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Accreditation Report
for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Landscape Architecture

Department: Architecture

Institution: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Date: 24/11/2025

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 **Landscape Architecture** 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 10

PRINCIPLE 1: QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND QUALITY GOAL SETTING FOR THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT 10

PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES 13

PRINCIPLE 3: STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT 17

PRINCIPLE 4: STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AND CERTIFICATION. 20

PRINCIPLE 5: TEACHING STAFF OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES 23

PRINCIPLE 6: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT 26

PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT 29

PRINCIPLE 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES 32

PRINCIPLE 9: ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC INTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES 35

PRINCIPLE 10: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES 39

Part C: Conclusions 40

I. Features of Good Practice 40

II. Areas of Weakness 41

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions 41

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment 42

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 Landscape Architecture of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Law 4653/2020:

1. PAVLOSTATHIS SPYROS (Chair)
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology
   (Institution of origin)

2. CHRYSAFI AIKATERINI ALEXANDRA
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   National Technical University of Athens
   (Institution of origin)

3. KATOPODES NIKOLAOS
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   University of Michigan
   (Institution of origin)

4. STATHOPOULOS THEODORE
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   Centre for Building Studies & Department of Building, Civil & Environmental Engineering (BCEE), Faculty of Engineering & Computer Science, Concordia University
   (Institution of origin)

5. THEODOSSOPOULOS DIMITRIOS
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   University of Edinburgh
   (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.

In preparation for the review and assessment of the postgraduate study programme (PSP) Landscape Architecture of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh), the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) reviewed a multitude of materials provided by the Hellenic Authority of Higher Education (HAHE), which included background information and guidance on the review and accreditation process, as well as detailed material and data related to the programme under evaluation, such as the programme accreditation proposal and associated appendices provided by the PSP through the HAHE. All programme evaluation material was submitted by the AUTh to HAHE in January 2024. At the request of the EEAP, several appendices of the programme accreditation proposal were updated by the AUTh.

The programme review was conducted via teleconference, organized, and coordinated by HAHE and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The schedule and agenda of the review were as stated below.

Monday 3/11/2025:
a) Preliminary private meeting of the EEAP. Discussion of the three Department of Architecture PSPs under review; assignment of writing sections of the draft accreditation reports to the EEAP members.
b) Welcome meeting and an overview of the three Department of Architecture PSPs with the Head of the Department Prof. A. Tellios, the Director of the PSP Landscape Architecture Prof. A. Vitopoulou, the Director of the PSP Advanced Design: Innovation and Transdisciplinarity in Design Prof. D. Kontaxakis, the Director of the PSP Environmental Architectural and Urban Design Prof. V. Tsakalidou, Department Internal Evaluation Group (IEG/OMEA) members Profs. K. Sakantamis, P. Issaias, D. Gourdoukis, and Institute Quality Assurance Unit (QAU/MODIP) Committee member Prof. P. Seferlis, MODIP Committee Secretary Mrs. A. Tzaneraki and MODIP staff Ms. M. Liolia and P. Poutiou: Brief presentation of the Department of Architecture history and structure, presentations of the above-mentioned three PSPs history, structure, strengths, weaknesses and other futures of the PSPs.
c) Meeting with Department administrative staff members Ms. Th. Iordanidou, Head Secretary, Ms. E. Fragkou, and Mr. I. Koukakis, Librarian; Ms. A. Mavridou, assisting staff PSP Landscape Architecture, Mr. A. Mpantogias, assisting staff PSP Advanced Design, and Ms. Ch. Kotsiori, assisting staff PSP Environmental Architectural and Urban Design; Prof. Th. Chatzigiannopoulos, member of Coordinating Committee and teaching staff PSP Landscape

Architecture and PSP Environmental Architectural and Urban Design; Prof. S. Chatzilazarou, member of Coordinating Committee and teaching staff PSP Landscape Architecture; Prof. S. Papadimitriou, teaching staff PSP Advanced Design: Innovation and Transdisciplinarity in Design; and Prof. L. Triantis, teaching staff PSP Environmental Architectural and Urban Design: Presentation of Department Secretary, on-line (video) tour of facilities, discussion of facilities, equipment, learning resources, software availability, as well as administrative and technical staff needs.
d) EEAP brief meeting. Discussion of the three programmes under review, impressions of the first day, coordination, and preparation for the remaining review and evaluation process.

