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Accreditation Report
for the New Postgraduate Study Programme of:

International Studies: Specialization European Studies

Institution: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Date: 29 September 2023

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the New Postgraduate Study Programme of **International Studies: Specialization European Studies** 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 New Postgraduate Study Programme of **International Studies: Specialization European Studies** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** comprised the following five (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. **Professor Apostolis Papakostas (Chair)**
   Södertörn University, Stockholm Sweden

2. **Professor emeritus Nikos Fokas**
   Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) Budapest

3. **Associate Professor Petros Vamvakas**
   Emmanuel College, Boston MA, 02215

4. **Mrs Evangelia Lekaki, Student**
   Department of International and European Studies, University of Piraeus

II. REVIEW PROCEDURE AND DOCUMENTATION

In reviewing the proposed Postgraduate Study Programme of International Studies: Specialization European Studies at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (hereafter the "Programme"), the objectives of the Panel, as described in the Guidelines for the Members of EEAP, are:

- to establish whether the data provided from the various resources is consistent among one another and reflect the actual situation.
- identify strengths and areas of weakness.
- engage in a constructive dialogue with the Institution, leading to reflection and continuous enhancement of the study programme.

Following a well-prepared schedule provided by HAHE, the Panel held several separate interactive virtual (by electronic means, ZOOM platform) meetings and visits as follows:

On Tuesday, 26/09/2023, 2023, the following virtual meetings took place:

- with the Rector of the University, the Director of the Programme and Head of the Department, MODIP members and staff, and Steering Committees/OMEA members
- on-line tour of classrooms, lecture halls, libraries, laboratories and other facilities related to the Programme. The on-line tour was followed by a discussion about the facilities in which teaching and administrative staff participated.
- with teaching staff of the Programme.
- with employers and social partners of the private and the public sector.
- meeting with the Rector of the University, the Director of the Programme and Head of the Department, members and staff of MODIP, and members of Steering Committees/OMEA members.
- This is a proposed programme; thus, the Panel could not meet students or alumni.

During the above virtual meetings, the Panel had the opportunity to meet, talk, and interact with all the participants of all meetings. All the participants were encouraged to express their views and they did so. The discussions were very constructive, fruitful and were conducted in a cooperative manner and attitude. All the meetings included presentations, discussions, and question and answer sessions. During the last meeting, some clarifications were provided, and the Panel made an informal presentation of some initial key findings.

The internal evaluation report and other extensive material were made available to the Panel electronically in advance through HAHE. More information and material were made available during the meetings. The Department worked diligently in preparing the internal evaluation report and other relevant materials, as well as in organizing and hosting the virtual meetings. It is the feeling of the Panel that the Department has performed an excellent job throughout the internal evaluation process and the objectives of the process have been fully met. The efficiency and eagerness of the Department to answer questions and provide additional information and clarifications during the meetings are worth noting. The Panel wishes to

express its thanks and appreciation to the Department and the University administration for their co-operation and professionalism.

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

III. STUDY PROGRAMME PROFILE

The proposed Postgraduate Study Programme "International Studies: Specialization European Studies" is a cooperation between the Aristotle University and the University of Turin (Università degli Studi di Torino), Italy. It has an interdisciplinary nature and its structure and courses offered are consistent with the Department's overall objectives. It awards a Master's Degree.

The aims of the Program are the following:

To endow its graduates with specialized knowledge in the field of European integration and to provide interdisciplinary training on the functioning of European institutions and the formulation and implementation of European policies, with emphasis on the external policies of the Union (the Mediterranean and Africa, the Balkans and Asia).
To provide a supranational and multinational analysis of European Union policies, to create a strong international academic environment of skills in European studies and a competent professional employment framework in the field.
To train scientists and professionals who will be able to meet the needs of the public and private sector at national, international, and subnational level.
To foster cooperation with the wide European academic community and to promote research in the field of European studies.

