America
4. Assoc. Prof. Panagiotis Christias, University of Cyprus, Cyprus
5. Mr. Konstantinos Vagiatis, student representative, University of the Aegean, Greece

The objectives of the evaluation as described by HAHE in the Guidelines for Members of the EEAP, are:

- To establish whether the data provided from the various sources is internally consistent and reflects the actual situation.
- To identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- To engage in a constructive dialogue with the institution, leading to reflection and continuous enhancement of the study programme.

The EEAP received all documentation relevant to the accreditation process in an easily accessible digital format. It was comprehensive, well-structured, and thoroughly prepared.

The EEAP members had a private meeting before the commencement of the accreditation process to establish common terms of reference regarding the accreditation principles and criteria and to ensure that all members had full access to the digital materials, which they carefully reviewed. The private meeting on Monday 16/06/2025 with EEAP members aimed to discuss the accreditation proposal, allocate tasks, etc.

The accreditation process took place remotely (via Zoom) and followed a carefully structured schedule provided by HAHE, which included one interactive virtual meeting beginning on Tuesday, 17/06/2025) as follows:

On Tuesday 17/06/2025 the evaluation process commenced with a meeting with the Vice-Rector/President of the MODIP, the Head of the Department and the Director of the PSP.

After a brief overview of the postgraduate programme (history, academic profile, and current status), strengths and possible areas of concern were discussed. The meeting also examined the degree of compliance of the programme with the Standards for Quality Accreditation.

Next the EEAP had a meeting with the teaching staff members of the planned PSP. The EEAP had the opportunity to discuss such issues as 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 programme; possible areas of weakness.

Next, we were scheduled to follow an online tour of the facilities and infrastructure supporting the PSP, including lecture halls, libraries, laboratories, and other relevant spaces. This was intended to evaluate the adequacy and appropriateness of the learning resources, materials, and equipment.

The EEAP members subsequently met with employers and social partners, providing an opportunity to discuss and assess the connections between the Communication PSP and external stakeholders from the public and private sectors.

Next, the EEAP held a debriefing meeting to discuss on the outcomes of the virtual visit and prepare the oral report.

Finally, we held a concluding meeting with the Vice-Rector, the Director of the PSP, the Head of the Department and the MODIP supervisor during which we informally presented and discussed the EEAP's key findings.

Throughout all virtual meetings, the EEAP had the opportunity to engage with participants, who were encouraged to express their views freely regarding their overall academic experience, institutional strategy, vision, and the adequacy of available resources. All participants welcomed the opportunity to speak with the Panel and share their perspectives. Discussions were insightful, constructive, and conducted in a collaborative manner. All meetings included presentations and Q&A sessions.

The Department worked diligently in preparing the internal evaluation report and providing the Panel with all relevant documentation. All virtual meetings were well-organised and efficiently hosted. The EEAP commends the Department for its outstanding work throughout the internal evaluation process, noting that the objectives of the external evaluation were fully achieved.

The efficiency and professionalism of both the academic and administrative staff in answering questions and providing additional information and clarifications during the meetings are particularly commendable.

The EEAP wishes to express its gratitude and appreciation to all those involved (academic staff, administrative staff, and social partners) for their cooperation and professionalism throughout this process.

This Accreditation Report is based on information collected and views expressed during the virtual meetings, as well as on data contained in the internal evaluation report and additional documents submitted before and during the virtual meetings.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

Brief overview of the new 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 Senate of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, at its meeting No. 3147/3-7-2024, decided to approve the establishment of the Postgraduate Studies Program (PSP) entitled "Communication" hosted by the Department of Journalism and Mass Media of the School of Social and Economic Sciences of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, in accordance with the provisions of Law 4957/2022.
The subject matter of the PSP entitled "Communication" is research, and providing postgraduate education in the fields of Communication, with two specializations:
A. Political and Public Communication
B. Cultural Management and Communication
The PSP will operate until the academic year 2028-2029, with the possibility of extension, given that it receives re-certification during the Department's periodic evaluation.

The PSP will accept holders of first-cycle degrees from higher education institutions in Greece and abroad, and in particular graduates of journalism, media, or communication departments, as well as graduates of humanities and social sciences.

The number of students admitted per year is set at a minimum of twenty (20) and a maximum of forty (40) postgraduate students, and more precisely at twenty (20) students per specialization. The PSP cannot operate with fewer than twenty (20) postgraduate students.

The number of admissions based on their undergraduate studies is distributed as follows: seventy percent (70%) for holders of degrees in Journalism, Media, and Communication, and thirty percent (30%) for graduates in humanities and social sciences.

In accordance with Article 7 of the Regulations for Postgraduate Programs of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, part-time study is available for working students. However, the duration of part-time study may not exceed twice the duration of full-time study.