Tuesday 4/11/2025:
a) Meeting with PSP Landscape Architecture faculty and teaching staff members, Profs. M. Ananiadou-Tzimopoulou, D. Fragkos, A. Manolos, M. Partalidou, D. Zavraka; Dr. A. Papadopoulou, Adjunct Faculty Member; Dr. P. Mouratidou, Teaching Staff: Discussion of teaching involvement, learning resources and other features of the PSP, professional development, research activities, as well as link between teaching and research.
b) Meeting with eight (8) current PSP Landscape Architecture students: Discussion of their study experience, satisfaction, facilities, student life, possible input in the PSP's development and quality assurance.
c) Meeting with PSP Landscape Architecture graduates Ms. Z. Karakinari, Ms. D. Karavasili, Ms. P. Koulali, Ms. A. Mpourlidou, Mr. Ph. Papapetrou, Ms. M. Pateraki, Mr. P. Vassiliadis, Mr. I. Venesis, Ms. E. Vouta, and Mr. V. Charistos: Discussion of their study experience, satisfaction, possible input in the PSP's development and quality assurance, and career path.
d) Meeting and discussion with employers and social partners: Ms. M. Tsoulou, Director of Michelis Foundation; Ms. E. Athanasiadou, President of Panhellenic Association of Landscape Architects (PHALA); Mr. L. Fredriksson, Vice President Communication of International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) Europe; Ms. M. Gidarakou, Landscape company; Ms. M. Lionatou, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Department of Metropolitan Planning of Thessaloniki; Mr. D. Metaxas, Head of Planning, Organization, Information Technology and Local Economic Development Department of Edessa Municipality; Mr. A. Semertzidis, Member of the Steering Committee, Technical Chamber of Greece, Department of Central Macedonia (TEE-TKM); and Ms. Julia Tzortzi, Professor Politecnico di Milano.
e) Private debriefing meeting (EEAP members only): Discussion of the outcomes and findings of the PSP virtual visit; preparation of oral report.
f) Closure meeting with Department of Architecture Head, PSP Director, Department IEG/OMEA Committee member, and Institute QUA/MODIP Committee member, secretary, and staff: Informal, oral presentation of the EEAP PSP key findings, discussion, and clarifications.

Wednesday 5/11/2025
Meetings with PSP Advanced Design: Innovation and Transdisciplinarity in Design teaching

staff, current students, graduates, employers, and social partners. Closure meeting with Department of Architecture Head, PSP Director, Department IEG/OMEA Committee member, and Institute QUA/MODIP Committee member, secretary, and staff.

Thursday 6/11/2025
Meetings with PSP Environmental Architectural and Urban Design teaching staff, current students, graduates, employers, and social partners. Closure meeting with Department of Architecture Head, PSP Director, Department IEG/OMEA Committee member, and Institute QUA/MODIP Committee member, secretary, and staff.

Friday 7/11/2025 to Friday 14/11/2025:
Draft report writing. EEAP virtual meetings. Review and finalization of the draft report.

Throughout the review and evaluation process, the EEAP was in close communication with the Department and PSP administration, who were very accommodating in providing additional information requested by the EEAP. The EEAP found that the Department and PSP administration, as well as the faculty, technical and administrative staff, PSP students, PSP graduates, and stakeholders interviewed were eager and helpful in our discussions, providing valuable additional information.

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 postgraduate study programme (PSP) Landscape Architecture was initially established in 2003 (Government Gazette 619/B'/20-5-2003) and was re-established in 2018 (Government Gazette 5436/B'/5-12-2018). The PSP is an interdepartmental programme of the Departments of Architecture and Agriculture, with the administrative support of the Department of Architecture.

The purpose of the PSP is to provide postgraduate education in the study and design of the outdoor, surrounding space, the natural and man-made landscape. The programme provides students with basic scientific principles, comprehensive knowledge, techniques, methods as well as new technology that make them capable scientists for the creation of new knowledge, the application of which has a direct impact on the design and management of the landscape.

Teaching in the PSP is carried out by thirty-six (36) individuals, most of them are faculty members in the Departments of Architecture and Agriculture (AUTh), seven (7) Emeritus Professors, two (2) faculty members from the Department of Law (AUTh), as well as four (4) researchers from the Hellenic Wetland Biotope Center. Specialized technical staff and administrative staff assist the PSP. Teaching is primarily through design studios and fieldwork, a learning environment that is typical in architectural education, and is amplified with guest tutors and speakers, from academia or the industry, often through the advisory board.

The programme has set at thirty-five (35) the maximum number of admitted students per each academic two-year cycle of studies, whereas the minimum number of admitted students is ten (10). The admission criteria and selection process are specified in the PSP Programme Guide. The tuition fees for the entire two-year study cycle are € 2800.

The PSP is a four-semester study resulting in a PSP diploma, level 7 of the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. To obtain the diploma, the student must have successfully passed sixteen (16) courses (90 ECTS) and completed a diploma thesis (30 ECTS). There are fifteen (15) elective courses. Instruction is in-person and attendance is mandatory.

Graduates of the PSP Landscape Architecture are prepared for careers in both the private and public sectors of the economy. A significant number of graduates have continued with doctoral studies and academic career. There are strong links to society, which is a key priority of the PSP, the Departments of Architecture and Agriculture, and the Institution.

The Department of Architecture offers three postgraduate studies programmes and participates in one interdepartmental and one interinstitutional postgraduate studies programme. The Department also supports doctoral studies.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Postgraduate Study Program (PSP) in Landscape Architecture is administered by the Department of Architecture in coordination with the Department of Agriculture at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh). The PSP aims to advance scientific and technological knowledge and conduct research in the field of Landscape Architecture. The PSP has been operating successfully since 2003. It offers a unique interdisciplinary experience and over the last twenty years, it has been recognized for its quality both in Greece and in the European Union.

The study programme comprises courses spanning three academic semesters (30 ECTS per semester) and the completion of a thesis (30 ECTS). The learning outcomes and acquired qualifications from this PSP are fully compatible with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (level 7).