Forty students are admitted each year (20 in each University). The duration of the studies is four academic semesters. For the completion of the Programme, 120 ECTS are required which are equally distributed over four semesters (30 ECTS per semester). During the first and second semesters, the courses are planned to take place in Thessaloniki, at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki under the administrative control and supervision of the Department of Political Sciences. During the third and fourth semesters, the courses will take place in Turin, at the Università degli Studi di Torino under the administrative control and supervision of the Department of Cultures, Politics and Society. The fourth semester also includes the elaboration and submission of a postgraduate dissertation. Fees are adjusted to specific regulations in each country.

During the first two semesters, students take five common courses of 10 ECTS per course and two elective courses (5 ECTS each, chosen of four possible courses), and during the third semester they write a thesis which is a requirement. The language of the Programme is English. The Programme offers courses in Arabic and Chinese languages.

The Programme is supported by the academic staff of the Department of the two Universities as well as academic staff from other Departments. All teaching staff are Ph.D. holders who are active scholars and researchers in diverse areas such as European Studies, European Governance, Balkan Studies, Europeans Institutions, Political Sociology, European Economics, Constitutional Law, in Arabic and Chinese language etc.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 1: QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND QUALITY GOAL SETTING FOR THE NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE INCLUDED IN THEIR STRATEGY THE DEVELOPMENT, ORGANIZATION, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES IN SPECIFIC SCIENTIFIC FIELDS AFTER INVESTIGATING THEIR FEASIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY.
INSTITUTIONS SHOULD IMPLEMENT A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY FOR THE NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC PLANNING.
THE QUALITY POLICY SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AND SPECIALIZED (WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF EXTERNAL BODIES) IN THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND ENFORCED BY ALL INTERESTED PARTIES.

By decision/s of the Senate, the Institutions should include in their strategy the issues of development of new postgraduate study programmes, which support the character, vision, mission, and strategic objectives of the Institution. The Institutional strategy should identify the potential benefits and possible difficulties or risks for the establishment of new graduate study programmes and plan all the necessary actions to achieve the goals as set. The Institution's strategic choices should be documented by specific feasibility and sustainability studies, especially for new postgraduate programmes.

In the case of offering PSP by distance methods, the Institution prepares and implements an e-learning strategy. The Institution's e-learning strategy is integrated into its overall strategy and identifies educational goals adapting to rapid technological changes and changes in pedagogical models. The Institution should include in its strategy the justification and feasibility as to why e-learning has been chosen as an appropriate learning strategy for the particular programmes of study in which it is applied.

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

The academic unit's quality policy for new postgraduate programmes is harmonized with the Institution's strategy and is formulated in the form of a statement, which is made public and implemented with the participation of all interested parties. It bears the pursuit of specific goals, related to the assurance and improvement of the quality of the postgraduate study programmes offered by the academic unit. Indicatively, the academic unit's quality policy statement includes its commitment to the implementation of a quality policy, which will promote the academic character and orientation of the new postgraduate study program, its purpose and objectives, implement the goals and determine the means and the ways of achieving them, and will apply the indicated quality procedures, with the final aim of its continuous improvement.

For the implementation of this policy, the academic unit undertakes to implement quality procedures that will demonstrate:

a) *the appropriateness of the structure and organization of new postgraduate study programmes*
b) *the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in line with the European and National Higher Education Qualifications Framework level 7.*
c) *the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of the teaching work at the PSP.*
d) *the suitability of the qualifications and the availability of the teaching staff for the PSP.*
e) *the drafting, implementation, and review of specific annual quality objectives for the improvement of PSP.*
f) *the level of demand for the acquired qualifications of the graduates in the labour market.*
g) *the quality of support services, such as administrative services, libraries, and student welfare services for the PSP.*
h) *the efficient utilization of the financial resources of the PSP that may come from tuition.*
i) *carrying out the annual internal evaluation and review of the quality assurance system for PSP with the cooperation of OMEA and MODIP of the Foundation.*

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

- **Findings**

The institution has clearly demonstrated the need and outlined the vision and strategy of implementing this post-graduate program. The inter-institution approach in the development of this program is smart and efficient as it leverages the strengths of the partnering institutions, while addressing current shortcomings, as in the cases of courses in economics and foreign languages (Arabic and Chinese). Furthermore, the Institution utilizes its Thessaloniki location, as a centre for Balkan region expertise, which allows it to develop a niche within the European academic institutions.

