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Εθνική Αρχή
Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης
Hellenic Authority
for Higher Education

Αριστείδου 1 & Ευριπίδου 2 • 10559 Αθήνα | 1 Aristidou str. & 2 Evripidou str. • 10559 Athens, Greece
T. +30 211 1903 400 • E. secretariat@ethaae.gr • www.ethaae.gr

Accreditation Report
for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Greece: Ecclesiastical History and Culture

Department: Social Theology and Christian Culture

Institution: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Date: June 2026

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

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Postgraduate Study Programme of **Greece: Ecclesiastical History and Culture** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the postgraduate study programme of Greece: Ecclesiastical History and Culture of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Law 4653/2020:

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

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

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

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

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

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

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

The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) was constituted in May 2026 and the accreditation support material concerning the reformed Postgraduate Study Program "Greece: Ecclesiastical History and Culture" (PSP 1) of the Department of Social Theology at the Faculty of Theology of the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki in cooperation with the Department of Social Theology and Religious Studies of the University of Athens, was available via the HAHE Accreditation Management System before the accreditation visit. The review was organized by HAHE and the Department Social Theology and Christian Culture of the AUTH. The quality of the support material was excellent. Indicatively, the providing documentation included: Course Syllabi, Study Guide, the Guidelines for Academic Advisors, the Senate decision for the Quality Policy and Institutional Strategy, the Student Guide, the Internal Evaluation Report of MODIP, Teaching Staff Information, the Accreditation Proposal, etc.

During the visit, all the participants involved (MODIP, Teaching Faculty, Administrative Staff, and social partners) were very prompt to provide us with all the information we asked for. The meetings with the Department of Social Theology and the social partners, which took place on Tuesday, June 2nd, 2026, were conducted online utilizing Zoom video conference facilities. All meetings took place in a very friendly and cooperative spirit.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On Wednesday, June 3rd, 2026, the EEAP continued its meetings, first with following teaching staff of PSP1 “Greece: Ecclesiastical History and Culture:
- Prof. Symeon Paschalidis, AUTH.
- Prof. Basileios Tsigkos, AUTH.
- Prof. Emmanuel Karageorgoudis, NKUA.
- Prof. Sotirios Despotis, NKUA.
- Prof. Ioannis Panagiotopoulos, NKUA.
- Assoc. Prof. Gregorios Liantas, AUTH.

The EEAP discussed various topics of interest with the above mentioned faculty, e.g. the

program's structure and profile, professional development opportunities, mobility, competence and adequacy of the teaching staff to ensure learning outcomes, workload, evaluation by students; link between teaching and research; teaching staff involvement in applied research, projects and research activities directly related to the program; strengths and possible areas of weakness.

The next meeting was with active students of the PSP1, namely:

- Father Filotas Talidis, 2nd semester student.
- Ms. Archontoula Prousali, 2nd semester student.
- Ms. Polyxeni Galanopoulou, 2nd semester student.
- Ms. Maria Mizamidou, 2nd semester student.
- Father Emmanouil Roubis, 2nd semester student.
- Mr. Ioannis Fountoulis, 2nd semester student.
- Mr. Nikolaos Karagiannis, 4th semester student.
- Mr. Konstantinos Memilas, 4th semester student.
- Mr. Konstantinos Morfos, 4th semester student.

All students expressed their satisfaction with the structure and the content of the program and praised the engagement and the help of the teaching staff, especially the fact that each student is assigned a study counsellor. Regarding the fact that this PSP takes place exclusively in presence, the students stated that they were content with the teaching arrangements that demand their physical presence either at the AUTH or the NKUA on every Saturday during the semester.

On the negative side, the students expressed the wish to meet physically at least once per semester the teaching staff from the other participating department, i.e. the students at the NKUA the teaching staff of the AUTH and vice versa, and the wish for more than one workshops per semester. The students at the NKUA complained about the insufficient resources of the library of the NKUA Theological Faculty. Another general desiderate was the introduction of a course devoted explicitly to scientific and research methodology.

After the meeting with active students the EEAP had the opportunity to meet some

graduates of the PSP, namely:

- (Father Gerasimos) Demosthenis Vlatitsis, Presiding Priest of the Holy Church of Saint Chrysostomos of Smyrna in Drama-Head of Sports Affairs of the Holy Metropolis of Drama.
- Mr. Panagiotis Gekas, Primary Education Teacher at the 4th Primary School of Farsala (Larissa Regional Unit).
- Ms. Despoina Andreou, Human Resources Director of the Municipality of West Lesvos.
- Ms. Dimitra Papanikolaou, Major – Hellenic Air Force Officer, NATO Headquarters Thessaloniki.
- Mr. Christos Papadopoulos, Explosives Ordnance Disposal Technician, Police Sub-Lieutenant, Directorate of Special Police Forces of Northern Greece, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit, Hellenic Police.
- Mr. Ioannis Tsiolis, Commander of the Department of Police Constable Trainees of Mouzaki, Police Deputy Director – PhD Candidate at the Department of Physical Education and Sport Science, University of Thessaly.
- Ms. Eleni Tsakiridou, Head of the Supervision and Linen Department at Georgios Gennimatas General Hospital of Thessaloniki.
- Ms. Maria-Eleni Alexiadi, PhD Candidate at the Department of Preschool Education, University of Crete.
- Mr. Christos Christopoulos, PhD Candidate at the Department of History, Archaeology and Cultural Resources Management, University of Peloponnese.

