ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC

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 Foreign Language Programme of:

Diploma with Integrated Master in Environmental Sciences and Engineering

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 Foreign Language Programme of **Diploma with Integrated Master in Environmental Sciences and Engineering** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** for the purposes of granting accreditation

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW ..... 4**

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel ..... 4

II. Review Procedure and Documentation ..... 5

III. Foreign Language Programme Profile ..... 6

**PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES ..... 8**

**Principle 1: Strategic Planning ..... 8**

**Principle 2: Quality Assurance Policy ..... 10**

**Principle 3: Design, Approval, and Monitoring of the Quality of Foreign Language Programmes ..... 13**

**Principle 4: Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment ..... 16**

**Principle 5: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Academic Qualifications, Award of Degrees and Certificates of Qualifications of Foreign Language Programmes ..... 19**

**Principle 6: Ensuring High Quality of the Teaching Staff of the Foreign Language Programmes ..... 22**

**Principle 7: Learning Resources and Student Support of Foreign Language Programmes ..... 26**

**Principle 8: Collection, Analysis, and Use of Information for the Organization and Operation of Foreign Language Programmes ..... 30**

**Principle 9: Public Information concerning the Foreign Language Programmes ..... 32**

**Principle 10: Periodic Internal Review of Foreign Language Programmes ..... 34**

**Principle 11: Regular External Evaluation and Accreditation of Foreign Language Programmes Periodic Internal Review of Foreign Language Programmes ..... 37**

**PART C: CONCLUSIONS ..... 39**

I. Features of Good Practice ..... 39

II. Areas of Weakness ..... 39

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions ..... 40

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment ..... 41

# PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

## I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Foreign Language Programme of Diploma with Integrated Master in Environmental Sciences and Engineering of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Law 4653/2020:

1. KARAYIANNIS TASSOS (Chair)

   Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, Brunel University

2. Megaridis Constantine

   University of Illinois at Chicago

3. SKARLATOS YANI

   Boğaziçi University

4. Δραγατσίκα Μαγδαληνή

   University of Western Macedonia

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EAAP) carried out a review process of the five-year full-time diploma with Integrated Master in Environmental Science and Engineering (ENVSEN) of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh) at the request of the Hellenic Authority of Higher Education (HAHE) on the 17th of June 2026. The programme is offered jointly by the Schools of Physics (coordinating school), Chemistry, Biology, Mechanical Engineering and Agriculture.

The EEAP had an in-person premeeting in the evening of the 16th of June to discuss preliminary findings, after a first read of the paperwork submitted via HAHE by the University/Schools. Points that needed clarification were noted with the intention that these be included in the discussions on the 17th. At the same time the EAAP agreed their approach procedure for the meetings and the allocation of member responsibilities in terms of the 11 principles of the report.

In the morning of the 17th, the EAAP met with the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and Development Professor Nikolaos Maghioros and the Head of the School of Physics Professor Alexandra Ioannidou. This was an informal welcome meeting, during which the vision of AUTh was discussed in relation to the proposed programme of study to be delivered exclusively in English.

Following this, the EAAP met with the heads of the sponsoring schools plus the director of the programme and the chair and members of the Internal Evaluation Team (OMEA) plus the secretary, Mrs Alexandra Tzaneraki and Professor Konstantinos Papazachos a member of the University Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP). The presentation by the Head of School of Physics included general information on the University and the sponsoring Schools (Physics, Biology, Mechanical Engineering, Agriculture and Chemistry). The Programme Director presented a short overview of the Foreign Language Programme (FLP) of the Diploma with Integrated Master in ENVSEN and its academic profile, strengths and possible areas of concerns (SWOT evaluation). The programme director placed emphasis on student-centred learning and the support that will be offered to incoming students. The meeting progressed with questions from the Panel and discussion. The meeting was very informative and helped set the background for subsequent meetings and discussions. The chair of the EAAP requested copies of the presentations to be sent to members of the panel.

On completion of the above, the EAAP had a meeting with 10 academics from the sponsoring schools. It was an excellent opportunity to discuss and clarify issues relating to professional development, staff opportunities/mobility, appropriate workload, assess directly the academic competences of staff and ensure high quality teaching. Staff support and English language competence was also discussed. The EAAP also assessed, through the paperwork and the discussions at this meeting, staff compliance and support for standards of accreditation.

A meeting with administrative staff followed, mostly from the coordinating School of Physics plus the administration officer for communications and a representative of the international studies office. A presentation of the support available for the new programme plus the students was presented by the head of the administrative staff. This was very helpful, clarifying the role of each member of the administration colleagues and the support offered. There was a tour of the facilities focusing on resources relevant to the ENVSEN programme, led by staff from the five sponsoring schools. The EEAP was able to confirm adequate learning material, equipment and support facilities for a successful delivery, meeting the targeted learning outcomes of the FLP.

In the afternoon, the EEAP met with the programme stakeholders, who included possible

employers and social partners from a number of organisations. The significance and relation of the proposed programme to the labour market was thoroughly discussed. The industrial colleagues were very supportive of the programme and the possible engagement and employability of its graduates.
The EAAP had a short debriefing and prepared for a final meeting with the Vice-Rector, Heads of School, two members of OMEA and members of MODIP.
Documentation
The documentation received by the EAAP included among others, information on the AUTh , the five sponsoring schools, a feasibility study, the vision, objectives and targeted learning outcomes of the FLP, quality assurance procedures, information on the staff profile and the fee structure of the programme. The rationale for the development of the Foreign Language Programme and a list of similar programmes (particularly in Europe) was clearly explained in the documentation plus the presentation. In general, the documents provided were of high quality, fully informative and adhere to the standards required and expected by HAHE.
Summary
The review process was well organised and progressed in a smooth straightforward manner. The documentation provided by the University/Schools was very informative and well written. All meetings were carried out in a friendly, collegial and constructive atmosphere. The presence of the Vice-Rector of Academic affairs and Development and the secretary members of MODIP gave a chance to the EAAP to explore the AUTh vision in relation to the foreign language programmes and their related immediate/long term plans plus the measures taken to ensure academic high-quality provision within the framework required by HAHE and international benchmarks.

## III. Foreign Language Programme Profile

The proposed programme entitled Diploma with Integrated Master in Environmental Sciences and Engineering is proposed by five collaborating schools, namely the Schools of Physics (coordinating school), Chemistry, Biology, Mechanical Engineering and Agriculture of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. It is a five-year, full-time programme of study offered exclusively in English. There is tuition fee of 6,000 euros per academic year. The sponsoring schools are targeting a maximum of 40 new entrants per year. A minimum of 24 new students is considered by the schools as the number required for the programme to operate without financial losses.

The Programme Steering Committee (PSC) targets both a national and international student cohort and seek to provide a high level of tertiary level education in Environmental Sciences and Engineering. It became clear during our meetings that the targeted student cohort does not include students with a Greek secondary education certificate. The five coordinating schools aim to achieve Foreign Language Programme objectives through teaching the basic concepts of modern environmental scientific and technological aspects and the main theoretical, experimental and computational tools in the area. The FLP aims to be a flagship programme of the university and help promote the schools and the university to an international audience of students and practitioners.

The main objective of the programme is the integrated scientific and technological training in the field of Environmental Sciences and Engineering. Emphasis is placed on the physical, chemical, biological and mechanical foundations of environmental processes, sustainable management of natural resources, climate change, air and water quality, energy, circular economy and sustainable development. The ENVSEN programme covers the necessary knowledge and skills that can enable students to proceed to scientific, technical and technological professions, plus other areas that require a high level of multidisciplinary training in the field of the Environment-Energy. The successful completion of studies corresponds to level 7 of the National and European Qualifications Framework. The programme is structured in 10 semesters leading to a total of 300 ECTS. It includes 50 courses,
i.e. 34 being compulsory and 16 selective, plus a final thesis. There are three specialisation routes, for which a student will take three compulsory courses, two electives and two assignments over a semester The Diploma with Integrated Master in ENVSEN offers students both the possibility of working in related Environmental Sciences and Engineering areas, and provides them with the academic prerequisites for the continuation of their studies at postgraduate and subsequently doctoral level of studies in Greece and abroad.

# PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

## Principle 1: Strategic Planning

### INSTITUTIONS AND ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN APPROPRIATE STRATEGY FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND PROVISION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES (FLP).

*By decision of the Institutional Senate, the Institutions and their academic units should adapt their strategy to allow for the provision of FLP, in addition to attending to any special needs in terms of infrastructure, services, human resources, procedures, financial resources, and administrative systems. In this strategy, the Institutions and the academic units should anticipate the potential benefits, weaknesses, opportunities, and/or risks from their implementation and plan all the necessary actions to achieve their goals.*

***Relevant documentation***

- *Institutional Strategy*
- *Academic unit Strategy, including a plan for effective revenue utilization*

**Foreign Language Programme Compliance**

**I. Findings**

The director of the PSC and the team have done a lot of preparatory work on the operation specifics of the programme, including the detailed curriculum and course content, the distribution of teaching and support tasks, the coordination of the programme activities with the parallel operation of the existing Greek language programmes in all five participating schools, and considered the promotion of the FLP in targeted foreign markets, the special multicultural requirements of teaching students from abroad, the leveraging of administrative support for the multiple FLPs planned by the University, the documentation of the programme curriculum and academic support, the distribution of the income drawn from the programme. Both the institution's and the five participating units' ongoing activities reveal extroversion consistent with the delivery of FLPs. The team is large and highly qualified to deliver foreign language programmes. Many team members have participated in external activities where they had to deliver courses and workshop lectures abroad. In addition, the participating faculty members have experience in delivering course content in English in some of the graduate programmes of the university.

The Institution has been setting up the administrative support infrastructure required for accepting and teaching foreign students. Capacity does not appear to be a problem, although external housing and accommodation difficulties were identified. The city of Thessaloniki does not offer many options for high-quality housing near the campus, and this was identified as a matter that the Institution and the programme leaders must address in the long term not just for this FLP. Peculiarities in teaching labs were noted with some labs being consistent with international standards (dedicated space with multiple stations to accommodate large numbers of students), while other labs were housed in smaller research spaces intended for dual use (both as research labs as well as teaching labs). The smaller spaces had some safety deficiencies

(e.g. lack of second exit) and could only accommodate much smaller numbers of students at a time. Classroom infrastructure was found adequate, with several rooms having full digital instrumentation for multimedia instruction.
The potential benefits of the FLP include the cultural enrichment of the current student body, the support staff and the faculty, the familiarization with academic procedures and methods from abroad, the establishment of new collaborations with overseas institutions, the development of a multi-lingual workforce that is highly skilled in cross-disciplinary subjects, which is not possible with the current structure of the AUTh and the enhancement of the reputation of AUTh abroad. Most importantly, the FLP would raise funds that could be leveraged to improve the overall university infrastructure which is in urgent need of upgrades.

**II. Analysis**

The evaluation was performed through in-person meetings with the programme leadership and representatives of the university management and administration, the teaching staff, the administrative support staff, as well as multiple stakeholders from industry and local civil entities. No students participated in the evaluation as this is a proposal for a new programme of study. The programme team had provided extensive documentation on many programme specifics written both in Greek and English. This material was analyzed in advance to examine the preparedness of the proposed programme to advance to the implementation phase.

**III. Conclusions**

The documentation on the programme's academic specifics was found to be very good. Some strategy details are still under development and several issues remain unresolved. While the team has done a good job up to now and is very enthusiastic, the feasibility of an October 2026 programme start was found to be unrealistic given the amount of promotional and preparatory work that remains to be done before the programme gets launched. While the team's strategy is solid, it remains in flux. Therefore, although the Director and his team are commended for the immense amount of work they have done up to now, they should continue to work with the University management to address the issues brought up during the evaluation.

**Panel Judgement**

| **Principle 1: Strategic Planning** | |
|---|---|
| Fully compliant | |
| Substantially compliant | **X** |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

**Panel Recommendations**

1.1 The team is advised to take actions that enhance the probability for a successful later start (probably September-October 2027), which will place the programme on a more favourable track for a viable future.

1.2 It is recommended that the PSC reviews laboratory provision, ensuring adequate up-to-date facilities operating within accepted safety standards.

## Principle 2: Quality Assurance Policy

**ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD DRAFT AND IMPLEMENT A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY, ARISING FROM THEIR STRATEGY AND SPECIALISED FOR THE SPECIFIC FLP DOMAIN, THAT IS ACCOMPANIED BY ANNUAL QUALITY ASSURANCE TARGETS, FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.**

*The quality assurance policy of the academic unit must be formulated in the form of a statement, which is made public, and is implemented with the contribution of all stakeholders. The objective is to pursue specific annual quality goals, related to the quality assurance of the study programmes offered by the academic unit, including its FLP. In order to implement this policy, the academic unit, along with other assurances, is committed to implement effective procedures that will provide the suitability of the structure and organization of the FLP, the suitability of the qualifications of the teaching staff, as well as the quality of the support services of the academic unit that has adequate administrative staff. The academic unit also commits itself to conduct an annual internal evaluation of the FLP, realised by the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the Institution.*

***Relevant documentation***

- *Quality Policy*
- *Quality Targeting (utilizing S.M.A.R.T. methodology)*

### Foreign Language Programme Compliance

#### I. Findings

The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki has an established and well documented Quality Assurance Policy that schools have to follow in establishing programmes of study. Based on the documents provided, it is noted that the Regulation of Undergraduate Studies is drafted in accordance with the provisions of Chapter G' of Law 4957/2022 (Government Gazette A', 141/21.07.2022) "New Horizons in Higher Education Institutions: Strengthening the quality, functionality and connection of HEIs with society and other provisions", which concern the organization and operation of university study programmes. Foreign Language Undergraduate Study Programmes are covered in Chapter K' of the same law. The proposed Diploma with Integrated Master in Environmental Sciences and Engineering programme also follows the Regulation of Operation of Undergraduate Study Programmes of the AUTh. This ensures that the regulations governing the operation of the programme including quality assurance processes, are in line with the current institutional framework.

The quality assurance policy of AUTh is well documented in the paperwork provided. In the discussions that followed with the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and Development, the Secretary and members of MODIP, heads of sponsoring schools and academic and administrative staff, the EAAP was convinced that the initial and continuous review of programme quality was well embedded in the university culture. The University has a clear quality assurance policy and its efforts to create an environment enabling staff and students to work together in the delivery of high-quality programmes at all levels of provision are clearly articulated. The university management and MODIP are also committed to an on-going review

and continuous improvement of programmes offered, with quality being one of the main pillars considered at each review. The above policy is directly related to the operational principles of the university and is in accordance with international benchmarks provided, for example, through this accreditation organised by HAHE and based on the Principles and Directives for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.
The university formal policy for quality assurance forms part of its strategic objectives and includes contributions from all staff of the institution (management, academic and research staff, technical and administrative staff and students). The responsibility for implementation is delegated to MODIP, which works closely with schools including OMEA for successful outcomes. This work involves the quality provision of existing programmes as well as the recommendations for new ones.