The Department of Architecture, responsible for the Programme, employs a clearly defined Quality Assurance Policy, fully aligned with the University's Internal Quality Assurance Unit and the Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Standards. This policy includes commitments to continuous improvement, transparency, and active stakeholder involvement. The Quality Assurance policy is publicly available and applied across academic and administrative levels, ensuring shared ownership and accountability among faculty, staff, and external collaborators.

The PSP has created and monitored a set of suitable key performance indicators (KPIs), which are regularly updated and communicated to the Programme’s constituents. The strategic targets are carefully selected, and the target values are set to realistic levels.

The assurance of the quality of the PSP was explicitly demonstrated during meetings between the EEAP and students, recent graduates, and stakeholders of the Programme. They all expressed their respect for the PSP and testified to its efforts for quality assurance.

The quality of education offered by the PSP is heavily dependent on the efforts of a professor emerita and the extraordinary contributions by several early-career faculty who offer their services without compensation.

II. Analysis

The PSP Landscape Architecture has a well-developed structure, whose learning outcomes align with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education at Level 7. The teaching faculty of the PSP from both collaborating Departments have high-quality research records. The curriculum aims to educate competent and competitive graduates who will meet the growing demand in the labor market. The PSP adheres to a detailed Quality Assurance Policy, which outlines achievable and measurable goals, providing the basis for the programme's success and future improvement. The KPIs are designed for

incremental improvement and thus lack the potential for transformative changes to the Programme.

III. Conclusions

The PSP in Landscape Architecture meets all the requirements of Principle 1 regarding strategic management, quality assurance policy, and quality goal setting. The Programme is strategically aligned and academically sound. It is subject to continuous feasibility studies and a clearly defined quality assurance framework. Its outcomes align with Level 7 of the European and National Qualifications Frameworks, ensuring academic rigor and labor market relevance.

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

R1.1. Strengthen and promote ties with foreign universities to enhance faculty and student mobility.

R1.2. Intensify efforts to establish an external advisory board.

R1.3. Create a formal mentoring process for early-career faculty.

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 EEAP was generally satisfied with the development and delivery of this PSP on Landscape Architecture of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The internationally recognized programme was first founded in 2003. The PSP is well designed and covers a broad selection of topics in the field of Landscape Architecture including specializations in architectural and geotechnical designs. The programme aims at the generation of knowledge, the intensification of research to cover the needs of educational institutions, international organizations, public and private sector enterprises in terms of scientists and engineers with high level knowledge in sustainable environmental design for works in the urban, agricultural or natural environment with emphasis on the landscaping.

Special features of this programme are that students admitted must just have an undergraduate degree in any area, e.g., Engineering, Technology, Sociology, Biology, Economics etc.; there are no courses to give a general common ground to the students. There is minimum overlapping with the content of programme courses or any similar undergraduate courses. It is noteworthy that the PSP courses address not only the technical but also the economic, social, and political aspects of the field. Courses are offered (taught) through joint teaching.

The percentage of students graduating from this programme (in the order of above 85%) is good and consistent with other similar programmes. The grades of the students are rather high – typically in the order of 80 to 95%. Admission criteria are meticulous, and the admission of applicants is quite selective. The delivery of the programme is entirely in the presential mode (by physical presence) and exclusively in the Greek language. Nevertheless, there was no evidence of any formal student participation in the curriculum development, although no complaint has been expressed to the EEAP in this regard when talking with the students, graduates, and stakeholders, some of whom have been recent or non-recent graduates from this PSP.

II. Analysis

The EEAP was impressed by the success of and the high demand for this programme due, among other things, to the hard work, efforts and dedication of the Director and the faculty members teaching in this PSP. This success can also be attributed to the high quality of students admitted to this programme and the field of study, which is in the center of interest of the society, i.e., the significance

of the environment in design by considering bioclimatic factors, climate change and respect to the nature and the landscape. The number of admitted students (about 20-25) is lower than the maximum that could be accommodated (35) but the quality is high. However, an increase in the number of applicants, without lowering the admission standards, could be desirable in order to increase the long-term financial viability of the programme.

In addition, it is also remarkable to mention that the stakeholders interviewed by the EEAP expressed a very positive opinion of the programme and the technical and professional skills of the programme graduates, both in depth and breadth. These stakeholders have known or worked with the graduates or have taken the programme themselves.

Finally, the EEAP discussed the possibility of formal development of an External Advisory Board and suggested including in its membership the stakeholders of the programme output, for instance senior government or industry officials and other experts from academia and technology to advise the PSP administrators regarding the strategic development of this programme, potential curriculum enhancements, research, technological and socioeconomic needs and the like.

III. Conclusions

The PSP on Landscape Architecture of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki is highly successful and complies fully with the HAHE requirements of Principle 2. However, this PSP could be enhanced and enjoy even higher success with the formal establishment of an External Advisory Board providing critical input on issues such as curriculum evolution, enhancement of case studies and fieldwork experience, as well as better employability of the PSP graduates.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R2.1. Establish and publicize an External Advisory Board to advise the programme administrators regarding the strategic development and enhancement of this programme.

R2.2. Establish a formal process for the active participation of students in the curriculum

development of the programme.