The alumni described their study time also in vibrant colors and – especially those ones who attended the PSP during the COVID19 pandemic, when presence teaching was banned - highlighted the fact that the studies take place in exclusively presence. Regarding critical comments, the graduates pointed out the missing of an official alumni tracking procedure, e.g. a graduate association.

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

- Mr. Michael Lappas, Deputy Mayor for Culture of the Municipality of Trikala.
- Mr. Christos Rumpidis, Director of Secondary Education of Thessaloniki
- Mr. Theodoros Tzemis, Estate Agent.
- Ms. Evrope Papadopoulou, School Counselor for Secondary Education Theology.
- Mr. Konstantinos Moraitidis, Vice President of the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

- Mr. Georgios Skiadaresis, Head of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Chalkidiki and Mount Athos.
- Ms. Eftymia Seraphim, Head of the Center for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counseling and Support, Patras II.
- Mr. Nikolaos Georgiadis, General Lyceum Director, Prosotsani, Drama.
- Mr. Spyridon Kiartzis, Director of New Technologies and Alternative Energy Sources of HelleniQ Energy.

His Eminence Metropolitan of Langada, Liti and Rentini,Platon was invited but could not attend the meeting.

The meeting with the employers and social partners was of a very constructive nature and all involved parties highlighted the importance and utility of the PSP, especially for the proper management of the religious monuments and sites and expressed their enthusiasm and willingness to offer their support in any possible way.

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

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

- Prof. Konstantinos Christou, Director of PSP
- Prof. Apostolos Kralidis, Head of the School.
- Prof. Panagiotis Tzoumerkas, Member of the Steering Committee of the PSP
- Prof. Ekaterini Tsalampouni, OMEA co-ordinator.
- Prof. Nikolaos Maghioros, Vice Rector of Academic Affairs and Development /MODIP Committee Chair
- Mr. Vasileios Fyntikoglou, Professor, MODIP Committee Member
- Mrs. Alexandra Tzaneraki, MODIP Committee Secretar

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

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

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

The PSP "Greece: Ecclesiastical History and Culture" is offered by the Department of Social Theology at the Faculty of Theology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in cooperation with the Department of Social Theology and Religious Studies of the University of Athens. It is designed to provide graduates with advanced academic training through a competitive selection process, culminating in a MA Degree.

The PSP was established in 2016, with an executive order published in the Government Gazette 3486/issue B/ 31-10-2016 and commenced operations in the same year. It was reformed in 2019 and again in 2025 due to the need to harmonize with the provisions of law 4952/2022.

The program's aims are:

- The cultivation and promotion of scientific knowledge and research in the fields of History and Culture, as they have been shaped in the Greek cultural space.
- The provision of postgraduate students with specialized knowledge on the subject, with the aim of more fully preparing them for their scientific and professional careers.
- The production and dissemination of knowledge, methodologies, tools and research results in the scientific field in which the two collaborating Departments operate.

The teaching takes exclusively in presence. However, since the students are distributed between Thessaloniki and Athens, access to the teaching sessions provided in the one partner department is provided via teleconference in the premises of the other partner department.

A key focus of the program is academic outreach and collaboration, both nationally and internationally. It actively seeks partnerships with other universities and research centers via ERASMUS+ cooperations

The main goal of the program is to broaden graduates' professional prospects by providing scientific competence to work in:

- Public administration and organizations
- Religious institutions and Churches
- Media and communication organizations
- Institutions managing religious and cultural heritage
- Education and research

The Faculty members are dedicated to maintaining academic excellence, promoting innovative research, and contributing to the advancement of their disciplines.
The duration of studies is three (3) academic semesters, which correspond to a total of 90 ECTS credits.
The number of admitted students per year is 80. The tuition fee amounts to € 1800 payable in three installments.

The PSP accepts applicants based solely on academic criteria. Eligible candidates include:
- Holders of first-cycle degrees from the Departments of Theology and Departments of Humanities of domestic institutions.
- Holders of first-cycle degrees from other domestic universities/technical institutes.
- Graduates of the Higher Ecclesiastical Academies and Production Schools.
- Holders of first-cycle degrees from similar foreign institutions.

The admission process for applicants to the PSP “Greece: Ecclesiastical History and Culture” takes place at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The admission criteria are:
a) BA score, multiplied by a factor of four (4), with a maximum of 40%.
b) Previous research activity (based on the number) or participation in student mobility educational programs: up 10%.
c) Possible relevant professional experience, (based on the relevance to the subject of the PSP): up to 10%.
d) A second degree receives yields 5%.
e) A first or second cycle postgraduate degree yields 5%.
f) Knowledge of a second foreign language (English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Albanian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Serbian and Turkish at level B2 and above yields 5%.
g) Oral interview with a grading scale from zero (0) to ten (10). The grade of the oral interview is multiplied by a factor of two (2), i.e. the interview yields a maximum 20%.

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

In each of the first two semesters, three compulsory postgraduate courses and one elective course (chosen from three (3) elective courses) are offered. Additional lectures on Scientific Research Methodology, on writing theses, and articles are also offered. The PSP organizes also a yearly research workshop and various excursions.

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

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel reviewed the strategic framework supporting the establishment and implementation of the Postgraduate Study Program “Greece: Ecclesiastical History and Culture” of the Department of Social Theology and Christian Culture of the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki in cooperation with the Department of Social Theology and Religious Studies of the University of Athens.