Tuition fees amount to €3,000.00 for the PSP. Postgraduate students are required to pay tuition fees in three equal installments. According to the law, 30% of the students are entitled to exemption from tuition fees.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE
The PSP is structured in three semesters, each corresponding to thirty (30) ECTS. To obtain the Master's Degree, postgraduate students must:

a) attend and successfully pass eight semester-long postgraduate courses in their specialization. Specifically, in the first semester, they must successfully pass four courses, two of which are compulsory and two elective, and in the second semester, four elective courses, or three elective courses and an internship in accordance with the provisions of the PSP's regulations, and
b) prepare a Master's Thesis during the third semester, in accordance with the PSP's regulations, the topic of which is informally determined in consultation with the proposed supervisor at the end of the second semester and formally finalized at the beginning of the third semester.

The total of eight courses corresponds to sixty (60) ECTS [thirty (30) ECTS per semester], while the master's thesis corresponds to thirty (30) ECTS, and therefore the Master's Degree corresponds to a total of ninety (90) ECTS credits.

The program offers internships at organizations and institutions involved in communication and culture. Internships are optional educational activities offered by the PSP that aim to relate the knowledge gained in the PSP into practice and familiarize students with potential workplaces.

POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA THESIS
Provided that the postgraduate student has successfully completed the compulsory courses of the first semester and at least four elective courses, he/she may be admitted to the postgraduate thesis process at the beginning of the third semester. To this end, the postgraduate student must apply to begin their postgraduate thesis. The application must include the proposed title, the proposed supervisor, and a summary of the proposed thesis. The master's thesis may be individual or group work and may be completed, in addition to the usual methods, through participation in a research project, through practical employment at a collaborating institution under the conditions and procedures laid down in the PSP's Operating Regulations, through the completion of a specially designed group project, or a combination of the above. The presentation of the postgraduate thesis is defended before the Three-Member Examination Committee on a date and at a place determined by the Committee, with the possibility of remote examination.

Classes are held in person but may exceptionally be held using modern distance learning methods.

Selection criteria
The selection of admission is based on the following criteria:
(a) The overall degree grade, (b) any research and writing activity (including thesis or dissertation work), as well as participation in student mobility programmes, (c) any professional experience, (d) certified knowledge of a second foreign language at least at A2 level (i.e. basic knowledge), (e) possession of a second degree, (f) grades in undergraduate

courses relevant to the subject related to the preferred specialisation, (g) oral interview.

The qualifications that students are expected to acquire from this programme are:
to understand the importance and role of communication in society in general and particularly in the fields of political and public communication and culture; to critically analyse the complexity and challenges faced by communication and culture organisations in today's globalised society; to apply best communication strategies and professional practices, and to adapt them to public and private life. Having acquired MSc diploma, they will have the necessary skills to continue their studies in an autonomous manner.

Objectives
The general objective of the PSP is the cultivation and promotion of scientific knowledge in the fields of Communication, as well as the development of research in the scientific fields of "Politics and Public Communication" and "Cultural Management and Communication". The specialisation “Politics and Public Communication” aims to study and teach communication in the fields of politics, the public sphere and public policy. It examines the ways in which communication is used (a) by political actors (e.g., governments, political parties) to influence citizens and the political process, and (b) by organizations (public, non- governmental, etc.) to inform and persuade public opinion in order to serve the public interest and development (on issues such as education, health, environment, social rights, etc.). The specialisation in “Cultural Management and Communication” aims to provide training and specialised knowledge, both theoretical and practical, on the administration, management and marketing of communication and cultural organisations, methods of audience and communication research, the design and implementation of communication and cultural policy, and more generally on the interaction between communication and culture.

The specializations proposed PSP "Communication" are unique in Greece and Cyprus. The specialization in “Politics and Public Communication” is the only program that focuses on communication in general in the public sphere and is directly linked to practical applications. Similarly, the specialization in “Cultural Management and Communication” is the only one in Greece that combines education in Cultural Management, emphasizing Communication and the connection with the labour market, as well as offering the possibility of an internship.

An increased demand for the postgraduate degree is expected both from graduates of social sciences and humanities departments and from professionals working in the fields of communication and journalism, as no other postgraduate degree with these specializations is offered in Greece.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Strategy, Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Goal Setting for the New Postgraduate Study Programmes

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD INCLUDE IN THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT THE DEVELOPMENT, ORGANISATION, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES (PSP) IN SPECIFIC SCIENTIFIC FIELDS AFTER INVESTIGATING THEIR FEASIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY.
INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY FOR THE NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT.
THIS POLICY SHOULD EXPAND AND BE AIMED (WITH THE COLLABORATION OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS) AT THE PSP OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL INTERESTED PARTIES.

By decision/s of the Institutional Senate, the Institutions should adapt their strategy to allow for the provision of postgraduate study programmes, in addition to attending to the profile, vision, mission and strategic objectives of the Institution. In this strategy, the Institutions should anticipate the potential benefits, difficulties or risks from the implementation of new postgraduate study programmes and plan all the necessary actions to achieve their goals. The Institution's strategic choices should be documented through specific feasibility and sustainability studies, especially for new postgraduate study programmes.