R2.3. Consider increasing recruitment efforts to increase the number of admission applications to this programme.

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 Interdepartmental Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) "Landscape Architecture" adopts a student-centred approach to teaching and assessment, combining theoretical, laboratory, and design courses that encourage active participation, collaborative learning, and the development of research and synthesis skills. Students particularly benefit from teamwork, as the interdisciplinary composition of the groups promotes knowledge exchange and mutual understanding.

Moreover, there is frequent and direct communication between students and teaching staff, which facilitates the smooth operation of the PSP and allows for the timely resolution of emerging issues. This ongoing interaction may partly explain the lower participation in electronic course evaluations, without, however, diminishing their importance as a feedback tool. The available student evaluations (2019–2021) are highly positive regarding course content, structure, and teaching performance, while students expressed a favorable attitude towards the inclusion of a practical training component, considering that it would further strengthen the link between studies and the labour market.

In addition, the graduates' survey (2023) confirms the PSP's effectiveness, as 86.5% of alumni are employed in positions related to landscape architecture and maintain active communication with the PSP through professional and academic events. The role of the academic advisor is formally established in the PSP's regulations; however, interviews indicated that greater student awareness of this role would be beneficial.

Finally, a formal regulation for the management of complaints and appeals is in place and publicly available on the PSP's website, clearly defining the procedures for addressing academic and administrative matters.

II. Analysis

The PSP demonstrates a high level of compliance with the principles of student-centred learning and teaching. The combination of theoretical, laboratory, and design courses enhances students' active participation, creativity, and collaboration, while the emphasis on interdisciplinary teamwork fosters the exchange of ideas and the development of integrated approaches to landscape design.

Furthermore, continuous, and open communication between students and teaching staff strengthens the learning experience and contributes to a supportive academic environment. Although participation in electronic evaluations is relatively limited, informal feedback channels operate effectively, allowing the academic team to identify areas for improvement and adapt the PSP to students' evolving needs.

In terms of assessment, the methods applied are clear, consistent, and

transparent, including assignments, presentations, and the evaluation of the final thesis by a three-member faculty committee. Moreover, the existence of a formal regulation for managing complaints and appeals, publicly available on the PSP's website, ensures fairness and transparency in both academic and administrative procedures.

The role of the academic advisor further supports personalized guidance and academic mentoring, although additional communication with students about this role could enhance its effectiveness. At the same time, students' positive stance towards the potential introduction of a practical training component demonstrates that the PSP remains receptive to initiatives that strengthen the link between studies and professional practice.

Overall, the PSP reflects a mature and coherent implementation of student-centred teaching and assessment practices, maintaining close interaction among students, faculty, and alumni, and fostering a dynamic and participatory learning community.

III. Conclusions

The PSP demonstrates a strong student-centred approach to learning, teaching, and assessment. It promotes active participation, collaboration and independent thinking through transparent evaluation procedures and open communication between students and faculty within a constructive and supportive academic environment.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R3.1 Strengthen student awareness and engagement regarding the role of the academic advisor.

R3.2 Encourage more systematic participation of students in formal course evaluations to enhance the feedback process.

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 selection of students for admission to the PSP is based on criteria that include the quality of undergraduate studies, the GPA of the Bachelor's degree, the relevance of other postgraduate studies, proficiency in a foreign language, the candidate's research or professional experience, letters of recommendation, and publications. An Open Day is organized each Spring preceding the start of a new cycle for the orientation of perspective students at the PSP.

Every year, when classes begin, the Director of the PSP organizes an informative meeting with incoming students. Faculty members who teach in the PSP also participate in this meeting. Assessment of performance in courses is typically achieved through a combination of written or oral examinations, assignments, presentations, or a mix of these methods.

The terms and criteria for assessment in each course are communicated at the beginning of the course by the respective instructor or course coordinator. There have been no mobility or exchange activities for postgraduate students in the programme due to its intensive course study and thesis effort. Furthermore, there is no formal practical training.

There exist appropriate documents that describe the required procedures for participation in the postgraduate programme, the rights and obligations of the students, the assessment requirements, and the completion of their thesis work. The Diploma Supplement is issued without request in both the Greek and English languages.

II. Analysis

The EEAP recognizes the effective organization of the postgraduate programme and the quality of the regulations that promote the PSP academic culture. The Programme meets and exceeds all expectations for supporting the graduate students and provides an environment that rewards academic excellence. The student-to-teacher ratio in this PSP is appropriate, enhancing the learning experience. The faculty members work beyond the call of duty to maintain this high-quality programme; however, additional teaching faculty positions are needed to ensure the programme's viability.

III. Conclusions

Faculty members enjoy teaching their assigned topics and bring commendable benefits to the PSP through their extensive networks with national and international partners from academia, as well as the private and public sectors.

Allocating additional resources for professional development, technical support, and administrative assistance to the teaching staff is vital to the Programme's continued success.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R4.1. Increase the number of teaching faculty positions to enhance the academic viability of the PSP.

R4.2. Enhance support for faculty and staff through internal and external collaborations.

R4.3. Enhance the mobility support for early-career faculty.