## II. Analysis

The school(s) quality assurance policy is directly linked to the university-level recommendations. MODIP carries out an annual cycle of the evaluation of the proposed programme. The school management and the Programme Steering Committee (seven members from the teaching and research staff of the five schools) are equally committed to continuous improvement and set specific targets that relate to the expectations of all involved (academic/technical and administrative staff and students).
The coordinating School of Physics along with the Schools of Chemistry, Biology, Mechanical Engineering and Agriculture support strongly the implementation of the quality assurance policy. In summary, they expect such a policy to (among others): enhance the academic standing of the programme of study and its international outlook; ensure that the mission , the subject matter and the strategic objectives are met; establish the means to achieve the above objectives; facilitate the participation of all involved (staff, students, future alumni and stakeholders in the quality processes; develop staff and student mobility in collaboration with international organisations. They also expect the above to ensure quality recommendations are implemented in a continuous process of improvement.
It is clear to the EEAP that the coordinating school and its partners have defined targets and performance indicators (KPIs) and are committed to the provision of high-quality, student-centred education. These include the recruitment of foreign students with high qualifications/grades, the annual improvement of student performance, an improved academic and technical support for the programme and an increased participation of the students on the evaluation of the programme. In addition to the above, other KPIs include a measurable increase of the international reach of the programme, an improved relation with the labour market and a continuous improvement in the quality of the teaching provision.
The AUTh and the sponsoring school have an established process of evaluation that is transparent, communicated clearly with easily verifiable outcomes in all its provisions both at individual and team level. The evaluation process includes data collected from student questionnaires and statistical input collated by the school administration staff including course results and staff contributions. These are to be evaluated by OMEA with a follow up assessment by MODIP and recommendations and final actions presented by the chair of OMEA. Note that the student questionnaires are well designed to cover all classroom and laboratory teaching.

The Panel had separate meetings with administrative staff and external stakeholders. Feedback was very good. The administrative staff expressed a direct desire and ability to be involved with all the processes that relate to the programme, including the processes covering the quality of programme provision.
The industrial members commented extremely favourably on the level of industry related topics and generally on the content of the curriculum and very positively on the delivery in English. However, they mentioned that they were not consulted as a group in any formal way during the development of the curriculum.

## III. Conclusions

It is obvious that the quality assurance (programme academic level and processes) is very high in the objectives of the sponsoring schools and the university. This is based on the documents provided and subsequent discussions with the Vice-Rector, Heads of Departments, MODIP secretary and staff plus the programme director and administrative and academic staff. There is a clear culture of appreciating and supporting quality processes – well embedded and articulated in the proposed new programme of study. Staff are also aware of the particular challenges (English language delivery, different student cohort than what they are currently used to, i.e. mostly non-Greek students) and international market needs. The schools have clear aspirations to deliver a programme, which includes both fundamental plus research-led and industrial relevant aspects, that meet the aspirations of its graduates and the needs of Greek/international industry and relevant organisations. The Panel concludes that sponsoring schools with the support of MODIP have an excellent quality assurance process in place that can nurture and support delivering a very challenging novel programme of study. The schools have a very supportive stakeholders' group and will benefit by working more closely with them

**Panel Judgement**

| **Principle 2: Quality Assurance Policy** | |
|---|---|
| Fully compliant | **X** |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

**Panel Recommendations**

2.1 Include a member of the technical and administrative staff in the Programme Steering Committee.
2.2. Include student representatives (one per year) in a formal way in the discussions of the Programme Steering Committee that relate to student matters. This could possibly extend to (part of) a school meeting where student-related matters /comments are discussed.
2.3. Establish an Industrial Advisory Board, which, among others, will periodically review the curriculum content and provide advice accordingly.

## Principle 3: Design, Approval, and Monitoring of the Quality of Foreign Language Programmes

**ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD DEVELOP THEIR FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES FOLLOWING A DEFINED WRITTEN PROCESS WHICH WILL INVOLVE THE PARTICIPANTS, INFORMATION SOURCES, AND THE APPROVAL COMMITTEES FOR THE PROGRAMME. THE OBJECTIVES, THE EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES, THE INTENDED PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS, AND THE WAYS TO ACHIEVE THEM ARE SET OUT IN THE FLP DESIGN. THE ABOVE DETAILS AS WELL AS INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME'S STRUCTURE ARE PUBLISHED IN THE STUDENT GUIDE.**

*Academic units develop their Foreign Language Programmes following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile and orientation of the programme, the objectives, the subject areas, the structure and organisation, the expected learning outcomes and the intended professional qualifications according to the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, are described at this stage. The above components should be taken into account and pertain to a feasibility study, which, among other things, should take into consideration the strategy of the Institution, the experience of external stakeholders from the labour market, the smooth progression of students throughout the stages of the Programme, the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the option to provide work experience to the students, the linking of teaching and research, the international experience in Programmes of the given discipline, the relevant regulatory framework, and the official procedure for the approval of the Programme by the Institution.*

*The process of the approval or revision of the Programmes provides for the verification of compliance to the basic requirements of the Standards by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).*

***Relevant documentation***

- *Institutional Senate decision for the establishment of the FLP (par. 2, 3, and 5 of article 82 of Law 4692/2020)*
- *FLP Guide (bilingual, in Greek and English)*
- *Course outlines*
- *Teaching staff (list of names with scientific specializations, employment relationship, and assignment of teaching in the FLP and other Programmes)*
- *Special protocols on cooperation or memoranda of agreement*
- *Feasibility study*
- *QAU records*

### Foreign Language Programme Compliance

#### I. Findings

The current Foreign Language Undergraduate Study Programme in Environmental Sciences and Engineering under evaluation, is delivered by the Schools of Physics (lead Institution) Biology, Mechanical Engineering, Agriculture, and Chemistry.

The proposal for accreditation submitted followed guidelines set by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education for such evaluations. The participating schools are responding also to institutional guidelines and presented paperwork that clarifies aspirations to provide, among others, high quality research and application-led education, support of collaborative activities and

learning and a programme that in itself contributes to high research and application attainment levels and linking studies in an interdisciplinary area.
A detailed feasibility study with comparisons to similar programmes in Greece and abroad, involving academic as well as financial aspects has been made (Doc. ιγ).
The quality processes in place are in line with the AUTh guidelines with key performance indicators given in a detailed list. For example, parameters such as an appropriate FLP structure, the learning outcomes that are designed to correspond to the European and National Qualifications Framework at level 7, the high quality of academic staff teaching on the programme and the availability of administrative support for staff and students, plus the targeted completion of an annual internal quality review and audit of the programme with a collaboration between the PSC, OMEA and MODIP. In this framework, the annual internal report of OMEA is to be submitted to MODIP for the evaluation of the annual performance of the FLP. It is also reported that MODIP performs its own evaluation of PSP programmes in the AUTh. The first internal evaluation led by MODIP took place in January 2026.
It became clear during the EAAP discussion with the programme director, faculty, and administrative staff that there is an excellent relationship and harmonious cooperation in achieving the desired goals.
The small number of students, (40 at most) makes this common effort and approach possible. However, it was noted that there is no formal mechanism provisioned for involving students in the planning and discussion process of academic matters as student representatives are not expected to attend faculty meetings. There was also no evidence of formal collaboration or advice sought from stakeholders, apart from informally on an individual basis. It has been stated, however, by both parties that there is willingness and intention to hold advisory board meetings periodically once the programme is launched.

## II. Analysis

The foreign language undergraduate study programme has a high academic standing and compares well with similar programmes in established universities nationally and internationally. A point to note is the fact that this is a rapidly evolving scientific domain and frequent reviews of the curriculum and practices employed should be conducted on a regular basis.
The schools have nominal quality processes in place but need to ensure that these processes are all followed on a continuous basis. It seems that the university does not involve current students and graduates in the annual evaluation cycle beyond the typical completion of questionnaires and informal discussions. In addition to feedback on the curriculum relevance, the involvement of graduates in the form of presentations to current students can have the additional advantage of offering advice on possible paths and opportunities after graduation. The relation with industry and the possible job opportunities for the graduates is an opportunity that would benefit both staff and students. The PSC so far has not involved the stakeholders in any formal way in the evaluation of the curriculum and programme delivery. In addition, to advice on the taught part of the programme, this group can possibly help support students through project ideas and sponsored research beyond the FLP. The group can also help the participating schools cultivate and enhance their overall relationship with industry.

### III. Conclusions

The programme is comparable with those at outstanding Greek and foreign universities.

**Panel Judgement**

| **Principle 3: Design, Approval, and Monitoring of the Quality of Foreign Language Programmes** | |
|---|---|
| Fully compliant | **X** |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

**Panel Recommendations**

3.1 Involve students in the annual programme evaluation process through formal participation of their representatives in relevant school meetings, when the teaching delivery is considered and recommendations, including students' comments, are discussed (See also 2.2).