As it is outlined in the strategic plan the "The primary objective of the School is to provide students in all cycles of their studies with an excellent quality education that prepares them for a successful career in the field of political sciences, public administration and international relations. As far as postgraduate programs are concerned, and especially for the Joint English-Language Interinstitutional Postgraduate Program "International Studies: Specialization in European Studies" (hereinafter referred to as the Programme), the School has formulated

and implements an integrated quality policy that guides their development process, and complements the quality policy of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki while complying with the relevant special standard of the HAHE. “

The quality policy for programme is clearly outlined with three main strategic goals, which are spelled out with specific assessment values and a target date of 12/31/2024. The proposed Masters Program has three assessable outlined goals: Enhancement of the Academic Curriculum of the Program; Enhancement of Academic Research; Enhancement of Reputation and Internationalization of the Institution. Each of these goals is broken down and values are associated with each target, with the date of assessment being the end of 2024.

- **Analysis of judgement**

The Institution has done a nice job in outlining the need and the goals of the proposed inter-university partnership, which truly has a great deal of merit. There is also a clearly outlined process of assessment and evaluation, even though, it might have to be reviewed after the initial assessment period, as to the effectiveness of some of the sub-categories identified for assessment. The date of the initial assessment of 12/31/2024 might be too soon to render any meaningful results and would be recommended that the initial assessment takes place after 2 years of the program’s implementation, and not in the middle of the academic year.

- **Conclusions**

This is certainly a promising and very necessary proposed Masters Program, which should be pursued as the projected benefits far outweigh any possible shortcomings. The clearly outlined process of evaluation is not only required but necessary to guarantee the deepening of the program and more importantly the sustainability of this undertaking.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

The academic units develop their postgraduate study programmes following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile and orientation of the programme, the research character, the scientific objectives, the specific subject areas, 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. courses 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).

Relevant 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.

Study Programme Compliance

- **Findings**

The Institution has clearly outlined the process that was followed to get the program approved through the proper channels outlined. The internal and external processes of MODIP and ADIP have been followed and their assessments have been included in the proposal. There is also a clearly outlined semester by semester two-year curriculum with the required courses of the proposed Masters Program, accounting and fulfilling the ECT requirements. Each course does have a syllabus with outlined learning goals, expectations, as well as reading and assessments. The inter-institutional nature of the proposed programme is an essential dimension, which certainly enhances the experiential learning of the students and allows them to be better prepared for the post-graduate professional environment. The professional orientation of the graduate of the program is certainly outlined in the goals of the programme and was repeatedly stated by many of the stakeholders during the interviews and the virtual visit.

- **Analysis of judgement**

The designers of the programme have covered all of the criteria outlined by this Principle, as there is clearly institutional support for the proposed program, there is a clear outline of the course of study as well as the curricular requirements and expectations, on the course, semester, year and program level.

- **Conclusions**

The programme is designed within all the guidelines provided, with the appropriate goals and requirements, as the assessment process. More importantly this is a student-centered programme, from the academic layout to the expected outcomes of professional placement. The designed Masters Program has as expected outcomes, providing work experience for students, and linking research and teaching. Two skills necessary for student professional success.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

PRINCIPLE 3: STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AND DEGREE AWARD

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

The Institution should have drawn up and published the internal regulations prescribed by law which, among other things, should regulate all matters of postgraduate studies from the beginning to the end of the studies.

Indicatively:

- Students' selection procedures and required supporting documents.
- The rights, obligations, and monitoring of student progress.
- Internship matters (if applicable) and scholarship matters.
- The procedures and conditions for preparing theses and dissertations.
- The process of awarding and recognizing degrees, the duration of studies, the conditions for promotion and ensuring the progress of students in their studies.
- The terms and conditions for enhancing their mobility.

In the case of offering the PSP with distance learning methods, the Institution should have a regulation for e-learning, which includes in particular the following topics:

- Services of the Institution to support e-learning.
- Course development and implementation methodology.
- Ways of providing the teaching work and variety of forms of teaching and assessment of the students
- General standard of course structure.
- Student support system.
- Supporting faculty/teachers with mandatory e-learning training for new staff members.
- Offered technological infrastructures of the Foundation.
- Student identity confirmation system (student identity check, assignment and exam writing process, security, and degree award issues).
- The institution should establish rules to provide appropriate access and ensure the participation of students affected by disability, illness, and other special circumstances.
- With the regulation on e-learning, ethical issues are regulated, such as those of protecting data privacy or intellectual property rights and rules to deal with fraud.