In the case of PSP delivered by distance methods, the Institution prepares and applies an e-learning strategy. The Institution's e-learning strategy is integrated into its overall strategy and identifies educational goals while keeping up to the rapid technological changes and to the developments in pedagogical models. The Institution should include in its strategy the justification and feasibility as to why e-learning has been selected as the appropriate learning strategy for the particular programmes of study where it is applied.

In the context of e-learning, innovation strategies, the possibility of programme revision, the linking between learning and research (requiring knowledge of the latest innovations in order to select the most appropriate means to achieve the learning outcomes) should be taken into account.

The quality assurance policy of the academic unit for postgraduate study programmes should be in line with the Institution's strategy 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 postgraduate 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 continuous 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 and the availability 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 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 internal review and audit of the quality assurance system for the PSP through the cooperation of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU)*

Documentation

- *The Institutional strategy for postgraduate studies, which includes a special strategy for e-learning, as long as it is applied to the Institution's PSP*
- *Feasibility and sustainability studies for the new PSP*
- *Quality Policy of the academic unit for the development and improvement of PSP*
- *Quality Targeting of the academic unit for the PSP*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department of Journalism and Mass Media at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki presented to the EEAP (to be referred as Panel henceforth) a "new" PSP entitled "Communication" for accreditation. Although not immediately apparent to the Panel, this is a revised PSP that has been operating since 2018. Despite the fact that the Panel was not given the opportunity to make a thorough comparison between the old and the new PSPs (e.g. Panel did not hold conversations with any graduates of the old program to ascertain their satisfaction with the program and how it helped them enter the labor market), it appears that it complies with the Principle of Strategy, Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Goal Setting (Principle 1).

It had incorporated postgraduate strategy and quality assurance into the core of its academic planning. The new PSP is overall aligned with institutional objectives and has been approved by the University's Senate and Departmental Assembly. It aspires to offer solid training, albeit more applied than theoretical, on the important subject of broadly defined as "Communication." It is designed to meet Greek domestic and Thessaloniki local needs and its graduates can be employed in very diverse places, from Museums, to NGO's, to public services, etc. By

integrating various qualitative and quantitative elements of the field of Communication, this new PSP is well-equipped to navigate the growing demands of this complex discipline, as well as the emerging needs that new technologies constantly introduce in the 21st century.

The PSP's proposal clearly outlines its academic necessity, and its alignment with Greek societal needs. It includes a detailed justification for its purpose and draws on the Department's strength on Journalism and Mass Media. Its relevance lies in addressing problems with information and misinformation, fake news, and AI, areas that are of great importance in both European and global contexts. The PSP's proposal also includes its feasibility and sustainability, since it outlines both its academic necessity and its alignment with societal needs. The PSP builds on core thematic pillars already present in its undergraduate curriculum, and develops them further into this applied postgraduate pathway aligned with the Department's broader Greek (and somehow international) orientation. The PSP adopts a student-centered approach, as outlined in the Department's published Quality Assurance Policy. It explicitly commits itself to fostering inclusivity, and transparency. The policy also affirms the PSP's alignment with the European and National Qualifications Frameworks (EQF/NQF) and supports continuous improvement through established mechanisms: these include curriculum evaluations and re-evaluations, annual internal reviews, and formal/informal feedback from students and social partners. The policy also takes into consideration expectations for academic integrity, constructive communication, and the active engagement of students in shaping the educational experience. Internal coordination structures, annual goal settings and student evaluation processes are already in place, as are regular internal audits by the Internal Evaluation Group and verified alignment with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area through departmental self-assessment.

The Study Guide confirms that a total of 90 ECTS across three semesters are needed, and it includes: a) eight core courses (7.5 ECTS each) during the first two semesters, which cover various themes of the field of Communication, both theoretical and applied; and, b) a compulsory 30 ECTS independent/thesis to be completed during the third semester. A structured module framework that integrates research-based learning, critical evaluation, and interdisciplinary skills is already in place. The Department's new building on Vasileos Irakleiou Street, located outside the main campus, but right at the center of the city, provides ample space for instruction and student gatherings. The PSP uses the Open eClass platform that facilitates students in finding their course readings, meetings, requirements, examinations, activities, and feedback mechanisms.

The budget model outlines a tuition-based PSP set at €3,000 per student, with clearly planned allocation of the funds: for teaching, support services, digital

infrastructure, and scholarship provision. Thus, the funds generated from tuition ensure the long-term sustainability of the PSP, while enabling reinvestment in its future enhancement.