3.2 Increase the educational interaction with industry both in terms of input on curriculum content and collaborative projects. Perhaps, involve industrialists in the teaching delivery through a targeted programme of guest lectures.

3.3 Involve stakeholders and alumni in an Industrial Advisory Panel meeting 1-2 times a year to support the curriculum development and relevance of material delivered. (See also 2.3).

## Principle 4: Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

**ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES ARE DELIVERED IN A WAY THAT ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN CREATING THE LEARNING PROCESS. THE ASSESSMENT METHODS SHOULD REFLECT THIS APPROACH.**

*In the implementation of student-centered learning and teaching, the academic unit:*

- *Respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling 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*
- *Reinforces 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 students' complaints*

***Relevant documentation***

- *Questionnaires for assessment by the students*
- *Operating procedure for managing student complaints*
- *Operating procedure for the function of the academic advisor*
- *Report on teaching methods and student assessment*

### Foreign Language Programme Compliance

#### I. Findings

The Interdepartmental Foreign Language Programme has been designed with a clear orientation towards student-centred learning. The structure of the programme encourages active student participation in the learning process through a combination of theoretical teaching, laboratory exercises, computational applications, assignments, presentations, projects, case studies, and field activities where feasible.

Course syllabi include learning outcomes, workload, teaching methods, and assessment methods. The use of English as the language of teaching, assessment, and communication responds to the international character of the Programme and to the needs of international students. At the same time, the use of the AUTh e-learning platform supports students' access to educational material, announcements, and communication with instructors.

The structure of studies allows for the gradual development of knowledge and skills. In the first semesters, students acquire the necessary scientific background in physics, mathematics, chemistry, biology, ecology, programming and data analysis. They are then introduced to more specialised and interdisciplinary fields, such as environmental chemistry, climate change, atmospheric physics, water management, biodiversity, circular economy, energy systems, waste management, remote sensing and environmental assessment.

The logic of the curriculum is based on a progression from foundational knowledge to integrated interdisciplinary thinking, application to real problems, and independent research. The programme comprises 50 courses, of which 34 are compulsory and 16 are elective, with students required to select 11 elective courses, across 10 semesters, and includes a diploma thesis corresponding to 30 ECTS.
The FLP aims to develop skills and responsibility, cultivate critical thinking, promote the synthesis of knowledge from different scientific fields, provide access to international literature and high-level scientific equipment, and familiarise students with research methodology and the writing of scientific papers.
Student assessment is based on a variety of methods, including written examinations, assignments, laboratory reports, presentations, problem-solving exercises, and participation in educational activities. These methods are linked to the learning outcomes of each course and support both the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and the development of analytical, research, and communication skills.
The programme provides for the operation of the Academic Advisor system, which supports students on matters related to studies, course selection, learning difficulties, the diploma thesis, and future academic or professional choices. This is particularly important for an English-taught programme addressed to international students and to students who may come from different educational systems.
Finally, course and instructor evaluation questionnaires are in place, as well as an institutionalised mechanism for managing complaints and appeals. The FLP provides for evaluation after the completion of each course and for a graduation questionnaire, thereby strengthening the capacity for systematic collection of student feedback.

## II. Analysis

The available evidence indicates that the programme has been designed with a clear orientation towards student-centred learning. The variety of teaching methods corresponds to the interdisciplinary character of the field, as students are required to combine theoretical knowledge, laboratory experience, computational analysis, environmental thinking and the ability to solve complex problems.
The availability of elective courses in the advanced semesters enhances flexibility and allows students to develop a more personalised academic direction. The diploma thesis also functions as a key element of student-centred learning, as it gives students the opportunity to focus on a topic of interest and to work independently under supervision.
The emphasis on access to international literature, research methodology, and scientific writing is compatible with the Level 7 status of the programme and with its Integrated Master character. At the same time, the development of soft skills, intercultural communication, and oral presentation is particularly important for students who will operate in an international academic or professional environment.
The Academic Advisor constitutes an important support mechanism, especially for students coming from different educational systems who need guidance in order to understand academic requirements, assessment methods, and the operation of the Greek university environment.
The existence of evaluation questionnaires and a complaints mechanism is also a positive element. However, since the programme is new, there are not yet actual data from students. For this reason, it is important from the outset to emphasise active student participation in

evaluations and to inform students how their feedback is used.

### III. Conclusions

The FLP offers a learning environment that appears clearly student-centred. It combines different forms of teaching and assessment, enhances active student participation, provides academic guidance, and includes mechanisms for evaluation and complaints submission.
The structure of the programme is appropriate for the gradual transition from basic knowledge to more complex, applied, and research-oriented activities. The programme's interdisciplinarity, elective courses, and diploma thesis further strengthen its student-centred character.

**Panel Judgement**

| **Principle 4: Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment** | |
|---|---|
| Fully compliant | **X** |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

**Panel Recommendations**

4.1. The Panel recommends that student participation in course and instructor evaluations be encouraged from the outset, with clear information that student feedback will be used for the improvement of teaching (see also Principles 2 and 3).
4.2. The operation of the Academic Advisor system should also be systematically monitored, particularly with regard to the support of international students.
4.3. After the first year of operation, the PSC should review the actual student workload and the balance between lectures, laboratories, assignments, and examinations, always taking into account the questionnaires on the evaluation of teaching.

## Principle 5: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Academic Qualifications, Award of Degrees and Certificates of Qualifications of Foreign Language Programmes

**ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD DEVELOP AND APPLY PUBLISHED REGULATIONS COVERING ALL ASPECTS AND PHASES OF STUDIES (ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION OF STUDIES, AND DEGREE AWARD).**

*The internal regulations that govern the Foreign Language Programmes should regulate all the matters pertaining to these, from the beginning to the end of the studies. Indicatively:*

- *The admission criteria and the required supporting documentation according to the law*
- *The rights and obligations of students*
- *Internship issues*
- *The language of instruction*
- *Procedures concerning the award and recognition of higher education degrees, the duration of studies, rules ensuring students progression*
- *Terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility*

*Appropriate recognition procedures rely on institutional practice for recognition of credits among various European academic departments and Institutions, in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Graduation represents the culmination of the students΄ study period. Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed (Diploma Supplement).*

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

***Relevant documentation***

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the FLP (Senate decision)*
- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility, and student assignments*
- *Diploma Supplement*

### Foreign Language Programme Compliance

#### I. Findings

The participating schools have a regulatory framework covering the main stages of students' academic path, from admission and registration to progression, recognition of studies, completion of requirements, and award of the degree. The relevant procedures are described in the Internal Regulations, the Study Regulations, the Study Guide, the Diploma Supplement, and the other documents included in the accreditation file.

Admission concerns international candidates who have completed secondary education abroad or in a recognised foreign school. The required documents include an application, identity card or passport, secondary school leaving certificate, transcript of records, certificate of English language proficiency, cover letter and curriculum vitae.

The selection of candidates is based on the application file, academic performance, knowledge of English, the cover letter, and the interview. Final selection is carried out by the Programme

Committee, while an appeals procedure is also provided.
The Secretariat has an active role at all stages of the admission process: online application, initial registration, completeness check of the application file, informing candidates, forwarding files to the PSC, administrative organisation of interviews, recording final results, and informing candidates.
The Secretariat also supports students in practical and administrative matters, such as checking the completeness of files, communication with candidates, supervision of residence permit issuance, registrations and renewals, course registrations, timetable, examinations, progress monitoring, informing students and Academic Advisors, final check of completion of studies, complaints management and provision of certificates.
One point that needs particular care is communication with students after acceptance of their place on the programme. It is important that, immediately after the student confirms acceptance of the place, an organised information process be activated. This process may include sending an initial information email or welcome package with information on registration, required documents, visa or residence permit where required, insurance, accommodation, communication with the Secretariat, the Academic Advisor, and the main AUTh services.
The programme is a full-time, five-year programme comprising ten semesters and 300 ECTS. It includes fifty courses and a diploma thesis. Of these courses, thirty-four are compulsory and sixteen are elective, from which students must select eleven. The diploma thesis corresponds to 30 ECTS.
Student progress is monitored through course registrations, grades, accumulation of ECTS, and the electronic student registry system. Students are informed about their obligations through the Study Guide, course syllabi, the e-learning platform, the Secretariat, and the Academic Advisor.
The programme study guide does not include a compulsory internship. However, provision is made for students to participate in environmental research projects, as well as in Erasmus+ mobility or traineeships where feasible. Recognition of studies in the context of mobility is based on the ECTS system and the relevant learning agreements.
The degree is awarded after successful completion of all requirements and accumulation of 300 ECTS. The Diploma Supplement is issued in Greek and English and provides information on the nature, level, content, learning outcomes, and status of the studies.

## II. Analysis

The schools have a comprehensive framework for admission, study, monitoring of progress, recognition, and graduation. The admission criteria are appropriate for an international English-taught programme and take into account both formal qualifications and qualitative elements, such as the cover letter and the interview.
The structure of 300 ECTS, the five-year duration, and the 30 ECTS diploma thesis are compatible with the character of an Integrated Masters programme. The application of ECTS enhances transparency, comparability, and the possibility of recognition of studies.
The Secretariat functions as the central hub of an organised administrative process involving students, candidates, instructors, the PSC and other AUTh services. This is particularly important for a Foreign Language Programme, where students need timely and clear guidance on academic and administrative matters.

Timely and clear information from the moment of acceptance of the place is particularly important for a programme addressed primarily to international students. The first communication must be organised, clear, and practical, in order to facilitate students' transition to the Greek university and social environment. The International Studies Office, as the relevant institutional service, has a decisive role in this respect, so that international students receive timely and complete guidance.
The absence of a compulsory internship does not constitute a substantial weakness, as the programme has a strong scientific, laboratory, computational, and research-oriented character. However, it would be useful to gradually strengthen more structured opportunities for practical experience, such as research placements, Erasmus+ traineeships, or collaborations with external bodies.
The Diploma Supplement is an important tool for transparency and international recognition, especially for graduates of an English-taught programme who may continue their studies or work abroad.

## III. Conclusions

The schools have clear and documented procedures for admission, progression, recognition of studies, and award of the degree. Its structure is transparent, based on ECTS, and compatible with the requirements of an integrated Masters programme.

**Panel Judgement**

| **Principle 5: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Academic Qualifications, Award of Degrees and Certificates of Qualifications of Foreign Language Programmes** | |
|---|---|
| Fully compliant | **X** |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

**Panel Recommendations**

5.1 Particular emphasis should be placed on the first communication with international students after acceptance of their place, in order to ensure smooth integration into the programme and the university environment. The Panel recommends the creation of a clear English-language welcome package for students who join the FLP. This package should include information on registration, visa or residence permit, insurance, accommodation, academic obligations, communication with the Secretariat, the Academic Advisor and available services.
5.2 There should also be clear cooperation with the International Studies Office or another competent AUTh service for the support of international students before and during their arrival.
5.3 The EAAP also encourages the PSC to gradually consider more organised opportunities for practical experience or contact with external bodies through research projects, Erasmus+ traineeships, or collaborations with companies and organisations in the environmental sector.

## Principle 6: Ensuring High Quality of the Teaching Staff of the Foreign Language Programmes

**ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD ASSURE THEMSELVES OF THE QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCE OF THE TEACHING STAFF. THEY SHOULD APPLY FAIR AND TRANSPARENT PROCESSES FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHING STAFF.**

*The academic unit and the Institution should attend to the adequacy of the teaching staff numbers, the appropriate student-teacher ratio, the appropriate categories of staff (and in the respective foreign language of instruction), the appropriate learning outcomes, a fair selection procedure, high research performance, training, an effective personnel development policy / participation in mobility schemes, conferences, and educational leave (according to the law).*

*More specifically, the academic unit should set up and follow clear, transparent, and fair processes for the recruitment of properly qualified staff and offer them conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching and research. It should 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, and promote the increase of the volume and quality of the research output within the academic unit. It should also follow quality assurance processes for all staff members (with respect to attendance requirements, performance, self-assessment, training, etc.) and develop policies to attract highly qualified academic staff.*

***Relevant documentation***

- *Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment*
- *Regulations or employment contracts, obligations*
- *Staff support and development policy*
- *Performance of the teaching staff in research and teaching*

### Foreign Language Programme Compliance

#### I. Findings

The five supporting schools and the University follow the laws and regulations set out by the Greek state in appointment of new staff. Similarly, they follow due nationally agreed processes for promotions. In discussions with staff, the appointment and promotion criteria were clear and closely adhered to. The Panel was able to review all relevant documents that relate to staff in the schools, including their research performance - recent and over the last few years.

The PSC is responsible for the allocation of the teaching work of the Joint Undergraduate Studies Programme. This is done in consultation with the sponsoring schools and on the basis of the teaching staff availability and expertise. The staff that may be employed as teaching staff on the programme include: (i) members of the teaching and research staff of the Schools of Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mechanical Engineering and Agriculture or other schools of the university and other higher education institutions; (ii) emeritus Professors or retired faculty members; (iii) members of special educational staff, laboratory teaching staff and special technical laboratory staff (with a doctoral degree, teaching and related experience). The PSC can also

consider visiting or collaborating professors and visiting or contract researchers plus post-doctoral research fellows and researchers and scientists based in other research organizations in Greece and abroad (with a PhD and relevant experience).

The involvement of the sponsoring schools ensures that the assigned teaching duties do not in any way affect staff in pursuing other educational, research and administrative obligations towards the rest of the work of the schools and the mainstream Greek programmes of study. All staff involved get additional renumeration for their involvement in the FLP. There is however, an established and transparent process identifying the educational activities and the total teaching hours assigned per staff according to the curriculum, as well as the total cost of their remuneration. The renumeration amount is communicated to the Special Account for Research Funds (E.L.K.E.) of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The amount of remuneration per category of teaching staff is determined following a decision of PSC and is based on the regulations of AUTh regarding the contracts for the remuneration of the institution's staff, external collaborators, the teaching work and total teaching hours assigned, on a case-by-case basis. Staff teaching on the programme are obliged to follow all normal procedures as relevant to the proper high-quality delivery of the course material and examination. Administrative staff supporting the programme are also entitled to additional renumeration, following similar processes as for the teaching staff.

Permanent academic staff that are due to contribute to the new programme include 14 members for the School of Physics, 13 from the School of Chemistry, 8 from Biology, 15 from Agriculture and 13 from the School of Mechanical Engineering. The EEAP found that the permanent staff that are proposed to teach on the programme are very well qualified, enabling them to teach/deliver appropriate supervision as required by the courses/research projects offered by the programme. In discussions with staff, one could see that their workload was quite manageable and allowed them to contribute well to this programme, without jeopardising their contribution to the rest of the teaching work of their schools and having enough time for research and scholarly activity.

Staff development and support: The schools and the university are able to support (at least in part) staff through school funds (e.g. open access publications, conference participation, specialist teaching/research software). Mentoring, e.g. for new academic staff, is not a formal, established process in any of the schools. However, it was evident that the very highly collegial environment is conducive to support from senior staff towards new/early career staff as they enter academic life. The sponsoring schools have also an established process for staff support and development, working closely with the AUTh Centre for Supporting Teaching and Learning. This includes support for new teaching technologies.

The staff are able to offer projects based on student-staff interests, enhancing research-led-teaching leading to a mutually beneficial process and a good outcome. This can also lead in many ways to an excellent forum, for training of students (and sometimes staff development) and publications. The programme could also be an excellent springboard – as in part intended – for students wishing to follow a PhD programme in Greece or foreign institutions or a research related job opportunity in industry. This was also confirmed in the discussions of the panel with the stakeholders, with additional benefits for staff, i.e. extending possible high-impact work and

industry-related teaching.