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 criteria and recruitment procedures for faculty members and Collaborating Teaching Staff are outlined in the Greek State laws. The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, being a public university, must adhere to strict regulations, akin to all Greek public universities. The EEAP found that the teaching staff of the PSP on Landscape Architecture is gender-balanced (17 male and 19 female) and they have excellent qualifications to teach the courses offered by the programme. The workload of teaching staff is high and there is no extra compensation for teaching at this PSP. This workload proves to be challenging and demanding, allowing only limited time for research activities. However, research activities and some limited publications are carried out during the last (fourth) semester of the programme when students work on their diploma thesis.

It is also noteworthy to mention that each course in this programme is taught by a team of faculty members, each specializing in the topic(s) of the portion of the course they teach. The course evaluations are very good, but the percentage of student participation is low. The student satisfaction with the quality of teaching became clear during the meetings of the EEAP with the students and graduates of the programme.

II. Analysis

The commitment of the teaching staff to the mission of the PSP is superb. Some come from other Greek Universities and, considering the presential teaching mode of the programme, do not hesitate to travel to Thessaloniki; some have also been instrumental in the development of specialized laboratories. Such collaborations have boosted the morale and encouraged the professorial staff to enhance their teaching skills to better serve the students' interests.

Academic counselling has been activated and the maximum number of students per advisor is very low, which is extremely good. As also verified by the students and graduates the EEAP met, the faculty members teaching in the programme are very enthusiastic about teaching their subject matter.

Although this PSP is not generally research oriented, the teaching staff has very good research profiles with most of them having significant research output. This should be highlighted in the university's web pages.

It must be noted though that there is a broader issue with staffing at the Department of Architecture (a drop from approximately 100 to 25 faculty members over the last 20 years). The PSP also employs several emeriti professors, who bring strong and experienced engagement, but may hamper the appointment or development of new faculty members, or the exploration of other possibilities in the pedagogy or academic direction of the PSP. A recommendation can be to increase the student numbers to the prescribed 35, bringing more income and making thus the appointment of new faculty members necessary and feasible.

III. Conclusions

Faculty members have excellent qualifications, and they are highly capable of teaching the topics they are assigned to teach, and their teaching is enthusiastic. Students appreciate their teachers' efforts, and this makes the programme very successful.

Panel Judgement

Principle 5: Teaching staff of postgraduate study programmes	
Fully compliant	**X**

Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R5.1 Increase the number of teaching faculty positions with expertise in the PSP subject area.

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 EEEP attended a virtual tour of the facilities of the Interdepartmental PSP "Landscape Architecture," confirming the adequacy of the spaces and resources supporting the learning process. The PSP provides sufficient learning resources and infrastructure, with administrative and technical support offered by the Department of Architecture of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh). Teaching facilities and equipment are shared by the collaborating Departments of Architecture and Agriculture, ensuring access to lecture rooms, laboratories, libraries, electronic databases, and the University Farm for applied exercises.

In addition, the programme benefits from the institutional support services of

AUTh, such as the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU/MODIP), the Institutional Repository (IKEE), student welfare, and career services, and the University's IT networks. These services, combined with the programme's dedicated administrative support, contribute to a well-organized and accessible system of student assistance. Particular attention is given to ensuring equal access for all students, including those who are employed or have special needs.

Regarding funding, the programme relies mainly on tuition fees, which, after the legally required deductions, primarily cover administrative and technical support. Financial management is carried out through the AUTh Research Office (ELKE), while additional sources, such as the Michelis Foundation scholarship, further support its operation. Despite the limited state financial support through University and Ministry of Education funds, the collaborating departments play an essential role in maintaining and improving the available facilities and services.

Overall, the programme's resources, infrastructure, and support services are considered sufficient and effective, ensuring consistent support for teaching and learning within a well-structured and supportive academic environment.

II. Analysis

The PSP demonstrates a well-structured and efficiently managed system of learning resources and student support services, fully integrated within the infrastructure of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh). The ongoing collaboration between the Departments of Architecture and Agriculture guarantees sustained access to suitable instructional environments, laboratories, digital resources, and field facilities, thereby efficiently supporting both theoretical and practical elements of the curriculum.

Furthermore, administrative and technical support are effectively provided, while the institutional services of AUTh, such as MODIP, IKEE, student welfare and career guidance, and IT networks, enhance the overall learning environment. These mechanisms, governed by clear internal procedures, contribute to the smooth operation of the programme and the timely response to students' academic and administrative needs. Equal access to all services is ensured, including for working students and those with special needs.

In terms of financial sustainability, the programme operates mainly through tuition fees, which cover administrative and technical support, complemented by additional sources such as the Michelis Foundation scholarship. Although direct state funding remains limited, the collaborative structure between departments and the efficient utilization of available resources enable the programme to maintain a satisfactory level of facilities and services.

Overall, the learning resources, infrastructure, and support mechanisms are effectively managed and continuously improved, ensuring that students receive

consistent and equitable support throughout their studies in a well-organized and inclusive academic environment.

III. Conclusions

The PSP provides adequate learning resources, infrastructure, and student support services that effectively sustain the delivery of high-quality postgraduate education. The collaboration between the departments involved, the efficient administrative framework, and the integration of institutional support mechanisms ensure a well-functioning and inclusive learning environment conducive to academic success.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R6.1 Although the PSP operates effectively with the available resources, the EEAP encourages exploring additional funding opportunities, such as external grants or sponsorships, to further enhance the financial sustainability and development of the PSP's learning infrastructure and student support services.

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

The PSP and the Department use the University's central Student Information System (SIS) for student, course and programme management. This comprises a range of sub-systems that support the following areas:

- Degree programme (creation of new programmes, course entries)
- Student registration (admissions, enrolment)
- Student progression (assessment recording, awards, certificates)
- Course and programme level feedback by the students.
- Connection with the e-learning portal of the University

The accreditation documents provided enough detailed information, especially a generalised example of the students record entries, illustrated with screenshots

from SIS. The portal allows parts like student assessment (individually or as a class) or course management (class bookings, calendar) to be visible and manageable by the academic staff.

The E-learning portal https://elearning.auth.gr/ supports teaching with learning material and digital collaboration environments but is also linked to student systems and collects coursework marks.

Extensive statistics were provided from the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) at the level of the Institution, the Department, and the PSP for 2017-2023. Many of the data can be imported by the SIS, as it is set up according to the same parameters used by NISQA. The data include broad student progression statistics (students on programme, graduates, gender, continuing students).

The data appear to be consistent with the rest of the PSP accreditation documentation and discussions with the academic and administrative staff.

Student feedback is very actively collected in every possible format (paper forms in the classroom, digital forms) and statistically analysed in a digital platform.

AUTh has several other data collection services that the Department and the PSP use and contribute to, including: a repository of all documents recorded by the Quality Assurance Unit (study guides, programme handbooks, staff CV); a repository of scientific staff publications; management of research projects.

The University also supports the creation of specific web sites for each PSP.

II. Analysis

The University-wide facility like SIS is effectively used as an essential tool by the Department's registry and administration. This is particularly helpful since the PSP is inter-departmental, though administratively supported by the Department of Architecture. The PSP has a secretary who is responsible for the management of student records and the importing/ exporting of relevant data. Student and Department administrative staff did not report any major issue.

There is a positive culture in the collection of student feedback but in general the PSP has achieved less than 50% returns, which is low. The EEAP had an extensive discussion on timely ways to collect such feedback. Statistics on the student response are clearly collected in relevant tables.

III. Conclusions

The University and the PSP team collect and evaluate the right amount of data regarding student registration, progression and satisfaction, which will help future PSP revisions and improvements.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R7.1 Make sure the statistics are always up to date, especially for internal evaluations by the University Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) or for future external evaluations.

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 main way information is made public relative to teaching and academic activities of the PSP is a dedicated website that is signposted on both the Departments of Architecture and Agriculture websites (https://land-arch.web.auth.gr/), and contains the same information in both Greek and English.

On the PSP site there is comprehensive information about the structure of the PSP, admissions, staff and regulations, while it points to other important University services in academic support and student life. All sections provide the information expected in the heading and the news page is regularly updated. All information seems to be current, especially regarding admissions, which are up to date for the present 2-year study cycle of the PSP.

The section under the tabs Programme> PG Dissertations https://land-arch.web.auth.gr/programme/metaptyhiakes-diatrives is very interesting as it contains links to the dissertations of graduates from all the previous study cycles of the PSP.

The Study Guide is not available through the PSP site or at least is difficult to find. It is usually a good practice to have it available as it shows externalisation but also makes this very important document directly available to both applicants and students.

Most information seems to be presented for prospective students. The PSP staff and all students mentioned that the programme is active on Facebook (where information on the PSP but also other landscape design related activities are

mentioned) and other social media.
The PSP website can be easily found through an internet search as also more specifically through the Architecture Department main website https://architecture.web.auth.gr/postgraduate-studies/ and that of the Agriculture Department.

There is a protocol in place for the communication strategy, update and actualisation of the websites at the Department of Architecture, which is coordinated by a dedicated administration officer.

The University supports the creation of specific web sites for each PSP. The format is appealing and distinct for each PSP, and in general easy to navigate.

II. Analysis

The Department of Architecture and the PSP faculty appreciate the publication of information about their teaching and broader academic activities, while research of the staff is outlined on the CVs posted by the University QAU (MODIP).

The information published is certainly useful for perspective students and it complements their contact with the PSP staff when they inquire for postgraduate studies, as also for the Open Day the PSP organises in Spring.

The website may serve also academics who want to know more about the PSP and its staff (CV, teaching and research activities). These aspects should also be of interest to the stakeholders and the advisory board of the PSP, but their engagement with the programme could be enhanced with more extensive samples of student work or a more directly highlighted repository of the dissertations (possibly organised under clear themes or the overall theme of each study cycle of the PSP). This signposting can enhance the visibility of the programme by perspective employers and sponsors. The EEAP would even recommend that the external advisory board becomes more prominent by setting up a dedicated tab on the website, as it is common and highly successful practice in North American universities.

Some of the texts that introduce the PSP and communicate its philosophy date from 2005 and the founders of the programme. It would be very useful to update these statements and add more images of the current team, which appear to be very active. It would also be useful to have some text from the Department of Agriculture, the partner in the PSP.

A few words would also need to be added on the professional status of the PSP and the lack of a specific specialty at the Technical Chamber of Greece (TEE, the organisation responsible for accredited professions in the country). The programme presents itself as MLA, the usual title in Europe for such degrees, which in turn have a professional accreditation. The EEAP had conversations with

the PSP team about such perspectives, and it is useful to include a reflection on the profession at the introduction of the programme on the website.

Right now, significant information is published in the Department website, which duplicates the PSP site. For reasons of coherence and management, it may be advisable to remove most reference at the Department site and keep only the PSP one, ensuring this is a single source of information, which is maintained and updated properly.

III. Conclusions

The PSP faculty values the publication of information relative to their teaching and academic activities through a well organised, informative and well-maintained website, but also presence to other social media. Currently the site seems to be primarily addressed to perspective students, but useful information about staff and research can also be easily found. The site can be slightly reformed to engage industry stakeholders and the external advisory board and promote their links with the PSP activities. The site introductory texts need to be updated, to reflect the current directions of the programme, and the partnership with the Department of Agriculture.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R8.1 Make the website more appealing to industry stakeholders and the external advisory board and promote their links with the PSP activities.

R8.2 Ensure there is little duplication between the presentation of the PSP at the department of Architecture web site and the dedicated PSP one.

R8.3 Update or re-structure the introductory texts of the PSP website.

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 internal evaluation of the PSP was carried out primarily by the University Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) for the session 2022/23 and was approved in February 2024. The procedure was based on the principles established by HAHE, statistics provided by NISQA, course descriptors, student feedback and direct collaboration with the PSP team. There is no documented evidence of any other formal evaluation, such as input by the students or the external advisory board.

The evaluation highlighted many strengths that became apparent to the EEAP during the interviews with staff and students: the PSP clearly commits to a student-centred environment and QA procedures, it follows the academic and

industrial trends in the sector, and staff is very competent and active in research, which keeps the programme in line with modern developments and in touch with the industry. Data are consistently collected and effectively used in the development of the programme. The limited mobility of the students, incomplete website (in both English and Greek) and the function of the Academic Advisor were pointed out as weaknesses that needed attention.

Several optional recommendations were made in the internal evaluation by MODIP: enhance QA compliance; strengthen application of published University regulations (especially Academic Advisor and handling of complaints); update website regularly; enhance care for the development needs of the academic staff; act upon internal evaluation towards the development of the PSP, stressing the collaboration with students. There is no formal and direct response of the PSP on these recommendations.

The input of the students is sought through their feedback towards the end of each semester, which is then passed on to the teaching staff, and any action upon it (improvement of the courses) is coordinated by the Architecture Department Internal Evaluation Group (OMEA). Evaluation for the whole PSP is sought just before graduation and OMEA organises reflection and action. Participation is usually 40-50%. Currently, there is no further direct way for the students to formally participate in the development of the PSP curriculum.

Staff research evaluation recognises the specific character of architectural research and uses a broader set of outputs and criteria, rather than only text-based submissions (peer-reviewed journals): teaching projects, exhibitions, participation at design competitions, or social and artistic activities. Information about the staff is given primarily through their CVs at their profiles which are clearly signposted on the PSP website.

A SWOT analysis was presented, and the future of the PSP seems to be secured. In general, academic staff numbers are considered to be sufficient, with deficiencies noted at the administration and technical staff.

In general, the internal evaluation is supported by evidence about most aspects of the teaching environment, student life and QA procedures.

II. Analysis

The internal evaluation seems to be comprehensive in administrative terms and is monitoring effectively the good learning experience of the PSP students. The evaluation confirms a student-centred learning environment, and this is manifested in academic issues, facilities, resources and student support. The students confirmed their satisfaction and the value they placed in working in well-equipped studios and getting constant care by the staff, who in turn seem to be sufficiently engaged with the whole QA process annually and in the context of the

internal evaluation.

The student opinion has been effectively monitored through direct contact with the students, but it seems this is weaker through official procedures like annual feedback. This has resulted in a constant renewal of the curriculum in each study cycle, in line also with the staff's interests and trends in the academic and design sector, as was appreciated more by discussions with the PSP students and staff.

The students' participation in the programme evaluation at 40% is considered low, but it is higher than the average in other PSPs. The staff make every possible effort throughout the semesters to improve response, including filling the evaluation forms in the classroom. One of the reasons given by the staff is that they are in constant contact with the students – the group is small (20 students), and they continuously work together in the design studios – and they are responding immediately to any students' concern, as it was verified by the students. One way forward can be to seek actively a less formal summary of the students' impressions by asking for a short report by the student representatives at the end of each study cycle.

The sustainability of the PSP is justified by the student cohort that has stabilised to around 20 admissions in each study cycle, while the staff spoke of a positive teaching experience, sufficient specialisms and strong engagement. No particular demand was made for an increase of revenue from the fees for direct expenses.

Mobility of students was discussed with the PSP staff and students. Though it has become an essential aspect of the broader undergraduate learning experience in AUTh, student exchanges were not deemed feasible or necessary in the PSP context: the students are in the PSP and the city for a year, and mostly work during the rest of each week, which would make any semester-long study abroad unfeasible.

Further actions have been taken on the internal evaluation recommendations: the website is quite comprehensive and appealing now (see Principle 8). The EEAP did not become aware of any complaint by the students or mishandling, especially in our conversations with them. The students also were aware of the role of the Academic Advisor but have not made much use of this service.

III. Conclusions

The internal evaluation has confirmed the positive academic activities of the staff and learning experiences of the PSP students, while the programme is considered as sustainable for the foreseeable future. Good quality assurance practices are followed, with the proper engagement of the staff. The curriculum evolves constantly as a result of acting constructively to student feedback, which shows satisfactory returns.

Student mobility was seen as a weakness in the internal evaluation, but staff and students do not believe such a practice can fit the schedule and pedagogy of the PSP. Long term teaching faculty recruitment was not discussed in the internal evaluation and does not seem to concern the PSP team; however, broad reliance on emeriti staff became a point of discussion within the EEAP.

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

R9.1 Mobility of students should not be an issue and needs to be clarified in the next internal evaluation.

R9.2 Enhance the shaping and updates of the curriculum by seeking input from students and constituting a formal external advisory board.

R9.3 Organise student feedback earlier in each semester, so that there is enough time for mid-term improvements. Explore further ways for feedback collection, possibly through a short report by student representatives in each study cycle.

R9.4 Discuss staff recruitment within the resources of the PSP (importance of renewal, less dependency on emeriti professors), but also the policy of the Department of Architecture, due to the low number of faculty members overall. Increase in PSP student numbers may need to be considered in this direction.

PRINCIPLE 10: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP has not undergone an external evaluation until now despite its 22 years of existence. In October 2019, the AUTh Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) was evaluated and fully accredited by the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQA), the pre-runner of HAHE. Several recommendations included in the above-mentioned accreditation report pertinent to the PSPs have been implemented. The Institution, through its Quality Assurance Unit (QAU/MODIP), organizes and supports the external evaluation procedures of the PSP according to the specific guidelines and directions provided by HAHE.

II. Analysis

Given the articulated quality assurance and control policy and procedures (see Principle 1), the experience of the Department administration and teaching staff, as well as the experience of the University QAU (MODIP) administration and staff with the review and accreditation process, it is expected that the PSP will fulfil the expected requirements of Principle 10.

Measures should be taken regarding the systematic and documented feedback by students, alumni, and external stakeholders, as well as the implementation of the programme's periodic internal evaluation findings. The participation of alumni and external stakeholders in the annual PSP evaluation should be made in a formal, structured, and documented manner.

III. Conclusions

The Department and PSP administration, faculty, and staff are aware of the importance of external evaluation and accreditation. The recommendation made below will result in an enhanced implementation and documentation of quality policy and continuous development of the programme.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R10.1 Develop a formalized and systematic process for adopting the recommendations of external evaluations, along with a detailed and documented action plan, as well as implementation timelines.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- The programme has the necessary procedures for monitoring quality assurance and continuous improvement which align with the strategic objectives of the Department and the University.

- Faculty and staff are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and dedicated to PSP's mission, resulting in a very positive and professional environment.

- Infrastructure and other resources are generally adequate for the successful operation of the PSP.

- Instruction is mostly in person.

- The employment potential of the PSP graduates in public and/or private sector is high.

- Stakeholders and social partners praised the PSP and believe there is a clear need for such graduates.

- The programme is addressing an area of need in the Greek economy, both at local and national level.

II. Areas of Weakness

- There was no formal, organized involvement of external stakeholders, PSP alumni, etc. in the design of the PSP.

- The number of enrolled students is relatively low compared to the possible maximum number of admitted students, especially when considering the existing shortage of the knowledge and skills of this type of PSP's graduates.

- Faculty mobility through Erasmus+ and/or other similar programmes, as well as broader utilization of sabbatical leaves, is low.

- Participation of visiting international faculty in the PSP is limited.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

1) Consider introducing mid-term course/instructor evaluations to improve the quality of instruction in the current semester.
2) Develop a formal mechanism for the input of alumni and external stakeholders, as well as the systematic implementation and documentation of such input in the programme's annual internal evaluation.
3) Establish a formal process for the active participation of students in the curriculum development of the programme.
4) Enhance the visibility and outreach of the PSP to attract a larger number of applicants and increase enrolment closer to the set maximum capacity.
5) Conduct staff satisfaction surveys to document the needs of faculty, teaching, and administrative staff.
6) Increase the number of teaching faculty positions with expertise in the PSP

subject area to enhance its academic viability. Discuss staff recruitment within the resources of the PSP (importance of renewal, less dependency on emeriti professors), but also the policy of the Department of Architecture, due to the low number of faculty members overall. Increase in PSP student numbers may need to be considered in this direction.

7) Make the website more appealing to industry stakeholders and the external advisory board and promote their links with the PSP activities.

8) Explore additional funding opportunities to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the programme and further develop its learning infrastructure and student support services.

9) Strengthen and promote ties with foreign Universities to enhance faculty and student mobility. Enhance collaborations with other Universities by actively utilizing opportunities provided by the Erasmus+ programme.

10) Create a formal mentoring process for early-career faculty.

11) Develop a formal and systematic process for adopting the recommendations of external evaluations, along with a detailed and documented action plan, as well as implementation timelines.

12) Intensify efforts to establish an external advisory board.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

None

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
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