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

Relevant documentation

- Internal regulation for the operation of the Postgraduate Study Programme.
- Special regulation for the implementation of e-learning if the PSP is offered by distance methods.
- Research Ethics Regulation.
- Regulation of studies, internship, mobility, and student assignments.

- Degree award template.

Study Programme Compliance

- **Findings**

This joint-venture postgraduate programme between Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the University of Turin, provides a dynamic and diverse educational experience, with a strong focus on a student-centered approach. It prioritizes language skills, independence, and a multifaceted perspective in teaching and learning. In alignment with Principle No. 3, the programme provides comprehensive documentation covering all study aspects and phases, along with clear procedures for student admission, progression, and degree award. Further program details are provided below.

- **Analysis of judgement**

This postgraduate programme is the result of a collaborative effort between the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the University of Turin. It offers a diverse educational experience to students, fostering not only a multifaceted perspective in teaching and learning but also promoting extroversion, independence, and language skills development, as the primary language of instruction is English. Apart from the main teaching language, students are prompt to choose a language course as well between Arabic, Chinese and French. This student-centered approach enriches the academic experience and prepares students for their future roles in European affairs.

The programme's choice of English as the teaching language aims to attract students from neighbouring countries, further diversifying perspectives, backgrounds, and enriching the overall classroom experience.

Selection procedures for students are transparently communicated through the programme's website, the Study Guide, and the Regulation of Studies, ensuring that all interested parties have access to the necessary information. Additionally, details regarding the study materials required for entry exams will be disclosed upon submission of the accreditation report. Given the programme's unique nature as a full-time, physically attended postgraduate programme, it does not offer part-time or distance learning options. While formal internships are not part of the program, students have the opportunity to engage in traineeships, potentially through initiatives like the Erasmus+ program, as long as these experiences do not disrupt their academic progress and participation in the flow of their studies.

The Regulation of Studies document clarifies students' rights and obligations, outlines the programme's duration (4 semesters), course schedules, examination processes, and grading methods. In cases where students require additional semesters to complete their studies, they are subject to a fee of 250 euros per extra semester. Upon successful completion of the program, students receive a diploma issued in both Greek and English, a validation of which is confirmed through the degree award template provided to the Committee. However, the workload is estimated to be over 250 hours per core course (9-10 ECTS). Given the duration

of the semester (13 weeks) the workload per week is rather high compared to usual standards. All regulations are in place, such as the Regulation of Academic advisor, Research Ethics as well as on the Complaints Mechanism, and are all published on the program's website too. Lastly, to ensure the program's effectiveness, continuous course evaluation by students has been integrated into its framework. This feedback mechanism will allow students to actively participate in improving the program's quality.

- **Conclusions**

This interinstitutional postgraduate programme, a partnership between Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the University of Turin, delivers a student-centric, English-language education that cultivates diverse perspectives, independence, and prepares students for roles in European affairs. It prioritizes transparent student selection, a full-time attendance model, and offers opportunities for traineeships to enrich the academic experience. The Regulation of Studies document provides comprehensive guidance, and the dual-language diploma ensures wider recognition. The program actively encourages and values continuous student course evaluations to drive ongoing improvement.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- To ensure consistency and clarity, consider equally allocating ECTS credits across courses in both partner institutions.
- It's advisable to increase the ECTS credits allocated for the thesis component to better reflect its significance.
- Consider a more balanced distribution of workload throughout the semester to align with typical academic standards and ensure a manageable pace for students.

PRINCIPLE 4: TEACHING STAFF OF NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

The Institution should attend to the adequacy 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, and 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.

Relevant documentation

- Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment and retention, and obligations of the teaching staff.
- List of teaching staff including subject areas, employment relationship, Institution of origin, Department of origin.