Some of the bibliography/references provided in the course syllabi did not have dates so it was not clear if the recommended material is up to date. This needs attending.

## II. Analysis

The quality and enthusiasm of the staff selected from the five participating schools was clearly evident. They all feel that their working life (teaching, research, scholarly activity and administration load) is well balanced in a very supportive school-university environment. The staff also feel that they are all well treated/supported by the schools and the university. This support covers all three activities, i.e. teaching, research and their desire to develop further through scholarly activity. The discussions that took place verified the staff commitment to a long-term success of the programme. The fact that the programme will be delivered in English appears not to be a problem. However, the EAAP panel was not able to verify this in the one-day visit – all discussions were in Greek. In addition, it was not possible to assess this for other technical, research and external staff that were due to teach on the programme. There were clear intentions and willingness to work more closely with industrial partners, and this can be of benefit to all parties concerned, i.e. students, staff and stakeholders. This was confirmed in discussions with the stakeholders. The fact that the programme was to be entirely in English was not seen as a disadvantage – and in fact was considered a positive move- by the stakeholders in embedding their collaboration with staff and students.

There is no formal mentoring process for new/early career staff and no classroom peer review. Students will be asked to evaluate the courses and teachers each semester through questionnaires in a process led by MODIP and overseen at programme level by OMEA (see Principle 3). However, beyond that, there is no formal process for evaluating staff performance. Staff performance and peer review is particularly important, especially for Foreign Language Programmes.

## III. Conclusions

Faculty members are well qualified and able to deliver the current programme under review. The staff feel that the balance of their workload is adequate and that they are able to carry out successfully teaching, research and scholarly activities. The teaching work of the Joint Undergraduate Studies Programme in English is allocated by decision of the Programme Steering Committee to permanent and external/visiting staff with experience and expertise in the subject matter. Teaching in the five schools is organically related to the staff research activities, drawing on the scientific expertise and international academic networks. The EAAP was able to discuss this with the heads of the schools and ascertain that the teaching delivery will be directly related to current trends and developments in each of the areas covered by the programme. All staff publish regularly in international academic journals and conferences.

The EAAP were able to discuss administrative contribution and student support for the programme. It was thus possible to verify the committed and high-quality support available from the administration staff.

There is a need to review regularly the material and bibliography included in the delivered modules.

**Panel Judgement**

| **Principle 6: Ensuring High Quality of the Teaching Staff of the Foreign Language Programmes** | |
|---|---|
| Fully compliant | **X** |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

**Panel Recommendations**

6.1 Encourage all teaching staff to publish regularly in high-quality journals and well respected conferences.

6.2 Consider establishing an annual review of staff performance – not necessary as a management tool but rather in a supportive/advising manner for career progression.

6.3 Consider establishing a classroom peer review process to support the teaching of early career staff. This should include, in a "light touch", visiting teaching staff, especially at their start of their involvement.

6.4 Establish further links with industry for feedback on teaching curriculum and selection of projects.

6.5 The bibliography included in the courses needs to be reviewed to ensure up to date material.

## Principle 7: Learning Resources and Student Support of Foreign Language Programmes

**ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER ALL THEIR TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS. THEY SHOULD PROVIDE ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORT AND FACILITATE DIRECT ACCESS BY ESTABLISHING INTERNAL RULES TO THIS END (E.G. LECTURE ROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, NETWORKS, BOARDING, CAREER AND SOCIAL POLICY SERVICES, ETC.).**

*Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient funding and means to support learning and academic activity in general, so that they can offer to the students of the FLP the best possible level of studies. The above means include facilities such as libraries, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communications services, support, and counselling services. When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students -including foreign students- must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed or international students, students with disabilities, etc.), in addition to the shift towards student-centered learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the institutional context. Internal quality assurance processes should ensure that all resources are appropriate, adequate, and accessible, and that students are informed about all available services. In delivering support services, the role of support and administrative staff is crucial and therefore this segment of staff needs to be qualified and have opportunities to develop its competencies.*

***Relevant documentation***

- *Insurance contract for foreign students*
- *Level, structure, and organizational setup of the Foreign Students Support Unit (Senate Decision)*
- *Administrative support staff of FLP (positions, qualifications, and responsibilities)*
- *Information material for the students with reference to the services provided (in English)*

### Foreign Language Programme Compliance

#### I. Findings

The inter-departmental Foreign Language Programme ENVSEN is supported by the academic, administrative, and student support structures of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, as well as by the resources of the five participating schools.

The schools make use of classrooms, laboratories, research infrastructure, libraries, digital platforms, and administrative services of the available to the schools and the institution. Given that the programme includes theoretical, laboratory, computational, and applied courses, access to appropriate laboratory infrastructure, scientific equipment, digital tools, and bibliographic resources is essential for its successful operation. Laboratories from all schools can be made available in the implementation of laboratory courses and diploma thesis. The schools also have study spaces and laboratory/research equipment, enabling each collaborating school to support the environmental dimension of the programme.

Administrative support is provided by the Secretariat of the leading School of Physics. The Secretariat functions as a regulator of smooth operation, manager of structured procedures, and

core link between the PSC, AUTh administrative departments, teaching staff, students and other stakeholders. The administrative staff that will support the FLP are identified by name in the documentation, and their responsibilities include student admission, registrations, course registrations, examination procedures, certificates, student registry, graduation, communication with students and instructors, support of the Programme Committee, and website maintenance.
Particular importance is attached to the support of international students. The PSC has English-language information material, while AUTh has an International Student Support Unit. This unit can contribute to the smooth integration of international students into the Institution and life in Greece by providing practical and administrative support. In addition, the accreditation files include provision for insurance coverage for international students.
Students also have access to the wider AUTh services, such as student welfare, counselling and psychological support, career services, Erasmus+ and international mobility, libraries, sports and cultural activities, and support services for students with disabilities or specific learning needs. Available services include, among others, the University Student Club, the University Gymnasium, the University Camp of Kalandra, the Central Library, the Library of the School of Sciences, the Counselling and Psychological Support Centre, the Career Office, the Internship Office, the School of Modern Greek Language, the Department of International Relations, the Student Ombudsperson and the Equal Access Unit.
The Academic Advisor system further strengthens student support, as it provides academic guidance, support in course selection, progress monitoring, and referral to other services where necessary.
An important element for the success of the Programme is also cooperation with external stakeholders. In discussion with the EAAP, the FLP PSC agreed that it will be a good idea to establish an Industrial Advisory Board with participation of representatives from different sectors, such as environmental technologies, climate services, circular economy, public bodies, water supply, energy, and research. This structure can contribute to feedback on labour market needs, curriculum updating, and the enhancement of graduates' employability.
Since the programme is new and addressed to an international audience, an organised strategy for promotion and marketing is required. It would be useful to have a clearly designated person or team responsible for the promotion of the programme, communication with prospective students, updating the website, and promoting the programme internationally.

## II. Analysis

The EAAP considers that the PSC has an adequate framework of learning resources and student support for the start of the operation of the FLP. The participation of five schools is a significant advantage, as it allows the programme team to make use of different scientific infrastructure and academic experience. The physical and digital infrastructure appears appropriate for the objectives of the programme. The use of classrooms of the five schools, multiple different laboratories, study spaces, e-learning, electronic communication, libraries, and laboratory spaces supports the learning process and meets the requirements of a modern interdisciplinary programme.

Administrative support is critical for a Foreign Language Programme, especially because students will come from different countries and educational systems. The fact that specific persons with specific responsibilities have been designated already is a positive element. However, it is important that administrative staff receive continuous training on the support of international students, English-language communication, and digital procedures.
The support of international students is also central to the sustainability and quality of the programme. Students should have easy access to practical information on visa or residence permit, insurance, accommodation, healthcare, registration, the academic calendar, communication with services, and study regulations. The existence of an organised Student Information Pack in English would significantly enhance the accessibility of this information.
Cooperation with stakeholders and companies can make a substantial contribution to the quality of the programme. Through regular discussions or advisory meetings with external bodies, the PSC will be able to identify which skills are required by the labour market and to examine whether elective courses, projects, research opportunities, or employability activities respond to these needs.
Finally, the promotion of the FLP is particularly important. Since this is an English-taught programme addressed to international students, the mere availability of information on the website is not sufficient. A more active strategy of international promotion is needed, with a clear objective, responsible coordination, updated content, and use of digital communication channels.

## III. Conclusions

The PSC has adequate learning resources and student support structures. It makes use of the infrastructure of the five participating schools and the central services of AUTh. Administrative support is organised, while provision for international students is strengthened through English-language information material, the International Student Support Unit, insurance coverage, and the Academic Advisor.
The programme is new and addressed to an international audience, and therefore particular emphasis should be placed on easy access to information, cooperation with stakeholders, monitoring the adequacy of infrastructure, and organised international promotion.

**Panel Judgement**

| **Principle 7: Learning Resources and Student Support of Foreign Language Programmes** | |
|---|---|
| Fully compliant | **X** |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

**Panel Recommendations**

7.1 The EAAP recommends the creation and systematic updating of an English-language Student Information Pack, including practical information on registration, visa or residence permit, insurance, accommodation, healthcare, counselling, academic guidance, mobility, libraries, communication with the Secretariat, and emergency contacts.

7.2 The establishment of an Industrial Advisory Board and the strengthening of cooperation with external stakeholders, companies, organisations, and research centres are also recommended, so that the PSC receives feedback on labour market needs and graduates' employability prospects.

7.3 The Panel recommends that a person or team be appointed for the international marketing and promotion of the FLP, with the aim of systematically attracting suitable international students and continuously updating the website and digital communication channels.

7.4 Finally, the adequacy of laboratories, digital tools, libraries, and administrative support should be periodically monitored, especially as the number of students increases and the corresponding evaluation questionnaires become available.

## Principle 8: Collection, Analysis, and Use of Information for the Organization and Operation of Foreign Language Programmes

**ACADEMIC UNITS BEAR FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTING, ANALYSING, AND USING INFORMATION, AIMED AT THE EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF FLP AND RELATED ACTIVITIES, IN AN INTEGRATED, EFFECTIVE, AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE MANNER.**

*Efficient procedures for collecting and analysing information on FLP provide data to the internal quality assurance system. The information collected depends, to some extent, on the type of accreditation (initial, or re-accreditation).*

*The following are of interest: key performance indicators, student body profile, student progression, success and drop-out rates, student satisfaction with the FLP, availability of learning resources and student support, career paths of graduates.*

*During the initial accreditation, the data concerning the profile and structure of the FLP must be entered (National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - NISQA fields: M4001 - M4030, M4033 - M4038, and M4127 - M4133).*

***Relevant documentation***

- *Report from the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) on the launching of FLP*
- *Operation of an information management system for the collection of administrative data for the implementation of the Programme (Students' Record)*

### Foreign Language Programme Compliance

#### I. Findings

The FLP fully complies with AUTh's relevant regulations and policies. It has established formal processes for routinely gathering data on students, teaching methods, and academic progress. Student satisfaction will be assessed regularly via online surveys issued each semester, which also capture feedback on instructors. This data will be analyzed and summarized in reports that evaluate and improve teaching quality. No additional formal channels for communication among FLP management, students, and alumni have been identified.

#### II. Analysis

Analysis results from the data will be shared with key parties, such as faculty and programme leaders. The FUP takes student input seriously, resulting in meaningful improvements to the learning environment and better alignment with career goals.

#### III. Conclusions

The PSC of the FLP effectively operates a robust data management and quality assurance system that drives its performance and long-term viability. To enhance this further, it should expand and structure involvement from students and external parties—like alumni as well as student graduates and industry—through periodic workshops or similar efforts. As the programme develops, the PSC is also urged to ensure high survey response rates and investigate new communication channels with students, future alumni and stakeholders.

**Panel Judgement**

| **Principle 8: Collection, Analysis, And Use of Information for The Organization and Operation of Foreign Language Programmes** | |
|---|---|
| Fully compliant | **X** |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

**Panel Recommendations**

8.1 The FLP management should explore additional ways/methods for information exchange with its students, future alumni and external stakeholders

## Principle 9: Public Information concerning the Foreign Language Programmes

**ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES WHICH IS CLEAR, ACCURATE, OBJECTIVE, UP-TO-DATE, AND READILY ACCESSIBLE.**

*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 Foreign Language Programmes they offer, the intended learning outcomes, the degrees awarded, the teaching, learning, and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students, as well as graduate employment information.*

***Relevant documentation***

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

### Foreign Language Programme Compliance

#### I. Findings

Key information regarding the university and the participating academic units is available online in Greek. The English version needs more work. Some participating departments had impressive websites, while others had only basic information available or some broken links. The main website for the FLP (http://envsen.auth.gr/) in English is well structured and quite extensive. Some deeper links led to content posted in the Greek language. The dedicated technical team that has been hired for the digital tasks seems competent and well qualified to perform the work. The programme course summaries and syllabi were provided with the application in both languages and were found to be extensive and complete. The Study Guide provided both in Greek and in English was extensive and contained useful information about the University, the city and other support services for the students of the FLP. The University Quality Assurance policies are already available online in both languages (MODIPAUTH http://qa.auth.gr).

#### II. Analysis

The evaluation was performed through in-person meetings with the programme leadership and representatives of the university management and administration, the teaching staff, the administrative support staff, stakeholders from industry and local civil entities. No AUTh students participated in the evaluation process – this is a new proposed programme. The leadership team had provided extensive documentation with the application written both in Greek and English. This material was analysed in advance to examine the preparedness of the FLP to advance to the implementation phase.

### III. Conclusions

The extensive documentation in both languages and the credentials of the academic team are detailed and of high quality, thus offering assurances on the administrative and academic success of the programme. The starting online materials made available to the public are very good. The in-person interactions of the evaluation committee with the academic team, the support staff and the stakeholders provided clear evidence that even though all the appropriate issues have not been fully resolved at this stage, the programme is destined to meet the European requirements for offering FLPs.

**Panel Judgement**

| **Principle 9: Public Information concerning the Foreign Language Programmes** | |
|---|---|
| Fully compliant | |
| Substantially compliant | **X** |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

**Panel Recommendations**

9.1 As expected, since the FLP is in its initial evaluation/approval phase, the associated outreach materials (including the website) should be improved.

## Principle 10: Periodic Internal Review of Foreign Language Programmes

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

*Regular monitoring, review, and revision of the FLP aims at maintaining the level of educational provision and creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students.*

*The above comprise the evaluation of: the content of the FLP in light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up to date; the changing needs of society; the students' workload, progression, and completion; the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students; the students' expectations, needs, and satisfaction in relation to the FLP; the learning environment, support services, and their suitability for the programme; FLP are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the FLP is adapted to ensure that it is up to date.*

***Relevant documentation***

- *Procedure for the re-evaluation, redefinition, and updating of the curriculum*
- *Procedure for mitigating weaknesses and upgrading the structure of the FLP, and the learning process*
- *Feedback processes on strategy implementation and quality targeting of the FLP, and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*

### Foreign Language Programme Compliance

#### I. Findings

There are a number of documents submitted in relation to this principle; namely Doc. α (central to this accreditation), Doc. θ, (quality targets), Doc. ιθ, (students' feedback), Doc. ιγ (feasibility study), Doc. κβ (MODIP report) as well as pieces of information in several other documents.
Document κβ includes the programme's first internal report. Dated January 2026, it lists strong and weak points, as well as corrective actions to be undertaken. Quality targets, apart from improvements in the contents of the programme's web page, grouped in five headings are tabulated in this document. The target dates for their attainment are set as, presumably, the next internal assessment. No subsequent internal quality reviews and no further progress reports are mentioned.

#### II. Analysis

The programme being new, has had its first self-assessment towards the end of 2025, and the outcomes have been submitted to MODIP. This was thoroughly assessed and a report was prepared, i.e. the first report on the internal evaluation in January 2026 (Doc. κβ). The detailed report summarized the main findings of MODIP, such as the specific areas covered by the FLP and its multidisciplinary nature, the advantage that would be offered to the graduates in terms of expertise in fundamental and applied aspects of clean energy science and technology ,

transparent operational structures and the integration of quantity and quality targets and measurable deliverables. The MODIP report continues with a comprehensive list of suggestions for continuous improvement in the quality and delivery of the FLP. The action plans involve mainly improvements in the quality of education, student centred learning, industry relations, human resources, finances, and data collection and dissemination. It is interesting to note that the document indicates a well-considered student-centred process of learning that, if followed, will produce excellent results. The report has been shared with the academic unit, and action plans have been made and published in Doc. ιβ in February 2026.
A point to note is that, although indirect reference is made, there is no dedicated target to improve the visibility of the programme and make it truly international.

## III. Conclusions

It is clearly evident, based on the documents provided and discussions that followed with the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and Development, the Secretary and members of MODIP plus the heads schools and academic/administrative staff that the sponsoring schools and the university have very detailed and appropriate plans in place for a periodic review of the FLP. These include both targets and measurable outcomes. The PSC and the heads of school were also agreeable that more interaction with the stakeholders will help improve the long-term relevance and viability of the programme. In addition, they are mindful that this will enhance the relations of the FLP (staff and students) with the labour market. Discussion also led to the agreed conclusion that the university management and administration, the PSC and the faculty involved should consider actions to increase the FLP visibility and thus attract as many international applicants as they can (with a maximum number of 40). In addition to bilingual publications, an international office, increased social media presence, and engagement rates in platforms such as linkedin should be considered. The employment of more appropriate marketing technics and facilities such as health and lodging that can cater for the needs of foreign students should be added to the action plans and be made part of the quality assurance audits. This will also contribute to applicants with higher academic qualifications seeking to follow the FLP, and as consequence help improve the overall quality of teaching and learning.

**Panel Judgement**

| **Principle 10: Periodic Internal Review of Foreign Language Programmes** | |
|---|---|
| Fully compliant | **X** |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

**Panel Recommendations**

10.1 Proceed with the establishment of an external Industrial Advisory Panel that could be consulted on a regular basis (at least once or twice a year) with this being part of the continuous monitoring and efforts for quality improvements.
10.2 Plan and implement innovative methods to increase the visibility and reach of the programme to help ensure applicants with high academic qualifications.

## Principle 11: Regular External Evaluation and Accreditation of Foreign Language Programmes Periodic Internal Review of Foreign Language Programmes

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY COMMITTEES 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 FLP accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by a committee of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of these programmes, with a specific term of validity, following to which revision is required.*

*The accreditation of the quality of the FLP acts as a means of verification of the compliance of the programme with 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 recommendations submitted by the committee of experts for the continuous improvement of the FLP.*

***Relevant documentation***

- *Utilization of the recommendations of the external evaluation of the academic unit and / or the Institution for the establishment and the continuous improvement of the operation of the FLP (reference to the action plan)*

### Foreign Language Programme Compliance

#### I. Findings

The PSC, the academic team and the administrative support staff are well aware of the importance of periodic external reviews by independent experts whose criticism and advice are necessary for continuous programme improvement. The provided teaching survey forms will document student feedback on many items that monitor student interest and the value/popularity of the courses offered. Plans were discussed with the EAAP to engage external stakeholders from the private and the public sectors in the form of an advisory board that would convene at least once a year to review and discuss the current status or the programme, new needs in the marketplace, and recent technological developments (e.g. AI tool implementation in teaching and learning) that may require periodic programme adjustments.

#### II. Analysis

The evaluation was performed through in-person meetings with the program leadership and representatives of the university management and administration, the teaching staff, the administrative support staff, as well as a group of stakeholders from industry and local civil entities. No AUTh students participated in the evaluation process; as expected as this is a new proposed programme. The programme leadership team had provided extensive documentation with the application written both in Greek and English. This material was analyzed in advance to examine the preparedness of the FLP to advance to the implementation phase.

## III. Conclusions

Regular internal evaluations are commonplace in most academic degree programmes and will be used to trigger revisions that ensure the timeliness of the curriculum of the FLP. Accreditation reviews performed every few (3-5) years by external experts will contribute to an independent confirmation that the FLP remains competitive and viable. Both external evaluation and accreditation procedures should follow established European standards that ensure that the FLP meets the needs of the rapidly advancing marketplace by producing professionals who are well equipped to work productively in both the private and the public sectors in countries around the globe.

**Panel Judgement**

| **Principle 11: Regular External Evaluation and Accreditation of Foreign Language Programmes Periodic Internal Review of Foreign Language Programmes** | |
|---|---|
| Fully compliant | |
| Substantially compliant | **X** |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

**Panel Recommendations**

11. 1 The schools should establish external evaluation and accreditation procedures that follow accepted European standards, ensuring that the FLP meets the needs of the rapidly advancing marketplace.

# PART C: CONCLUSIONS

## I. Features of Good Practice

The following are noted as features of good practice following a thorough evaluation of the paperwork provided and meetings with academic and administrative staff and the programme stakeholders.

1. The programme forms part of the internationalisation vision and objectives of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki Staff. Therefore, it has the full support of the university management and heads of the five sponsoring schools.
2. The University MODIP has a very well established and documented quality assurance process that will benefit directly the programme ensuring a high delivery provision.
3. Staff are very supportive of the programme and committed to its long-term success.
4. Staff are well qualified. They are active researchers and able to transfer such up-to-date knowledge to the programme.
5. The course content and structure were very well received by supporting stakeholders who are willing to contribute to future developments/continuous improvements of the programme.
6. There is adequate laboratory support in most areas (see below).

## II. Areas of Weakness

The EAAP panel notes the following areas of weakness that need consideration.

1. The stakeholders, although very senior/knowledgeable, were not consulted as a group in the development of the programme. Links with industry could be leveraged.
2. There is no formal Industrial Advisory Panel
3. The schools and the university need to design and implement marking plans that are consistent with international guidelines.
4. The physical infrastructure needs to be improved if it is to present a competitive university environment at international level.
5. Some of the laboratories do not measure up in quantity and quality for such a multidisciplinary programme.
6. The schools and the university seem to be not adequately informed or appreciative of the needs of international students (e.g. accommodation, pastural needs, cultural differences that can be important since most of the student will be international.)

## III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

Detailed recommendations are given in each section above under each principle and we request that the management of the AUTh, the sponsoring schools and the PSC consider these and the bullet points under "Areas of Weakness" and implement corresponding action following the submission of this report. The list below is only a summary of these detailed recommendations.

1. The EAAP believes that time is needed to prepare better – both in terms of academic provision and support for foreign students wishing to join the programme. Therefore, it is recommended that the programme accepts its first students for the academic year 2027-2028.
2. The PSC and participating schools plus the university plan and formulate marketing material, processes and actions for the FLP for what is a very competitive market, especially bearing in mind the plethora of university degrees offered in English, both in Europe and elsewhere.
3. Establish an Industrial Advisory Board, meeting twice a year and offering comments/advice on up-to-date curriculum matter and industrial needs.
4. Review laboratory provision, ensuring modern, well equipped and safe facilities that are well supported by technical staff.
5. Initiate a process providing information for staff (academic/administrative/technical) on specific needs of international students. Create the support mechanisms at school and university level to provide the necessary support for a multicultural international student cohort.
6. Establish a continuous staff performance and review process, including course delivery in English.

Finally, we recommend that HAHE considers a re-review of the foreign language Integrated Master in Environmental Science Engineering Programme in no-longer than three years from the start of the programme.

## IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:
1, 9, 11

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 |
|---|---|
| KARAYIANNIS TASSOS | Signed by KARAYIANNIS TASSOS |
| Megaridis Constantine | Signed by Megaridis Constantine |
| SKARLATOS YANI | Signed by SKARLATOS YANI |
| Δραγατσίκα Μαγδαληνή | Signed by Δραγατσίκα Μαγδαληνή |