II. Analysis

The PSP is relevant and original, since it provides a holistic approach to the study of Communication in the 21st century. Its design combines academic coherence with practical training, offering thus a distinctive profile. The feasibility and sustainability planning are realistic and well-constructed, demonstrating institutional readiness in terms of staffing and resource management. The department shows a strong internal quality assurance culture, indicated by a well-defined policy and annual goal-settings. Monitoring indicators are clearly defined, implemented, and linked to real evaluation mechanisms, that, most importantly, include student satisfaction. The financial model is also viable and takes into consideration social and economic difficulties. Tuition income is allocated transparently, with provision for merit- and need-based scholarships, along with a reinvestment strategy for the ongoing quality enhancement. The integration of teaching and research is evident, and the PSP ensures that structured research engagement is available for its students. The eClass platform appears to be technically and pedagogically robust as well.

The academic advisor system and a functioning research ethics committee reinforces the PSP's commitment to academic integrity and student-centered learning. Collectively, these elements indicate a strategically planned and institutionally embedded PSP that meets the expectations HAHE's quality assurance framework.

III. Conclusions

The PSP "Communication" is fully compliant with Principle 1. The PSP is institutionally embedded, academically justified, strategically planned, and financially sustainable. Its quality assurance policy is active and structured, while the feasibility of the study is strong. Overall, the PSP's academic, financial, pedagogical, and support frameworks meet all HAHE expectations and European standards.

Panel Judgement

Principle 1: Strategy, Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Goal Setting for the New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	**X**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	

Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations
None

Principle 2: Design and Approval of New 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 NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES. THE OBJECTIVES, THE SPECIFIC SCIENTIFIC SUBJECT AND THE STREAMS OR SPECIALISATIONS, THE EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND THE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS ARE SET OUT IN THE PROGRAMME DESIGN. DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW 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, the specialisations, the expected learning outcomes, the structure, the courses, the teaching and assessment modes, the teaching staff and the necessary resources 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. In particular, for each expected 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 for the 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 NQF, 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: teaching assignments per subject area and per course*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The aim of the MA Communication is the study, research and provision of postgraduate education in the fields of Communication, with two specializations: (a) Politics and Public Communication, (b) Cultural Management and Communication.The general objectives of the MA are to provide specialized knowledge, mainly of an applied nature, to promote scientific research, and to develop the critical and research skills required for doctoral-level studies. It is concerned with specific subject areas of the first cycle of studies on the basis of which postgraduate students acquire the specialised training, so that they can meet the existing and anticipated social and developmental needs of the labour market in the field of communication. The specific aims of the specialisations are to provide training and specialised applied knowledge on the interaction between communication, politics, the public sphere and culture, communication research methods and the pursuit of communication public and cultural policy, with a view to training managers for employment in communication and cultural organisations in the public and private sectors, political parties and political organisations, non-governmental organisations, media and the wider audiovisual and cultural sector.

II. Analysis

The design of the MA was based on information drawn from various sources, such as a survey of graduates, meetings and interviews with professionals in the field that indicated the current needs of the market, data from scientific institutions, research data and trends in communication and technology as reflected in repeated surveys by international organizations, recent developments in communication and media education as reflected in contemporary American curricula, and the latest developments in the field of communication and media education as reflected in contemporary American curricula. The MA was approved by the Departmental Assembly and the Senate.

The administrative bodies of the MA are: a) The Senate of the Foundation, b) The Postgraduate Studies Committee, c) The Assembly of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, d) The Coordinating Committee (CC) and e) The Director of the MA. For the implementation of the MA, a total of 14 members of the teaching staff are employed, of which 12 are faculty members of the Department of Journalism and Media, and 2 members of the Department of Journalism and Media. The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the MA Communication follow the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) which is based on the principle of transparency in learning, teaching and assessment processes. The educational work of the MA is structured in three (3) semesters. The first two semesters are allocated for the attendance of eight (8) semester-long postgraduate courses: in the first semester four (4) courses are attended, in the second semester four (4) or three (3) courses and an internship are attended, while the third semester is allocated for the preparation of the Master's Thesis which is presented in a public examination. The MA offers an optional internship which aims at the practical application of the knowledge offered by the MA and at familiarizing students with potential workplaces.

The MA Communication aims to train scientists capable of understanding mediated communication in its various forms, applications, dimensions and functions, as well as to promote the scientific study and investigation of its evolution and role in contemporary society and culture. By combining theory and practice, scientific knowledge and professional skills, an interdisciplinary approach and innovative technological applications, the curriculum aims at learning outcomes that contribute to the productive, socially responsible and creative presence of graduates in the diverse fields of public communication and culture.

The MA Communication is the only postgraduate programme of a Greek public university that offers the specializations: Politics and Public Communication, and Cultural Management and Communication. It is addressed to professional communicators and journalists who already serve in the field of Media and to graduates of higher education institutions who intend to seek employment in the field of communication and are interested in updating their knowledge, thus becoming familiar with the latest scientific developments in the field of communication and its applications in the political, cultural and public environment.

III. Conclusions

The MA presents an applied character, despite the few theoretical elements inserted to the teachings. It is an MA in Applied Communication, as specified by its target group of students (professionals and specialists in the working field) and by its own statement of attention to meet the needs of the labor market. In this perspective the MA is indeed original and well structured.