Study Programme Compliance

- **Findings**

The Programme seeks to maintain high standards of quality in teaching and research. Both the Department as a whole and the Programme in particular follow the existing legislation on the selection of teaching staff following a clear, transparent, and fair process for the recruitment of qualified staff. The Program's faculty is dedicated to teaching, research and educational support of students. In the Department of Political Science there are already two professors whose subjects are directly related to European studies, while several other already exciting courses also include European aspects. As this is an interdisciplinary programme it will be supported by other Departments, and some of the teaching staff will come from different departments.

- **Analysis of judgement**

The teaching staff of the Programme is qualified to offer a wealth of knowledge and provide high quality education and guidance to the students of the Programme. Similarly, the partner Faculty includes an excellent and fully qualified teaching staff. The Programme offers modern

facilities to its students in new or renovated classrooms, computer laboratories and research facilities.

Both Departments provide incentives and encourage their staff to participate in research and conferences. They shall ensure that staff have access to the resources and technology needed to conduct research.

As the programme seeks to provide students with practical experience in European affairs, it will recruit external lecturers for some lectures and courses.

- **Conclusions**

An outstanding innovation of the Programme is that it seeks to be implemented through international cooperation. All teaching staff should be commended for the firm commitment, concentrated effort, and enthusiasm to get this point, despite the obstacles and difficulties created by limited resources and other external factors. It is pointed out that the Department has a cooperative atmosphere, mutual respect and collegial spirit that has made this possible.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The exceptional dedication of the programme's initiators and participants, recognised by the university's management, has created the conditions for the programme to take off. At the same time, the programme's survival must gradually come to depend not on exceptional enthusiasm but on the continuous improvement of day-to-day operating conditions.
- The initiators of the programme and the department are aware that additional staff will be needed. The Committee supports this effort.
- Educational cooperation between the two departments could be strengthened. Consideration could be given to having a colleague from Italy teach in Thessaloniki during the first year and vice versa from Thessaloniki in Italy during the second year.
- The Programme and the Department could seek ways and means to provide further support to faculty members to enhance research and intensify their efforts for attracting external funding, especially through international and European projects.

PRINCIPLE 5: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

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

Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient resources and means, on a planned and long-term basis, to support learning and academic activity in general, 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-centered learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organized 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.

Relevant 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

- **Findings**

This programme strongly aligns with Principle No. 5. Considerable investments from both the University and the Department have resulted in brand new, environmentally friendly, and

inclusive facilities. These encompass well-equipped lecture rooms, a dedicated seminar space, computer facilities, a versatile area for student activities, and extensive libraries. Furthermore, a wide array of student services is readily available. In essence, the program provides comprehensive student support and has carefully devised a tuition revenue utilization plan to ensure its sustainability and to continue benefiting students effectively.

- **Analysis of judgement**

The University and the Department have made significant investments in infrastructure to support the Programme, including state-of-the-art lecture rooms and a seminar room in an environmentally friendly, newly constructed building near the main campus. Additionally, students have access to a new computer room, a study area, and a versatile space for postgraduate student activities. The facilities are designed with inclusivity in mind, featuring elevators and special accommodations for individuals with special needs.

Students in both Thessaloniki and Turin are granted access to a wide range of resources, including the Department of Political Sciences' library, which offers an extensive collection of books, journals, and electronic databases. The university's library, conveniently located within walking distance from the program's facilities, is also available for student use.

Furthermore, students can benefit from various services such sports centre, access to free food, counselling and psychological support centre, career office, Centre for Foreign Language Teaching, Student Halls of Residence and so on. In addition to these resources, students have access to two laboratories, the Applied Political Analysis Lab (institutionalized) and the Observatory of International and European Affairs (informal), which encourages students to engage and publish their work on the Observatory's webpage.

While accommodation details for the second year are not entirely clear, the Program will assist students in seeking housing. It will also contribute to the travel and accommodation costs of students in Turin, partly funded through scholarships and mobility funds from Erasmus+ Studies.

The Programme ensures effective communication of its services through various channels, including its comprehensive and up-to-date website, the Study Guide, a welcoming introductory week, and informative emails. Initially, administrative and support staff are provided by the Department of Political Sciences, with plans for dedicated support in the medium term, pending accreditation.

The programme's operational expenses will be fully supported by the tuition fees paid by students, with no additional financial burden on the Department of Political Sciences or AUTH. The tuition plan has been thoroughly reviewed and appears to be financially sustainable. Additionally, the Programme has secured acceptance and funding from the "Supporting Actions for the Internationalization of Higher Education" project, which not only covered

initial costs during the first period but will also contribute to providing scholarships for students.

- **Conclusions**

This programme showcases a robust commitment to excellence. Substantial investments by both the University and the Department have yielded well-equipped computer facilities, and eco-conscious, and inclusive infrastructure. A diverse range of student services is easily accessible and the program has meticulously crafted a tuition revenue allocation strategy to not only ensure its long-term viability but also to continue delivering valuable benefits to students.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

-It is strongly recommended to provide thorough and detailed information about student accommodation, especially during the second year of the program, which involves structured mobility. This level of transparency is essential not only to address any financial concerns potential students may have but also to enhance the program's overall attractiveness and accessibility.

-It is advisable to consider implementing a distinct and easily accessible section on the program's website that includes a direct link to the Department's webpage (to be translated in English as well). This link should lead students directly to the well-structured and highly informative section on formatting and evaluation criteria for Diploma theses, ensuring easy access to this essential information.

PRINCIPLE 6: INITIAL INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVALUATION AND MONITORING OF NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS AND ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD HAVE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM, IN WHICH THEY WILL INSTIGATE THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE NEW POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES, SO AS TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE QUALITY REQUIREMENTS OF THE PRESENT STANDARD. IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ABOVE ACTIONS IT IS NECESSARY TO INFORM ALL INTERESTED PARTIES.

The internal evaluation of the new PSP includes the evaluation of the certification proposal as well as the documentation material in accordance with the requirements of this Standard and the quality procedures of the Institution's Internal Quality Assurance System.

The internal evaluation of new postgraduate degree programmes also aims to ensure the quality level of educational services and to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

The Institution, through its Quality Assurance Unit, and the corresponding academic units organizes and supports the external evaluation procedures of the new PSP according to the specific instructions and directions of the HAHE.

The above includes:

- The objectives, content, and structure of the curriculum, the knowledge offered and the level of science and technology in the subject, to ensure the modern nature of the PSP, in accordance with the relevant documentation listed in the decisions of the competent bodies.
- The evaluation of the workload for the development and completion of postgraduate studies.
- The satisfaction of student expectations and needs from their study programme.
- The learning environment, support services, and their appropriateness for the mentioned PSP.

Postgraduate study programmes are designed and established in accordance with the provisions of the Institution's internal regulations and with the participation of students and other interested parties.

Relevant documentation

- The Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) procedure for checking the requirements of the Standard for the quality of new PSP as well as a procedure for organizing and supporting their external evaluation procedures.
- Assessment and feedback mechanisms of the PSP quality strategy and targeting and relevant decision-making processes (students, external bodies).

Study Programme Compliance

- **Findings**

The Department and the University have in place internal self-assessment procedures and mechanisms. The internal evaluation of the Programme aimed at maintaining good standards and an appropriate level of education. The internal evaluation of the Programme also aimed to ensure the quality level of educational services and to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

MODIP, OMEA, and the departmental Study Programme Committee play a significant role throughout the various stages of internal self-assessment. The outcomes of self-assessment are properly recorded, analysed, shared and utilized.

Quality Policy for the development of the Master Programs at the School of Political Sciences is constantly aligned to the country's legislative and regulatory framework following the quality strategy of the University. According to the Quality Policy of the Postgraduate Programs of the Department are designed to help students develop the critical thinking, research ability and analytical skills required to successfully conduct and complete complex research/applied projects in the fields of political science of their interest.

- **Analysis of judgement**

The Programme, of course has not been externally evaluated before. Throughout the current external evaluation process, it was convincingly demonstrated that the University and the Department are committed to the letter, spirit and process of quality assurance and external review.

The Department and the University worked diligently in preparing materials and presentations, as well as in organizing and hosting the virtual meetings with the EEAP.