The PSP was established in 2016, and was amended in 2019 and again in 2025 due to the need to harmonize with the provisions of law 4952/2022. It carries a total of 90 ECTS, delivered over three academic semesters.

The PSP is embedded in the Department of Theology of the AUTH. Its purpose is to provide scientific knowledge and research in the fields of History and Culture, as they have been shaped in the Greek cultural space.

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

The tuition fees amount to € 1800, payable in three installments.

The admission process is clearly defined, publicly available, and transparent, ensuring fairness and consistency in student selection. The PSP also benefits from collaborations with social partners and public and private organizations, e.g. education authorities, ecclesiastical authorities, and foreign academic research institutions.

The PSP has adopted a quality assurance policy aligned with the AUTH’s internal quality assessment system.

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

During the academic year 2022-23, the courses were evaluated by the students. The evaluation process is carried out electronically through the MODIP system. The students were informed about the start of the evaluation process by the Department Secretariat and the teaching staff of the PSP. Of the 33 registered students of the academic year, 24 students participated in the evaluation process. The participation rate in the evaluation for the entire academic year is 72,7 %. This rate is satisfactory.

The students' responses showed that a high percentages (62.3% for the academic

year 2022-2023) of the students believe that the knowledge acquired was of a high level and resulted in a close relationship between studies and work, that the PSP was a particularly good basis for the development of skills; and that the promotion of the students' abilities is a strong point of the PSP, which, especially for the graduates, was a particularly important factor in order to cope with the demands of their work in their existing or expected professional career. The surveys also highlighted the very positive view that the students have of the teachers of the PSP and of the teaching methods in general.

STRENGTHS

- Originality
- Teaching staff
- Interdisciplinary
- Diversity in the origin of students
- Possibility of utilizing the infrastructure of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the National University of Athens
- In-person education
- Sufficient duration of studies
- Scientific research
- Extroversion
- Stable demand
- Low tuition fees
- Adequacy of resources
- Sustainability

WEAKNESSES

- Low graduation rate
- The structure of presence teaching discriminates students living in remote parts of the country and cannot reach the teaching sites in Thessaloniki and Athens within a reasonable timeframe and with reasonable transportation costs.

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

II. Analysis

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

III. Conclusions

The PSP does meet all requirements of Principle 1. It is strategically anchored within AUTH's governance and quality framework and is supported by a fully operational Quality Assurance System linked to MODIP. The asynchronous

learning strategy is integrated, technically sound and pedagogically appropriate. Staff qualifications and program structure are fully consistent with Level 7 standards.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None

PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP THEIR POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES FOLLOWING A DEFINED WRITTEN PROCESS WHICH WILL INVOLVE THE PARTICIPANTS, INFORMATION SOURCES AND THE APPROVAL COMMITTEES FOR THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES. THE OBJECTIVES, THE EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND THE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS ARE SET OUT IN THE PRORAMME DESIGN. DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES, THE DEGREE OF ACHIEVEMENT OF THE LEARNING OUTCOMES SHOULD BE ASSESSED. THE ABOVE DETAILS, AS WELL AS INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME'S STRUCTURE ARE PUBLISHED IN THE STUDENT GUIDE.

The academic units develop their postgraduate study programmes following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile and orientation of the programme, the research character, the scientific objectives, the specific subject areas, and specialisations are described at this stage.

The structure, content and organisation of courses and teaching methods should be oriented towards deepening knowledge and acquiring the corresponding skills to apply the said knowledge (e.g. course on research methodology, participation in research projects, thesis with a research component).

The expected learning outcomes must be determined based on the European and National Qualifications Framework (EQF, NQF), and the Dublin Descriptors for level 7. During the implementation of the programme, the degree of achievement of the expected learning outcomes and the feedback of the learning process must be assessed with the appropriate tools. For each learning outcome that is designed and made public, it is necessary that its evaluation criteria are also designed and made public.

In addition, the design of PSP must consider:

- *the Institutional strategy*
- *the active involvement of students*
- *the experience of external stakeholders from the labour market*
- *the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) for level 7*
- *the option of providing work experience to students*
- *the linking of teaching and research*
- *the relevant regulatory framework and the official procedure for the approval of the PSP by the Institution*

The procedure of approval or revision of the programmes provides for the verification of compliance with the basic requirements of the Standards by the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).

Documentation

- *Senate decision for the establishment of the PSP*
- *PSP curriculum structure: courses, course categories, ECTS awarded, expected learning outcomes according to the EQF, internship, mobility opportunities*
- *Labour market data regarding the employment of graduates, international experience in a relevant scientific field*
- *PSP Student Guide*
- *Course and thesis outlines*

- *Teaching staff (name list including of areas of specialisation, its relation to the courses taught, employment relationship, and teaching assignment in hours as well as other teaching commitments in hours)*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Interinstitutional Postgraduate Program (ΔΠΜΣ) titled "Greece: Church History and Civilization" is jointly offered by the Department of Social Theology and Christian Culture at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH)—acting as the coordinating and administrative institution—and the Department of Social Theology and Religious Studies at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA). The curriculum spans a minimum of three academic semesters and requires the accumulation of 90 ECTS credits, leading to a Master's Degree (ΜΔΕ) aligned with Level 7 of the National and European Qualifications Frameworks. The educational structure awards 30 ECTS credits per semester: the first and second semesters consist of three compulsory core courses and one elective course each (7.5 ECTS per course), while the entire third semester is reserved for the preparation, completion, and public defense of a Master's research thesis.