The number of the members of the teaching staff involved is impressive, given the fact the these members also teach in the USP. This worries the EEAP as the teaching charge of the staff is particularly heavy and reflects on their research.

For these two reasons, the EEAP find principle 2 substantially compliant.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2: Design and Approval of New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	**X**
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Rename the MA as "Applied Communication".

It is advised that the Department takes all the necessary steps to prevent staff members from teaching more than 12 hours per week over the course of a semester.

Principle 3: Regulations for 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).

The Institution should develop and publish the internal regulations prescribed by law which, among other things, should regulate all issues of postgraduate studies from the beginning to the end of the studies.

Indicatively:

- *The students' 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*

In case that the PSP is offered through distance learning methods, the Institution should have in place a regulation for e-learning, including in particular the following issues:

- *Services of the Institution to support e-learning*
- *Methodology for the development and implementation of courses*
- *Ways of providing teaching and variety of teaching and assessment modes*
- *General standard of course structure*
- *Student support system*
- *Support of faculty/teachers with mandatory e-learning training for new staff members*
- *Technological infrastructures made available by the Institution*
- *Student identity confirmation system (student identity check, assignment and exam writing process, security and certification issues).*
- *The Institution should establish rules for the provision of appropriate access and for the assurance of the participation of students affected by disability, illness, and other special circumstances.*
- *Ethical issues, such as those concerning data protection, intellectual property rights and rules for protection against fraud are governed by the e-learning regulation.*

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

Documentation

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the postgraduate study programme*
- *Special regulation for the implementation of e-learning if the PSP is delivered through distance methods*
- *Research Ethics Regulation*

- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility, and student assignments*
- *Degree certificate template and Diploma Supplement template*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP "Communication" of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki is a good program aiming to attract postgraduate students and professionals with interests in journalism and mass media. It is designed to provide its students with the appropriate theoretical, practical and technological knowledge that will allow them to work in the field, in various settings, such as museums, cultural institutions, government agencies, and international organizations. Not many formal MOUs have been agreed prior to its operation with selected organizations for internships and employment prospects of the PSP graduates. Nevertheless, the social partners are very enthusiastic about working with students and graduates.

The Panel conducted a detailed evaluation of the PSP's submitted materials and held extensive discussions with faculty to assess the principles of Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Postgraduate Studies and Certification. From reading the provided essential documents and the conversations, it becomes apparent that the PSP offers thorough and transparent guidance to students: they clearly outline the procedures for student admission, academic progression, and the mechanisms supporting thesis development, as well as recognition of studies, student mobility and the awarding of postgraduate degree.

This new PSP is governed by a well-defined and legally compliant regulatory framework that covers the entire academic cycle from admission to graduation. The relevant internal regulations are issued annually by the Program Director, who follows the Coordinating Committee's decisions. These announcements fully and clearly outline the required supporting documents, specific admission criteria, application deadlines, and procedural details. The PSP has already put in place internal regulations for the operation of the PSP, that include student assignments, research ethics, internships, and future labor mobility.

The admissions process is well-structured and transparent. The Call for Applications will be issued annually by the Program Director after the Coordinating Committee's approval. The expected number of admitted/enrolled students is thirty (30). The evaluation criteria for acceptance and their unit values are clearly presented. The applicants are then individually evaluated through an oral interview. Students, once admitted, follow a two-semester well-designed curriculum, that include both required and elective courses. The total duration of

the program is 18 months and includes two teaching semesters (each awarding 30 ECTS) and a six-month period dedicated to the thesis (30 ECTS), for a total of 90 ECTS credits. The tuition fees are 3,000 Euros, and a number of students receive a scholarship. Each student is assigned an advisor, and this advisory support follows the practice already in place at the University. In addition, to taking courses, all students are required to complete a Master's thesis. Students have to research and write this final thesis, which must demonstrate advanced theoretical knowledge and skills, critical thinking, ability in problem analysis and synthesis, and research ability of the postgraduate student. The thesis may tackle theoretical or applied issues, while it may be carried out in a private or public body based in Greece that is active or interested in related subjects. Students are eligible to receive from the PSP financial assistance with their research expenses or through paid internships from the social partners.

The program regulation also includes policies regarding attendance and progression. The academic progression of students is formally overseen by both the PSP's Coordinating Committee and the student's academic advisor, and it is also informally supported by direct and frequent communication between students and faculty. The students have the right to evaluate the PSP through internal student evaluations via MODIP questionnaires, as well as open discussions with fellow students, faculty, and alumni. Students have full access to the physical and electronic resources of the University 's Library.

Overall, the Panel found that the regulations governing admission, progression, thesis preparation, and certification are comprehensive, and publicly available. They are consistently implemented by academic and administrative staff and will be well understood by students. The program benefits from a transparent and merit-based selection process, clearly defined rules for student obligations and rights, and formal mechanisms for tracking academic progression.