The discussions were very constructive and fruitful and were conducted in a cooperative manner and attitude. The efficiency and eagerness of the Department to answer questions and provide additional information and clarifications during the meetings are worth noting.

During the current external review, all stakeholders were actively engaged.

- **Conclusions**

The EEAP is convinced that this Programme is proposed to be launched after having studied the needs of the labour market, taking into account the developments in the international scientific community, as well as the opinions of collaborating institutions and will fill a gap in the specific scientific field in the southern European region.

The teaching staff has the appropriate qualifications, which are continuously cultivated through the activities of the partner institutions; the curriculum is organised according to the latest trends in the scientific field.

The EEAP is convinced that the commitment of the Department and the on-going internal monitoring and evaluation ensure that high quality teaching and research are firm and clear objectives embedded in the Programme. The internal review and monitoring of the Programme reflect an academically rigorous university quality assurance process.

It is the impression of the EEAP that the Department's positive approach toward quality assurance and external review is expected to have a positive impact on the Programme and contribute to its continuous improvement.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

As this is a new innovative programme, based on international cooperation, the departmental quality assurance committee may wish to consider having a more structured procedure for continuous monitoring and periodic reviews.

In this context, we suggest that particular attention be given to:

- how the consolidation of the Programme's identity on the European academic scene has developed.
- how it is succeeding the diffusion of research at the academic level, at the public sphere and in teaching
- how is the programme strengthening its participation in international fora
- the increase of its human resources (faculty, administrative staff).

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. FEATURES OF GOOD PRACTICE

An outstanding innovation of the Programme is that it seeks to be implemented through international cooperation between Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the University of Turin. All teaching staff should be praised for the firm commitment, concentrated effort, and enthusiasm to get this point, despite the obstacles and difficulties created by limited resources and other external factors. It is pointed out that the Department has a cooperative atmosphere, mutual respect and collegial spirit that has made this possible.

The teaching staff has the appropriate qualifications, which are continuously cultivated through the activities of the partner institutions. The curriculum is organized according to the latest trends in the scientific field. The programme was praised by the social partners, and it is supported by the leadership of the University.

The programme delivers a student-centric, English-language education that cultivates diverse perspectives, independence, and prepares students for roles in European affairs. It prioritizes transparent student selection, a full-time attendance model, and offers opportunities for traineeships to enrich the academic experience. The Regulation of Studies document provides comprehensive guidance, and the dual-language diploma ensures wider recognition.

The programme actively encourages and values continuous student course evaluations to drive ongoing improvement.

II. AREAS OF WEAKNESS

- Long-term sustainability of the programme is not secured at the point of the evaluation.
- The number of academic staff is enough under regular circumstances but there are risks related to possible stuff turnover.
- The research environment that supports the programme is not structured in terms of an institutionalized research profile.
- The expected workload of students, as stated in course descriptions, is above European standards.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

- This is certainly a promising and very necessary proposed Masters Program, which should be pursued as the projected benefits far outweigh any possible shortcomings. The clearly outlined process of evaluation is not only required but necessary to guarantee the deepening of the program and more importantly the sustainability of this undertaking.

- The exceptional dedication of the programme's initiators and participants, recognised by the university's management, has created the conditions for the programme to take off. At the same time, the programme's survival must gradually come to depend not on exceptional enthusiasm but on the continuous improvement of day-to-day operating conditions. The initiators of the programme and the department are aware that additional staff will be needed. The Committee supports this effort.
- Educational cooperation between the two departments could be strengthened. Consideration could be given to having a colleague from Italy teach in Thessaloniki during the first year and vice versa from Thessaloniki in Italy during the second year.
- The Programme and the Department could seek ways and means to provide further support to faculty members to enhance research and intensify their efforts for attracting external funding, especially through international and European projects.
- If possible, institutionalize a clearly defined research profile in European Studies at the department.
- It is strongly recommended to provide thorough and detailed information about student accommodation, especially during the second year of the program, which involves structured mobility.
- It is advisable to consider implementing a distinct and easily accessible section on the program's website that includes a direct link to the Department's webpage (to be translated in English as well).
- Follow European standards in defining the expected workload.

IV. SUMMARY & OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.**

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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