Student admissions are regulated by an annual intake cap of 80 students and a minimum operational threshold of 40 students. Total tuition fees amount to 1,800 EUR per student, with statutory provisions allowing a complete fee waiver for up to 30% of the active student body based on strict socioeconomic indicators, as well as merit-based academic excellence scholarships that cover third-semester fees for up to 10% of enrolled students.

The teaching faculty consists of 12 primary instructors drawn from both cooperating departments and related theological faculties, establishing an adequate student-to-faculty ratio of approximately 6:1.

An internal quality audit conducted by the AUTH Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) on December 29, 2023, confirmed that the alignment of the program's Internal Operational Regulations with Law 4957/2022 was completed and subsequently published in the Government Gazette (FEK 3782/τ.Β΄/17-7-2025).

The MODIP internal evaluation identified three prominent operational vulnerabilities: an incomplete and outdated bilingual (Greek and English) website, a significantly skewed male-to-female faculty gender ratio of 12:1, and a low rate of timely student graduation alongside a low cumulative number of graduates.

The curriculum does not feature a formalized or funded practical internship (Πρακτική Άσκηση), though it incorporates course-integrated educational site visits to museums, historical libraries, monuments, and cultural heritage preservation centers.

Candidate evaluation is conducted via a transparent, quantified point system assessing primary degree classification (max 40 points), prior research/mobility activity (max 10 points), relevant professional experience (max 10 points), secondary degrees (5 points), existing postgraduate titles (10 points), secondary foreign languages (5 points), and a structured oral interview (max 20 points), with mandatory written language examinations for uncertified applicants.

II. Analysis

The curriculum layout successfully synthesizes traditional ecclesiastical history with innovative, interdisciplinary subjects, including Ecclesiastical Diplomacy and Etiquette, the Administration and Organization of the Church of Greece, and Christian Monument Management. This composition directly aligns with Level 7 descriptive parameters by reinforcing comparative critical thinking and specialized problem-solving capacities.

Long-term financial sustainability is well established through the self-funded tuition mechanism (1,800 EUR), which fully covers operational expenses independently of central university budgets and provides budget lines for invited specialist lecturers and infrastructure improvements.

The 6:1 student-to-faculty ratio guarantees close academic mentorship, ensuring ample individual guidance throughout the development of course papers and thesis research.

Structured mechanisms for student-centered feedback are embedded via end-of-semester electronic course and instructor evaluation questionnaires managed by MODIP. Student participation remains high despite confidentiality anxieties typical of specialized cohorts.

Operational transparency and public communication are currently compromised by significant delays in updating the program's official bilingual web infrastructure, which is still being modified.

The extreme gender imbalance in the instructional roster (12 male faculty members to 1 female faculty member) and the protracted student graduation timelines constitute areas of non-compliance with broader European benchmarks for institutional diversity and the efficiency of educational progression.

III. Conclusions

The postgraduate study programme meets the necessary academic design, administrative structure, and regulatory compliance standards for institutional validation, showing a well-balanced and self-sustaining curricular model. To satisfy total quality assurance standards, the administration must execute rapid corrective actions to fully finalise and maintain the bilingual web portal.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Implement an active staffing policy to diversify its teaching roster and remedy the disproportionate 12:1 gender ratio.

- Reinforce the Academic Advisor system to systematically track student progress, mitigate delays in thesis submission, and optimiue timely graduation indices.

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

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

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

The student-centred learning and teaching process

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

In addition

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Panel reviewed the PSP's comprehensive documentation and engaged in detailed conversations with academic and administrative staff, current students and alumni concerning the principle of Student-Centred Learning, Teaching, and Assessment. The PSP provides the necessary conditions for students to be encouraged to take an active role in the learning process. More specifically, the student-centred approach of the programme is reflected in a number of core priorities, including respect for students' diversity, individual needs, and expectations. The PSP applies student-centred teaching methods that promote active participation whereas the procedures and methods used for student assessment are clear and transparent. The PSP has established a mechanism for the management of student complaints, as well as the Academic Advisor, both of which contribute to supporting students throughout their studies.

II. Analysis

The PSP adopts a student-centered approach, acknowledging students' diverse learning needs and drawing on their varied academic backgrounds within an interdisciplinary learning environment. Teaching staff employ a variety of methods, including lectures, seminars, study and analysis of books and articles, student presentations, written assignments, educational visits, and attendance at conferences and events. Students and alumni confirmed the use of these teaching methods and noted that they maintain regular communication with their instructors, who are readily available and supportive.

However, students attending remotely expressed a desire for at least one in-person meeting with their instructors per semester. The PSP contributes to the development of students' research skills through the organization of regular academic seminars, though students noted that more frequent sessions would be welcome. Assessment criteria and methods are published in advance, and student evaluations reflect an overall positive experience within the program. The Academic Advisor regulation is in place and, according to both faculty and students, plays a helpful role in their academic journey.

Finally, a complaints and appeals regulation is in place, with a designated faculty member serving as complaints officer for the program.

III. Conclusions

The Panel found that the PSP places particular emphasis on student-centred learning and teaching and it is in full alignment with the related principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Consider introducing at least one mandatory in-person meeting between instructors and remotely attending students per semester, in order to strengthen communication and engagement.

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

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP AND APPLY PUBLISHED REGULATIONS COVERING ALL ASPECTS AND PHASES OF STUDIES (ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, THESIS DRAFTING, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION).