II. Analysis

The procedures for student admission and examinations are clearly described and documented in detail in the materials provided, ensuring that the rights and obligations of the students are properly defined. In addition, there is an effective system for monitoring student progress. The student guide (Οδηγός Σπουδών) is comprehensive and provides all the necessary information for the academic process. The procedures for thesis preparation are also clearly defined and comprehensively detailed. The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is fully integrated into the program, facilitating academic recognition and mobility. Continuous faculty engagement and academic advising, ensures close monitoring of student development. The mandatory thesis requirement demonstrates academic rigor and immersion into practical training. The structure of the program (90 ECTS over 18 months) aligns with national and European standards and is well-suited for the students.

III. Conclusions

The Panel concludes that the PSP has implemented well-structured policies and procedures for student admission, progression, and recognition within the program. These measures provide a clear and organized framework for academic management, ensuring transparency and upholding the quality of the educational experience. The PSP is fully compliant with the accreditation criterion under Principle 3. The Panel trusts that the institutional and PSP regulations governing admission, progression, recognition, and certification will be effectively implemented, transparent, and well-documented.

Panel Judgement

Principle 3: Regulations for Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Postgraduate Studies, and certification	
Fully compliant	**X**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

None

Principle 4: Teaching Staff of New 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 and scientific competence of the teaching staff at the PSP, the appropriate staff-student ratio, the proper staff categories, the appropriate subject areas, the fair and objective recruitment process, the high research performance, the training, 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, policy for attracting highly qualified staff, and PSP Obligation Regulation*
- *List of the intended for recruitment teaching staff including subject areas, employment relationship, Institution of origin, Department of origin and relevant individual achievements*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department's teaching staff is well equipped to carry out teaching and research responsibilities. The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki is among the largest and oldest universities in Greece and has the necessary equipment and technological infrastructure to support students and faculty members. The University's rules apply to the new PSP, and these provide for quality assurance processes for all staff – inclusive of such matters as attendance, performance, self-assessment, training, and so on.

Faculty recruitment is regulated by law and the Department complies with relevant legislation. The recruitment process is governed by the rules and regulations that are applicable to all Greek universities. These specify the necessary formal criteria for hiring and promotion of academic staff in all Greek universities. New hiring is subject to financial and external constraints.

There is a total of 14 faculty members listed as tentative teaching faculty for the new PSP, of whom 10 are at the rank of Full Professor. Based on the material submitted to the EEAP there is a close match between the individual faculty members' specialties and the courses offered by them. The teacher-student ratio is well within established parameters for graduate level programs. Diverse teaching methods are incorporated in the syllabi of the courses and interactive learning is encouraged. The teaching workload appears appropriate. Students evaluate the teaching staff through a university-wide evaluation procedure. Faculty participate in staff mobility through the Erasmus Teaching Mobility Programs. The Department follows the established practice of inviting outside speakers for its seminars and using the mobility programs to encourage individual faculty mobility across institutions.

According to information provided to the EEAP, the Department has organized or co-organized a total of 20 conferences over the 2023-24 academic year. In terms of quantitative indicators concerning visibility, the EEAP has been informed that the faculty has a total of 2733 citations in Scopus over the last five years. For the 2023-24 academic year, a total of 74 articles are reported in Scopus, plus three monographs and six volumes.

The Department has further in place several research laboratories, but no explicit mention was made regarding their connection to the new PSP. Faculty members extensively participate in externally funded projects.

II. Analysis

Obtaining external funding seems to be one of the Department's major strengths: according to the Department's presentation, the Department secured a total of 37 externally funded projects for the 2023-24 academic year alone. This is an impressive number, although the EEAP has not received any financial information related to them (either from the Department or Aristotle University at large). According to the proposal for the new PSP, the Department ranks among the top departments at Aristotle University in terms of its ability to obtain outside funding.

The EEAP has not been made aware of whether the new PSP or even the Department has contemplated the development of specific policies to attract highly qualified academic staff (inclusive of using the existing legislative framework that governs Greek universities). Based on the information provided to the EEAP and the rules and regulations mentioned (that is, Law 4310/2014 (Aʹ 258), 4485/2017) the Department has the right to invite academics from other universities for visiting positions. In its list of 14 faculty members for the new PSP there is already a specific individual listed as visiting professor.

Based on interviews with the PSP's teaching faculty as well as the online meeting

with social partners, the EEAP is convinced that the Department has cultivated a strong link between its educational activities and social partners (who also serve as employers to students or future graduates). While this is commendable, the absence of similar links with the private sector (i.e. industry) raises the question of the new PSP graduates' future career options.

Moreover, no information has been provided to the EEAP concerning the strengthening of links between education and research – despite the presence of a considerable number of research laboratories within the Department. According to the cumulative information concerning research productivity (which was calculated via Scopus), the H-score for the teaching faculty members over the 2023-24 academic year is 14. Because of the very narrow temporal interval involved, no meaningful conclusions can be drawn regarding overall research productivity. If an H-score of 14 is applicable over an entire career, then this score is generally considered not particularly exceptional. But no such score has been presented or calculated.

In the PSP's proposal it mentions granting honorary PhDs to individuals among the practices used by the Department for mobility purposes. This is a very strange statement, as the purpose of honorary PhDs is completely different from the purposes of scholarly mobility.

III. Conclusions

The Department and the faculty members of the new PSP are extremely well-positioned when it comes to obtaining outside funding.

The establishment of a cordial relationship with the social partners is a great asset, although ties to the private sector appear lacking.

There is a close match between the individual faculty members' specialties and the courses offered by them.

Since 10 of the 14 faculty members of the new PSP are Full Professors, it might have been far more meaningful to calculate H-score over their entire career paths. Moreover, the need for new hires is self-evident.

Panel Judgement

Principle 4: Teaching Staff of New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	**X**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

It is obvious that there is a strong need for the recruitment of new faculty members (as indicated by the unusually large number of Full Professors). That is particularly true at the junior level.

Due to the large number of Full Professors, the indicators concerning research productivity should have been calculated over the entire span of individual careers. That would have produced far more accurate measurements of research productivity.

Principle 5: Learning Resources and Student Support

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER THE TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS OF THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES. 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, 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 and foreign students, students with disabilities), in addition to the shift towards student-centered 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 Committee carefully considered the evidence provided by the Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) and had extensive conversations with academic and administrative staff about the adequacy and effectiveness of the learning resources and student support services. The evidence suggests that the PSP is furnishing a supportive inclusive, well resourced, and academically challenging environment that facilitates student learning and makes a meaningful contribution to the quality of the programme overall.

II. Analysis

As part of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), the PSP has developed a comprehensive framework of services and infrastructure that enriches every aspect of the student experience. The programme is housed in modern, purpose built premises that include four fully equipped lecture rooms, a combined reading room and departmental library, two dedicated computer laboratories, and a radio-television studio. Students also enjoy on-site and remote access to AUTH's central library, whose extensive print and digital collections further support their teaching and research activities. The PSP couples these physical assets with a wide range of student-centred services: access to the University gymnasium, the Counselling and Psychological Support Centre, the Student Ombudsman and the Gender Equality Committee. Digital resources are equally comprehensive and every student is provided with licences for specialised software (e.g., SPSS, ATLAS.ti, LimeSurvey), continuous access to the Moodle e- learning platform and the full Microsoft 365 suite, all of which streamline coursework and research. Administrative support is delivered through an online portal that issues certificates, tracks grades and facilitates direct communication with staff. The department's permanent Secretariat staff, supported by a contract officer assigned only to the PSP, manage day-to-day operations. Finally, the programme is being implemented through a clear plan for the use of tuition which details a strategy for utilization of financial resources.

III. Conclusions

The PSP shows a clear dedication to supporting its students through a broad array of services and resources, making thoughtful and effective use of the assets at its disposal.

Panel Judgement

Principle 5: Learning Resources and Student Support	
Fully compliant	**X**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

As growth in student needs and administrative demands continue, there may be a need for additional investment in administrative support in order to sustain administrative efficiency and response to service demands.

Principle 6: Initial Internal and External Evaluation and Monitoring of New Postgraduate Study Programmes

INSTITUTIONS AND ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM, FOR THE AUDIT, INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE NEW POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES, THUS ENSURING COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE PRESENT STANDARDS. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

The internal evaluation of the new PSP includes the assessment of the accreditation proposal, as well as the documentation in accordance with the Principles of the present Standards and the quality procedures of the Institution's Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS). The internal evaluation of new postgraduate study programmes also aims at maintaining the level of educational provision and creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students. The Institution, through its Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) and the corresponding academic units, organise and support the external evaluation procedures of the new PSP, according to the specific guidelines and directions provided by HAHE.

The above comprise the assessment of:

- *the objectives, content, and structure of the curriculum, the knowledge offered and the level of science and technology in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the PSP is up to date, according to the relevant documentation listed in the decisions of the pertinent bodies*
- *the entailed students' workload for the progression and completion of postgraduate studies*
- *the satisfaction of the students' expectations and needs in relation to the programme*
- *the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the PSP in question*

Postgraduate study programmes are designed and established in accordance with the provisions of the Institution's internal regulations, involving students and other stakeholders.

Documentation

- *The Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) procedure for verifying whether the requirements of the Standards for Quality Accreditation of New PSP are met, as well as the procedure for organising and supporting their external evaluation procedures*
- *Assessment and feedback mechanisms of the PSP strategy and quality targeting, and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (and by extension all its academic units) has an Internal Quality Assurance System (MODIP), which fully complies with the

principles of the Quality Standard of the HAHE and the Quality Assurance Principles of the European Higher Education Area.

II. Analysis

Although the MA was presented for external evaluation as a new programme, the EEAP has been informed that it is actually the reformulation of an already existing programme. This means that the programme has benefited from past experience and feedback form old students and graduates as well as past and new stakeholders.

In order to ensure the quality development of its Postgraduate Programmes, the Department of Journalism and Media follows a policy of actively involving students in the development of the postgraduate programmes, regularly seeking their feedback and incorporating their comments into the redesign of the MA. The MA seeks feedback from students and faculty, as well as other stakeholders, in order to identify areas for improvement. Feedback is used to consider and implement any changes, including updating and adjusting curricula, changes in teaching methods and upgrades to equipment/facilities. The Department and the MA implements (in collaboration with the MODIP) mechanisms for continuous evaluation and feedback on the MA quality target and subsequently the strategy.

The findings are recorded in the Internal Evaluation Report. The Department's OMEA, in cooperation with the Coordinating Committee, studies the results of the evaluation, announces the findings and undertakes corrective actions to resolve any issues. Continuous evaluation makes it possible to identify weaknesses in good time and to ensure a high level of quality of educational services.

III. Conclusions

The OMEA in collaboration with the University's MODIP prepared the first initial external evaluation of the MA. All necessary documents were produced. The EEAP find Principle 6 fully complient.

Panel Judgement

Principle 6: Initial Internal and External Evaluation and Monitoring of New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	**X**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

None.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- The Department has cultivated a range of intended collaborations with external stakeholders. For instance, social partners were invited by the program coordinator and participated in the program's planning.
- The teaching staff has the appropriate qualifications, which are continuously cultivated through the participation in research and cooperation with cognate disciplines at the University, nationally and internationally.
- Regulations for student admission, progression, recognition of postgraduate studies and certification are in place. They are clear and comprehensively stated in the student guide and relevant documentation. Regarding the admissions' methods, the committee find that the process is fully transparent.
- The PSP has established a Quality Assurance Policy that is going to ensure systematic monitoring and evaluation. The EEAP is assured that the PSP will be regularly internally reviewed and revised with the participation of students and faculty members. The information collected will be analysed, and the programme will possibly be modified according to the internal and external evaluation data.
- The programme's academic profile, structure, and learning outcomes are appropriate for Level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework, with strong coherence between objectives, curriculum content, and assessment strategy.
- The programme meets market needs with supplying graduates who have acquired specific practical skills. Therefore, according to stakeholders, the program will be viable.
- It is very positive that the program includes mandatory practical training.

II. Areas of Weakness

- It is noted that, under the current national regulatory framework, teaching hours for staff involved in fee-paying PSPs are not formally credited within institutional workload models. This situation is not specific to the programme under review but reflects a broader structural issue in the Greek higher education system. The result is an unsustainable expectation on academic staff who are expected to deliver postgraduate teaching without corresponding workload recognition — a practice that may compromise the long-term viability of postgraduate provision nationally.
- Given the intensity of research-led teaching, and the need to preserve staff research time, mobility, and equitable workload distribution, this issue requires urgent reconsideration at the level of national policy. The panel encourages the Ministry of Education and the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education to review the existing regulatory framework, with a view to ensuring that staff contributions to self-funded PSPs are appropriately recognised in workload allocation and resourcing practices across institutions.

The new PSP as well as the Department needs to recruit new faculty members at the junior level. The large number of Full Professors is a shortcoming.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- A separate course on Research design – preparation of the thesis – is not currently included in the Programme.
- As growth in student needs and administrative demands continue, there may be a need for additional investment in administrative support in order to sustain administrative efficiency and response to service demands.
- In conversation with faculty EEAP members noted that there is an imbalance between the "parts" (Political Communication & Cultural Management) and the "whole" (Communication). The faculty members mistakenly responded to this issue as if it pertains to a distinction between "theory" and "empirical or applied research" within specific courses. To make this point is easy: just check the website of the International Communication Association, https://www.icahdq.org/ it lists some 50 "divisions" (e.g. specialties) within the field, inclusive of "Journalism" and "Political Communication". These are specialties within the broader discipline. The new PSP is supposed to cover the discipline of Communications and then offer specializations in Political Communication and Cultural Management. However, it is plain to see that the core or required courses do not cover the entire discipline satisfactorily. Given the focus of the PSP on the market-friendly aspects of the discipline of Communications, a possible solution could be to rebrand or rename the MA as "Applied Communication". These considerations should be the subject of further reflection by the Department and possibly provide the basis for future revisions.
- It is obvious that there is a strong need for the recruitment of new faculty members (as indicated by the unusually large number of Full Professors). That is particularly true at the junior level.
- Due to the large number of Full Professors, the indicators concerning research productivity should have been calculated over the entire span of individual careers. That would have produced far more accurate measurements of research productivity.
- It is necessary to take the necessary steps so teaching staff members do not have a teaching load that exceeds 12 hours per week.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:
Principles: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6
The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:
Principle: 2
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

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