All the issues from the beginning to the end of studies should be governed by the internal regulations of the academic units. Indicatively:

- *the student admission procedures and the required supporting documents*

- *student rights and obligations, and monitoring of student progression*
- *internship issues, if applicable, and granting of scholarships*
- *the procedures and terms for the drafting of assignments and the thesis*
- *the procedure of award and recognition of degrees, the duration of studies, the conditions for progression and for the assurance of the progress of students in their studies*
- *the terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility*

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

Documentation

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the Postgraduate Study Programme*
- *Research Ethics Regulation*
- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility, and student assignments*
- *Degree certificate template*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Panel reviewed the PSP's comprehensive documentation and engaged in detailed conversations with academic and administrative staff, current students and alumni concerning the principle of Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Postgraduate Studies, and Certification. The Study Regulation, the Mobility Regulation, and the Thesis Guidelines outline the student selection process, the stages of study, and the measures in place to ensure students' academic progression. They also address thesis preparation, the recognition of studies, the conditions for enhancing student mobility, and the awarding of the postgraduate diploma.

II. Analysis

The PSP implements regulatory provisions covering matters related to the principle of Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Postgraduate Studies, and Certification. More specifically, the Study Regulation covers a range of provisions addressing the PSP's governing bodies, the number of admissions, the criteria and process for student selection, the duration and conditions of study, students' rights and obligations, the curriculum and ECTS credits, the student mobility programme, as well as matters related to coursework and the postgraduate thesis. Student assessment for each course is carried out by the instructor through a combination of assignments and/or progress examinations. The contribution of participation in other educational activities, such as paper presentations at seminars and conferences, to the final grade is determined separately for each course. Participation in mobility programmes is encouraged; however, it was noted that broad participation in Erasmus exchanges is limited due to the duration of the study programme. Although no formal internship is in place, students participate in activities that strengthen their professional skills. Moreover, the PSP has adopted the university's Research Ethics Regulation. All relevant regulations and the Programme Guide are publicly available on the PSP's

official website (https://hchc.past.auth.gr/). Lastly, the diploma supplement is issued in both English and Greek, ensuring accessibility and clarity for all graduates.

III. Conclusions

The Panel found that the PSP has established clear procedures and regulations concerning student admission, progression, and recognition. These ensure a structured and transparent approach to academic processes, contributing to the overall quality of the programme.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

PRINCIPLE 5: TEACHING STAFF OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ASSURE THEMSELVES OF THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF THEIR TEACHING STAFF, AND APPLY FAIR AND TRANSPARENT PROCESSES FOR THEIR RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.

The Institution should attend to the adequacy of the teaching staff of the academic unit teaching at the PSP, the appropriate staff-student ratio, the appropriate staff categories, the appropriate subject areas, the fair and objective recruitment process, the high research performance, the training-development, the staff development policy (including participation in mobility schemes, conferences, and educational leaves-as mandated by law).

More specifically, the academic unit should set up and follow clear, transparent and fair processes for the recruitment of properly qualified staff for the PSP and offer them conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching and research; offer opportunities and promote the professional development of the teaching staff; encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research; encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies; promote the increase of the volume and quality of the research output within the academic unit; follow quality assurance processes for all staff (with respect to attendance requirements, performance, self-assessment, training, etc.); develop policies to attract highly qualified academic staff.

Documentation

- *Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment*
- *Employment regulations or contracts, and obligations of the teaching staff*
- *Policy for staff support and development*
- *Individual performance of the teaching staff in scientific-research and teaching work, based on internationally recognised systems of scientific evaluation (e.g. Google Scholar, Scopus, etc.)*
- *List of teaching staff including subject areas, employment relationship, Institution of origin, Department of origin*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The teaching staff of the PSP "Greece: Church History and Culture" consists of 13 faculty members: 8 full professors, 4 associate professors, and one assistant professor. Nine are faculty members of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and the other four are faculty members of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. Only one of the 13 faculty members (namely, the only assistant professor) is a woman, and this results in an almost extreme gender imbalance. The research and teaching interests of the teaching staff cover a large variety of areas, ensuring that the courses of the PSP can be adequately taught.

II. Analysis

Each faculty member typically supervises 4-6 students of the PSP at the dissertation stage each term. This results in a rather heavy teaching workload,

which might not allow for very extensive engagement in research activities. Although the publication record of the teaching staff is extensive, its international impact seems to be limited, at least according to Google Scholar: the average h-index of the teaching staff is only 1.15, with almost half of the staff having an h-index of zero. Moreover, there are no references in Scopus to any publication by 11 of the 13 teaching staff members. The teaching staff is regularly evaluated by the students through electronic surveys, and the results of those surveys are made available to the faculty members and are taken into account (in addition to the research performance of the faculty members) in promotion decisions.

III. Conclusions

Based on the above analysis, the EEAP finds that the PSP "Greece: Church History and Culture" substantially complies with Principle 5.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

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

- Address the gender imbalance by hiring more women.

PRINCIPLE 6: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER THE TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS OF THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMME. THEY SHOULD –ON THE ONE HAND- PROVIDE SATISFACTORY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR LEARING AND STUDENT SUPPORT, AND – ON THE OTHER HAND- FACILITATE DIRECT ACCESS TO THEM BY ESTABLISHING INTERNAL RULES TO THIS END (E.G. LECTURE ROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, NETWORKS, CAREER AND SOCIAL POLICY SERVICES ETC.).

Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient resources and means, on a planned and long-term basis, to support learning and academic activity in general, so as to offer PSP students the best possible level of studies. The above means include facilities such as the necessary general and more specialised libraries and possibilities for access to electronic databases, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, IT and communication services, support and counselling services.

When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed students, students with disabilities), in addition to the shift towards student-centred learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the institutional context. However, the internal quality assurance proves -on the one hand- the quantity and quality of the available facilities and services, and -on the other hand- that students are aware of all available services.

In delivering support services, the role of support and administration staff is crucial and therefore this segment of staff needs to be qualified and have opportunities to develop its competences.

Documentation

- *Detailed description of the infrastructure and services made available by the Institution to the academic unit for the PSP, to support learning and academic activity (human resources, infrastructure, services, etc.) and the corresponding firm commitment of the Institution to financially cover these infrastructure-services from state or other resources*
- *Administrative support staff of the PSP (job descriptions, qualifications and responsibilities)*
- *Informative / promotional material given to students with reference to the available services*
- *Tuition utilisation plan (if applicable)*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Panel examined the PSP's extensive documentation and held in-depth discussions with academic and administrative staff, current students and graduates regarding the principle of Learning Resources and Student Support. The PSP functions within a well-structured framework of infrastructure and services, reflecting the availability of a wide range or resources that support learning. These resources encompass academic and administrative staff, physical facilities, support services, access to library resources and a broad range of digital tools and services.

II. Analysis

As part of the Department of Social Theology and Christian Culture of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, in cooperation with the Department of Social Theology and Religious Studies of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, the PSP has established a comprehensive framework of services and infrastructure to enhance the quality of learning and student support. Facilities in both departments are equipped with modern audiovisual and computing infrastructure, high-speed internet access, as well as adequate heating and cooling systems and they are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities ensuring an inclusive learning environment. Students have access to the Libraries of the Theology Schools of both Universities, which hold a large number of books relevant to the PSP's subject area.

Both libraries are well-organized and offer access to electronic resources. Students and graduates expressed satisfaction with the available materials, highlighting their value to their research work. The PSP offers students a variety of digital tools and services, including an e-learning platform, a course management system designed to facilitate asynchronous learning, as well as email services. In addition, students benefit from a broad range of support services, including the Career Office, the Psychosocial Support Unit, the Accessibility Unit of Students with Disabilities, the Student Ombudsman, the Foreign Language Teaching Centre, the Student Cultural Association.

Students are informed about the PSP's academic and research resources through various channels, including introductory meetings at the beginning of each semester and the official website of PSP and Universities. Feedback from both students and alumni shows that these services are well known, easy to access, and suited to their academic needs. Graduates noted the need for the creation of a graduates' association and for greater involvement and interaction in the activities of the PSP. Administrative support is provided both by the Department's staff and external associates appointed for this purpose, as well as through digital services (https://sis.auth.gr/). Students and alumni spoke positively about the efficiency and accessibility of the support provided. The PSP has developed a tuition utilization plan aimed at ensuring the financial sustainability of the program, including faculty remuneration expenses, student mobility costs, and other related expenditures. Finally, students have the option to apply for a fee exemption which may be granted on the basis of academic merit and income-related criteria.

III. Conclusions

The PSP shows a strong commitment to providing students with a wide range of services and resources, making effective use of its available assets, and fully meeting the requirements of the principle of Learning Resources and Student Support.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Consider establishing a graduates' association to foster greater involvement and interaction of alumni in the activities of the program.

PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

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

Institutions are expected to establish and operate an information system for the management and monitoring of data concerning students, teaching staff, course structure and organisation, teaching and provision of services to students.

Reliable data is essential for accurate information and decision-making, as well as for identifying areas of smooth operation and areas for improvement. Effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on postgraduate study programmes and other activities feed data into the internal system of quality assurance.

The information collected depends, to some extent, on the type and mission of the Institution. The following are of interest:

- *key performance indicators*
- *student population profile*
- *student progression, success, and drop-out rates*
- *student satisfaction with their programmes*
- *availability of learning resources and student support*

A number of methods may be used to collect information. It is important that students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.

Documentation

- *Report from the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) at the level of the Institution, the department, and the PSP*
- *Operation of an information management system for the collection of administrative data for the implementation of the PSP (Students' Record)*
- *Other tools and procedures designed to collect data on the academic and administrative functions of the academic unit and the PSP*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

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

II. Analysis

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

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

III. Conclusions

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

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None

PRINCIPLE 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Joint MSc Programme "Greece: Church History and Civilization" has established comprehensive mechanisms for providing public information to prospective students, current students, graduates and other stakeholders. The programme maintains a dedicated website hosted within the digital infrastructure of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Public information is available in both Greek and English and includes admission requirements, programme regulations, curriculum structure, course descriptions, learning outcomes, tuition fees, mobility opportunities, academic staff and contact details. Students and graduates confirm during the interviews that the structure is helpful and the information is always updated and accurate. Formal procedures are in place to ensure the maintenance, updating and security of the website. Responsibilities for website management are clearly assigned and supported by institutional services. The programme has designated personnel responsible for content management and updating, while the university provides technical support and infrastructure maintenance. The programme also benefits from integration with institutional quality assurance systems through the MODIP platform, where study guides, programme information, course data, staff information and quality assurance documentation are made available. In addition to web-based communication, the programme organises scientific events, conferences, lectures, graduation ceremonies and dissemination activities that contribute to its public visibility and engagement with academic and societal stakeholders. Documentation and the webpage demonstrates sustained dissemination activity and active communication of programme achievements and academic outputs, except on the case of the Alumni section, which has not been regularly updated.

II. Analysis

The programme demonstrates a strong commitment to transparency and accessibility of information. Public information appears comprehensive, easily accessible and supported by formal procedures ensuring its regular updating and reliability. A particular strength is the existence of bilingual information and the integration of programme information into institutional quality assurance infrastructures, which contributes to consistency between public communication and internal quality processes. The programme goes beyond minimum compliance requirements by maintaining a visible public profile through scientific and outreach activities. This contributes positively to its reputation and supports engagement with prospective students and external stakeholders. The available information covers the major aspects required for informed decision-making by prospective students. The existence of formal procedures for website maintenance and content management further supports the reliability of public information. Nevertheless, the public information could be further enriched through more systematic publication of graduate destinations, employability indicators, alumni achievements and international cooperation activities, which would provide additional evidence of programme outcomes and impact.

III. Conclusions

The program provides accurate, comprehensive and regularly updated public information through multiple channels. Public communication is supported by formal procedures and institutional infrastructures and contributes effectively to transparency and stakeholder engagement. The program exceeds minimum requirements regarding dissemination and public visibility.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Strengthen the visibility of international collaborations and research activities through the program website.

- Consider a redesign of the Alumni section, which contains sections not properly updated. It could include more structured information concerning graduate careers, alumni achievements and employability outcomes.

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

INSTITUTIONS AND ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR THE AUDIT AND ANNUAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF THEIR POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES, SO AS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES SET FOR THEM, THROUGH MONITORING AND POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS, WITH A VIEW TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

The regular monitoring, review, and revision of postgraduate study programmes aim at maintaining the level of educational provision and creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

The above comprise the evaluation of:

a) the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the PSP is up to date
b) the changing needs of society
c) the students' workload, progression and completion of the postgraduate studies
d) the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students
e) the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme
f) the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the PSP in question

Postgraduate study programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date.

Documentation

- *Procedure for the re-evaluation, redefinition and updating of the PSP curriculum*
- *Procedure for mitigating weaknesses and upgrading the structure of the PSP and the learning process*
- *Feedback processes concerning the strategy and quality goal setting of the PSP and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*
- *Results of the annual internal evaluation of the PSP by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), and the relevant minutes*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The programme operates within the Internal Quality Assurance System of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and makes extensive use of institutional information systems and quality assurance mechanisms. A comprehensive information management framework is in place. Data are collected through the Student Information System (SIS), the institutional Quality Management System (MODIP), student evaluations, course reports, academic statistics, graduate surveys, research indicators and administrative records. These systems are interconnected and support the continuous monitoring of academic, administrative and quality-related processes. The programme systematically monitors a broad range of indicators, including student participation in

evaluations, programme demand, admission data, student progression, staff workload, student-to-staff ratios, research outputs, student participation in conferences and satisfaction indicators. Annual analyses are conducted and documented. The documentation demonstrates that evaluation results are analysed by the Internal Evaluation Group (OMEA), the Programme Committee and other quality assurance bodies. Based on the analysis of collected data, action plans and improvement measures are formulated and implemented. The internal evaluation conducted by MODIP confirms compliance with the accreditation standards and identifies areas for continuous enhancement. Student participation in course evaluations is reported as relatively high for a postgraduate programme, while graduate feedback mechanisms are also in operation. The programme maintains quantitative quality indicators and targets, including indicators related to student satisfaction, participation in evaluations, admissions, student research activity and teaching resources. During the interviews, the MODIP responsible provided suitable information about the work already done, and the students and graduates confirmed their participation in evaluation and proper feedback on the results.

II. Analysis

The program demonstrates a mature and well-developed quality culture. Monitoring and review activities are systematic, evidence-based and supported by reliable institutional infrastructures. A significant strength is the integration of multiple information systems that enable the collection, analysis and utilization of both quantitative and qualitative data. The program does not merely collect information for compliance purposes; rather, the documentation provides evidence that quality data are actively used in program management, decision-making and improvement processes. The existence of defined quality indicators, annual analyses and action plans demonstrates an operational quality cycle that includes data collection, interpretation, implementation of corrective actions and subsequent review. This reflects good practice in internal quality assurance and continuous enhancement. The program also benefits from a relatively high level of student engagement in evaluation activities and from systematic collection of graduate feedback, both of which strengthen the evidence base for program review. One area that could be further developed concerns the systematic monitoring of graduate careers and professional trajectories beyond program completion. While student and graduate satisfaction data are collected, more structured employability monitoring could further strengthen the program's review processes and strategic planning.

III. Conclusions

The programme has established effective and comprehensive mechanisms for continuous monitoring and periodic review. Quality assurance processes are systematic, data-driven and clearly embedded within programme governance structures. The evidence demonstrates that monitoring activities contribute directly to quality enhancement and informed decision-making.

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

- Develop a more structured framework for tracking graduate careers and long-term professional outcomes.

PRINCIPLE 10: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The specific interinstitutional postgraduate programme has not previously undergone an independent, program-level external evaluation or a formal accreditation cycle by an external committee of experts.

At the institutional level, the external evaluation of AUTH conducted in 2015 highlighted distinct systemic weaknesses across the university's broader postgraduate catalogue, noting a clear lack of coordinated central mechanisms to promote cross-departmental collaboration and structural interdisciplinarity, as well as chronic faculty understaffing.

The 2015 institutional external evaluation panel recommended specific corrective strategies, including the institutionalisation of mandatory organised research seminars to foster interaction among postgraduate researchers, the creation of a variety of program lengths (ranging from 2 to 4 semesters), and the inclusion of independent research theses as a mandatory component across all master's portfolios.

In a 2018 Progress Report submitted to the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education, AUTH's MODIP noted that standardising the 2015 external suggestions across all programs was unfeasible due to distinct disciplinary characteristics, thus leaving final structural decisions to individual departmental General Assemblies.

The subsequent institutional evaluation and accreditation of AUTH's Internal Quality Assurance System in 2019 was concluded with zero negative observations or adverse findings regarding postgraduate provisions. Following its internal review on December 29, 2023, MODIP formally instructed the program management to align with external validation expectations by increasing

international research collaborations, enhancing global publication metrics, and expanding student mobility and conference presentation frequencies.

II. Analysis

While a dedicated historical record of program-specific external evaluations is missing, the current curriculum structure was designed to incorporate and address the recommendations issued during the 2015 institutional external evaluation.

The program's optimal 3-semester layout meets the duration recommendation. Furthermore, the institutional requirement for independent research is realised by designating a substantial, standalone block of 30 ECTS credits explicitly to the Master's thesis in the final semester.

The historical criticism of a lack of cross-departmental coordination is addressed by the program's fundamental design as an interinstitutional partnership between AUTH and NKUA, effectively pooling faculty resources across two premier national institutions.

The inclusion of a mandatory end-of-semester "Scientific Conference" (Επιστημονική Ημερίδα), where students publicly present their research papers and receive critical feedback, directly satisfies the 2015 institutional external directive to establish interactive research seminars for young scholars.

Through the systematic utilization of MODIP's Quality Management Database and the Integrated National Quality Information System (OPESPA/ΟΠΕΣΠ), the program remains under continuous internal tracking, positioning it to feed data seamlessly into national evaluation frameworks. However, to ensure a successful outcome in upcoming independent programmatic accreditations, the management must aggressively address MODIP’s latest directives to resolve lagging graduation timelines, normalize faculty gender ratios, and enhance international research visibility.

III. Conclusions

The postgraduate program demonstrates strong structural alignment with historical institutional external evaluation directives, successfully embedding interdisciplinary cooperation and mandatory independent research into its operational template.

As the program approaches its inaugural independent external programmatic accreditation, the administrative focus must pivot from passive structural compliance to active performance optimization.
Priority must be placed on systematically tracking and publicizing alumni professional placement data, expanding formal international research networks, and accelerating student integration into global scientific symposia to meet HAHE

external benchmarks.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- The curriculum layout successfully synthesizes traditional ecclesiastical history with innovative, interdisciplinary subjects.
- Long-term financial sustainability is well established through the self-funded tuition mechanism.
- The 6:1 student-to-faculty ratio guarantees close academic mentorship, ensuring ample individual guidance throughout the development of course papers and thesis research.
- Student-centered approach.
- Employment of a variety of methods, including lectures, seminars, study and analysis of books and articles, student presentations, written assignments, educational visits, and attendance at conferences and events.

- The PSP shows a strong commitment to providing students with a wide range of services and resources.

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

- Implementation of a mature and well-developed quality culture.

- Strong structural alignment with historical institutional external evaluation directives, successfully embedding interdisciplinary cooperation and mandatory independent research into its operational template.

II. Areas of Weakness

- Discrimination and partial exclusion of students living in remote parts of the country and cannot reach the teaching sites within a reasonable timeframe and with reasonable transportation costs.

- Significant delays in updating the program's official bilingual web infrastructure, compromize operational transparency and public communication.

- Extreme gender imbalance in the instructional roster and the protracted student graduation timelines.

- Insufficient personal contact with the remote part of the teaching staff.

- Heavy teaching workload, which impairs engagement in research activities.

- Very low h-index scores of the teaching staff.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Introduce methods of inclusion of students who cannot be physically present at he teaching sites.

- Consider introducing at least one mandatory in-person meeting between instructors and remotely attending students per semester, in order to strengthen communication and engagement.

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

- Address the gender imbalance by hiring more women.

- Implement an active staffing policy to diversify its teaching roster and remedy the disproportionate 12:1 gender ratio.

- Reinforce the Academic Advisor system to systematically track student progress, mitigate delays in thesis submission, and optimiue timely graduation indices.

- Consider establishing a graduates' association to foster greater involvement and interaction of alumni in the activities of the program.

- Strengthen the visibility of international collaborations and research activities through the program website.

- Consider a redesign of the Alumni section, which contains sections not properly updated. It could include more structured information concerning graduate careers, alumni achievements and employability outcomes.

- Develop a more structured framework for tracking graduate careers and long-term professional outcomes.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

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

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

2, 5

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

None

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:

None

Overall Judgement	
Fully compliant	**X**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname	Signature
PSARROS NIKOLAOS	Signed by PSARROS NIKOLAOS
LAZARIS STAVROS	Signed by LAZARIS STAVROS
Marsico Claudia	Signed by Marsico Claudia
VRANAS PETER	Signed by VRANAS PETER
ΒΑΓΙΑΤΗΣ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΣ	Signed by ΒΑΓΙΑΤΗΣ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΣ