



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Accreditation Report

for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment

Department: Geology and Geoenvironment
Institution: National Kapodistrian University of Athens
Date: 30 November 2023



Επιχειρησιακό Πρόγραμμα
Ανάπτυξη Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού,
Εκπαίδευση και Διά Βίου Μάθηση
Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Postgraduate Study Programme **of Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment** of the **National Kapodistrian University of Athens** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the postgraduate study programme of **Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment** of the **National Kapodistrian University of Athens** comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Professor Emeritus Nikolaos Katopodes (Chair)**
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA
- 2. Professor Emeritus Stavros Constantinou**
Ohio State University, Mansfield, OH, USA
- 3. Professor Emmanuel Stefanakis**
University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada
- 4. Mr. Giotopoulos Georgios**
PhD Candidate, University of Patras, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In preparation for the review and assessment of the PSP **Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment** of the **National Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA)**, the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEA Panel) reviewed a multitude of materials provided by the Hellenic Authority of Higher Education (HAHE). These included background information and guidance on the review and accreditation process, detailed data related to the programme under evaluation, such as the programme accreditation proposal and associated appendices.

The programme review was conducted via teleconference, which was organized and coordinated by HAHE and the National Kapodistrian University of Athens. The schedule and agenda of the review were as follows:

Monday, 20/11/2023:

1. Preliminary private teleconference meeting of the EEA Panel. Discussion of the programme under review. Assignment of writing parts of the accreditation report to the members of the EEA Panel.
2. Welcome teleconference meeting and short overview of the two PSPs with
 - the Head of the **Department of Geology and Geo-Environment** Prof. Asimina Antonarakou,
 - the Director of the PSP **Earth Science and Environment** (PSP1) Prof. Hara Drinia,
 - the PSP1 Steering Committee members Prof. Andreas Tzanis, Prof. Ariadni Argyraki, Prof. Vassiliki Kouskouna,
 - the Director of the PSP **Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment** (PSP2) Prof. Sarantis Sofianos,
 - the PSP2 Steering Committee members Prof. Persefoni Megalofonou, Prof. Serafeim Poulos, Prof. Sotirios Karavoltsos, Dr. Alexandra Gogou,
 - the MODIP staff members Mr. Konstantinos Bourletidis and Mr. Theodoros Chajitheodorou, and OMEA member Prof. Katerina Kouli.
3. Presentation of the NKUA quality assurance policy, current status and future developments, as well as presentations and discussion of PSP1 and PSP2 history, academic profile, current status and future developments, strengths and areas of concern, degree of compliance to the quality standards for accreditation, internal procedures, course examinations, review of students' progress, course/instructor evaluations, etc.
4. Teleconference meeting and discussion of facilities and learning resources with PSP1 & PSP2 teaching faculty: Prof. Andreas Tzanis, Prof. Ariadni Argyraki, Prof. Vassiliki Kouskouna, Prof. Serafeim Poulos, Prof. Sotirios Karavoltsos, Prof. Dionisis Raitzos, and Dr. Alexandra Gogou, and administrative staff members: Mr. Dimitrios Psarris, Ms. Georgia Ganiatsa, and Ms. Eleftheria Moutziki.
5. Private debriefing meeting (EEA Panel members only).

Tuesday, 21/11/2023:

Teleconference meetings related to PSP1, **Earth Science and Environment**: of the **National Kapodistrian University of Athens**.

Wednesday, 22/11/2023:

1. Meeting and discussion with teaching staff members of PSP2, **Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment**: Prof. D. Raitsos, Prof. I Adamakis, Prof. I. Panagiotopoulos, Dr. V. Vervatis, Prof. E. Dasenakis, Prof. V. Roussis, Dr. C. Zeri, and Dr. S. Zervoudaki.
2. Meeting and discussion with eight (8) current PSP2 students.
3. Meeting and discussion with four (8) PSP2 graduates.
4. Meeting and discussion with employers and PSP2 social partners: Prof. Skoulos (MIO-ECSD). Mr. Andreas Kallos (WEMET P.C.), Mr. Spyros Maroulakis (TERRA MARINE), Dr. Helen Kaberi (HCMR), Mr. Giorgos Alexandrakis (Hellenic Oceanographers' Association), Dr. Vassilios Mamaloukas (Environmental Protection Engineering S.A.), and Mr Savas Hatzinikolaou (LAMAR S.A., Aquaculture)
5. Private debriefing meeting (EEA Panel members only): discussion of the outcomes and findings of the PSP2 virtual visit; preparation of oral report.
6. Closure meeting with the Head of the Department of **Department of Geology and Geo-Environment**, PSP2 Director and Steering Committee faculty, MODIP President and staff, and OMEA faculty members: informal, oral presentation of the EEA Panel PSP2 key findings and clarifications.

Thursday 23/11/2023 to Thursday 30/11/2023:

Draft report writing. EEA Panel virtual meetings. Review and finalization of draft report.

Throughout the review and evaluation process, the EEA Panel was in close communication with the Department and the PSP2 administration, which were very accommodating in providing additional information requested by the EEA Panel. The EEA Panel found that the Department and the PSP2 administration, as well as the faculty, staff, current students, and recent graduates interviewed were eager and helpful in our discussions, providing valuable additional information.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The postgraduate study programme (PSP2) **Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment** is organized and offered by the **Department of Geology and Geo-Environment, jointly with the departments of Biology, Physics, and Chemistry** of the **National Kapodistrian University of Athens, and the Hellenic Center for Marine Research (HCMR)**. The programme was re-established in the academic year 2018-2019 (Official Gazette 3434/17/08/2018) and operates under the regulations of the NKUA for postgraduate and doctoral studies established by the University Senate (1432/20-01-2023).

The objectives of the PSP are the multidisciplinary training and specialization of scientists-researchers in Marine Geophysics, Undersea Volcanology, Coastal and Undersea Morphology, Climatology, Sedimentology, Environmental Oceanography, Geography, Paleo-Oceanography, Marine Geology, Biological Oceanography, Chemical Oceanography, and Undersea Archaeology. Specifically, the study programme involves the study of complex multidisciplinary problems, the use of modern methods and techniques in the management of natural and technological challenges, as well as the promotion of scientific research related to oceanographic activities.

Teaching in the PSP is provided by the 57 members of the faculty of the departments of **Geology and Geo-Environment, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Pharmacy, Port and Shipping Management** of the **National Kapodistrian University of Athens**. Part of the teaching and field instruction is carried out by researchers of the **Hellenic Center for Marine Research** and the **Democritus Research Center**. Specialized technical staff and administrative assistants also support the teaching efforts in the PSP.

The programme has set at the maximum number of admitted students per academic year to thirty (30). The actual number of enrolled students is actually lower, and this allows for exceptional access to the faculty and strong support by the administrative staff of the PSP. The PSP also admits a small number of international students and offers a limited number of courses in English. The current students and recent graduates have a diverse background, which offers the potential for remarkable possibilities for multidisciplinary work. At the same time, this presents some unique challenges in course offerings and deep learning. Most of the current students and recent graduates that the EEA Panel interviewed were enthusiastic about the admission process. They all indicated that the PSP **Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment** of the NKUA was among their first choice based on the curriculum, study program, research strength of the faculty, and overall reputation of the Department supporting the PSP. They all were appreciative of the quality of instruction, and the support they receive during the writing of their theses.

The PSP requires a minimum of four (4) academic semesters study. To graduate, a student must have successfully completed 120 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits. These are based on seven (7) required courses, seven (7) elective courses, and the preparation and successful completion of a postgraduate thesis. Attendance in lectures is mandatory and final examinations are administered in-person on campus. There is an impressive number of elective courses offered after the first semester, which allows for a significant flexibility in the study program. The EEA Panel found that the number of courses offered cover both fundamental and advanced topics in in the area of Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment.

The PSP prepares graduates trained in the study, analysis, monitoring, and management of oceanographic interest for careers in both the private and public sector of the economy, such as research institution, consulting companies, as well as government agencies. In addition, a substantial fraction of graduates continues with doctoral studies. There are strong links to the needs of society, which is a key priority of the PSP **Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment**, the **Department of Geology and Geo-Environment**, and the **National Kapodistrian University of Athens**.

The **Department of Geology and Geo-Environment** offers three (3) graduate programs and participates in four (4) additional inter-departmental graduate programs. The department also maintains a very active program in doctoral and post-doctoral studies.

Part B: Compliance with the Principles

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

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP **Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment**, administered by the **Department of Geology and Geo-Environment**, at the **National Kapodistrian University of Athens** has developed and implemented its Quality Assurance Policy as part of its broader strategy, as described in Appendix A2 of its proposal for accreditation of the subject PSP.

The **Department of Geology and Geo-Environment**, in collaboration with the University Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) and the Department Internal Evaluation Group (OMEA), has harmonized the quality policy of the PSP **Oceanography and Management of the Marine**

Environment with that of the University, accompanied by annual quality assurance targets for the continuous development and improvement of the PSP, as well as that of the academic unit and other educational programmes.

The Quality Assurance Policy of the PSP is publicly accessible from the Department's website, and includes adequate references to the PSP delivery, including commitments to satisfy requirements and strive for continuous improvement. In addition to OMEA, a departmental Coordinating/Steering Committee further aids in the overall quality assurance of the PSP and the Department.

The processes and procedures used for the monitoring and continuous improvement of the quality of the PSP are as follows:

1. The strict implementation of the PSP Policy for Quality Assurance;
2. The optimal disposition and management of the PSP resources, including those resulting from tuition fees;
3. The establishment of Quality Assurance objectives of the PSP on an annual basis;
4. The periodic internal evaluation and monitoring of the PSP on an annual basis;
5. The collection of Quality Data, quantitation, analysis and improvement of the PSP;
6. The disclosure and publication of all information related to the PSP made publicly accessible;
7. g) The periodic external evaluation and accreditation following established procedures by HAHE.

The quality and effectiveness of teaching at the PSP is closely monitored through the course/instructor evaluation by the students, the collection of data by the OMEA and transfer to MODIP on an annual basis. The goals of quality of the programme include:

1. Multidisciplinary education of graduate students with a focus on research and application of various specialization directions of Oceanography (Biological, Chemical, Geological and Physical).
2. Preparation of the new generation of researchers, who will be able to contribute to the discovery of new scientific knowledge and will ensure the inter-dependence of research and practice.

II. Analysis

The structure and organization of the PSP is well planned and in line with the overall goal of the programme. The advanced material covered along with the study of new technologies in the area of **Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment** result in learning outcomes and qualifications of the postgraduate students consistent with Level 7 of the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. The teaching methods, learning outcomes, and student satisfaction are explained in the PSP Study Guide.

The Quality Assurance Policy is sufficiently communicated to all parties involved. The PSP has set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely goals regarding the postgraduate programme. The targets that are monitored include the annual percentage of graduates to all registered students; the grade point average of postgraduate theses; the research output by the faculty such number of publications; citations and impact; participation of postgraduate students in research; the number of publications with postgraduate students as co-authors, the number of conferences in which postgraduate students participate; and the percentage of postgraduate students who continued for doctoral studies. Based on the data provided to the EEA Panel, the targets are also paired with suitable key performance indicators (KPIs). Goals are monitored, updated, and communicated, according to the Quality Assurance Policy implemented by the Institution and the PSP. The quality assurance system is reviewed on an annual basis by the OMEA and results communicated to the University MODIP, which issues an annual report. According

to 2023 Quality Targets report, overall the PSP is at a satisfactory quality level in terms of achieving set targets. Potential areas of improvement include the number of applicants, the number of students completing the course/instructor evaluations, and students' mobility.

III. Conclusions

Overall this is a well-organized PSP focusing on the quality of the teaching and effectiveness of learning. The Department has established a Quality Assurance Policy that is appropriate for the PSP. It includes a commitment for its implementation and continuous improvement of the programme. The metrics established by the PSP and the Institution are adequate in tracking and documenting the quality of the programme. The findings are supported by the documents provided to the EEA Panel by the PSP, the interviews with the teaching faculty, support staff, and alumni of the programme.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To enhance adherence to Principle 1, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

- Document and communicate to all involved the course/instructor evaluations. Publish (discretely) the results on the PSP website.
- Incorporate learning assessment methods in the course evaluation process.
- Establish a formal External Advisory Board, which could provide input for the continuous review, and further improvement of the curriculum.

PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

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

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

In addition, the design of PSP must consider:

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

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

Documentation

- *Senate decision for the establishment of the PSP*
- *PSP curriculum structure: courses, course categories, ECTS awarded, expected learning outcomes according to the EQF, internship, mobility opportunities*
- *Labour market data regarding the employment of graduates, international experience in a relevant scientific field*
- *PSP Student Guide*
- *Course and thesis outlines*
- *Teaching staff (name list including of areas of specialisation, its relation to the courses taught, employment relationship, and teaching assignment in hours as well as other teaching commitments in hours)*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment focuses on training highly qualified scientific personnel, specialized in cutting-edge fields of Oceanography. The design and curriculum of the PSP have been formulated to impart the most comprehensive, feasible, and practical education to students from a variety of scientific disciplines, such as biology, geology, physics, chemistry, and geography. This programme unites these diverse fields into a cohesive systemic approach to the broader study of Oceanography and the management of marine environments.

The PSP leads to the awarding of a Master's Degree. Students must accumulate a total of one hundred and twenty (120) ECTS credits. Throughout their postgraduate studies, students are expected to consistently fulfil the requirements of technical and laboratory exercises, as well as the writing of a research thesis and other scientific works. Specifically, students must participate in and successfully complete seven (7) compulsory specialized courses in the first and third semesters. In the second semester, they must select from 22 available optional courses to gather the required 30 ECTS credits. The third semester includes one mandatory course and the selection of a diploma thesis topic, while the fourth semester is devoted exclusively to the completion of the thesis.

The expected learning outcomes of postgraduate courses follow the European and National Qualifications Framework (EQF, NQF) as well as the corresponding Dublin Descriptive Indicators for level 7.

The PSP has a well-established link to research with the involvement of the Hellenic Center for Marine Research (ELKETHE), which stands as the premier Oceanographic Research Institute in the Eastern Mediterranean and ranks among the larger institutions within the Mediterranean region. Postgraduate students enrolled in the PSP are strongly encouraged to engage and contribute to research projects conducted in the research laboratories of NKUA and ELKETHE. Students are prompted to engage in international exchange initiatives like ERASMUS+ or CIVIS, which allow them to experience educational and research methodologies utilized in other European Union nations.

As scientific knowledge advances, it becomes crucial to integrate new findings and refresh both the curriculum and the faculty's expertise in the PSP. This updating process is facilitated by utilizing contemporary research literature, faculty and student attendance at international conferences, researcher exchanges with foreign institutions, and lectures by visiting experts from academia, research centres, and industry.

The PSP does not include external internships. Instead, the students are exposed to the research projects conducted in the department's laboratories to acquire practical experience, and they benefit from the programme's extensive collaborative network with various public and private entities to get insight into the operational dynamics of these organizations.

II. Analysis

The PSP has been established by adhering to the pertinent regulatory framework and has undergone the official approval process by the Institution, confirming its legitimacy and structured implementation. The programme's academic profile and orientation have been meticulously outlined. The scientific aims and areas of research have all been clearly articulated and made transparent. The curriculum and educational structure are designed to deepen understanding and provide students with relevant competencies for the practical application of their knowledge. This is ensured through modules on research methods, engagement in research activities, and theses with an enhanced research focus. The programme has integrated the expertise of external stakeholders and professionals from the labour market, ensuring the curriculum's relevance and applicability. The student workload is calibrated in alignment with the ECTS for level 7, ensuring a comprehensive and balanced educational experience. Opportunities for work-integrated learning are offered, bridging academic learning with practical application.

III. Conclusions

The programme is fully compliant with the Principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To enhance adherence to Principle 3, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

- The PSP draws upon faculty members from four distinct departments and instructors from ELKETHE, creating a distinctive blend of expertise necessary for delivering a top-tier postgraduate program in the interdisciplinary field of Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment. It is advisable for the instruction team to convene regularly to enhance coordination within the PSP. Furthermore, it is suggested that research theses encompass multiple disciplines and demonstrate a more pronounced interdisciplinary character.
- The Department should have a more substantial participation in the ERASMUS+, CIVIS, and other student exchange programmes by offering sufficient support and encouragement to the students in the PSP. Likewise, the Department should create the required infrastructure to attract additional foreign students. Consideration should be given to reassessing the feasibility of providing students with internships and additional work-integrated learning experiences.
- The programme should include a greater number of field exercises and practical tasks within its courses to enhance student learning. The committee acknowledges the substantial teaching responsibilities shouldered by the faculty members, the challenges in securing research grants, and the constraints posed by inadequate technical support.
- Establishing an External Advisory Board as a consultative body to the PSP would be beneficial to the programme. Such a Board could comprise members from industry, local public authorities, other stakeholders, and academics from international universities who would advise the Department regarding issues such as the reassessment of the programme's goals, the integration of emerging priority fields into the curriculum, and strategies for enhancing the employability and ongoing development of its graduates.

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

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

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

The student-centred learning and teaching process

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

In addition

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The terms of study and the entire framework for the operation of the postgraduate program are defined according to: a) the Government Gazette 3555/22-08-2018 vol. B' announcing the re-establishment of an Inter-institutional Postgraduate Program of the Departments of Biology, Geology and Geoenvironment, Physics and Chemistry of the School of Sciences of the National

and Kapodistrian University of Athens and the Hellenic Center for Marine Research entitled "Oceanography and management of the Marine Environment"; and b) The amendment of the Regulation of the Inter-institutional Postgraduate Program Studies (MSc) of the Departments of Biology, Geology and Geoenvironment, Physics and Chemistry of the School of Sciences of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens in collaboration with the Hellenic Centre for Marine Sciences entitled "Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment" Government Gazette 3450/12-09-2019 vol. B'.

The post graduate program "Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment" is open to holders of a degree of the first cycle of studies of the Departments of Geology and Geoenvironment, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, as well as graduates of Departments of the Schools of Sciences, Environment, Agriculture, Engineering, and other relevant scientific disciplines, Greek Universities or equivalent, recognized by DOATAP, foreign institutions, as well as graduates of other Departments of Universities in Greece or equivalent schools recognized abroad.

Teaching takes place through face-to-face classes, lectures, scientific workshops, and symposia, as well as practical training.

The collaborating institutions are obliged to ensure that students with disabilities and/or special needs have accessibility to the proposed textbooks and teaching. Postgraduate students are invited to participate and attend seminars of research groups, bibliographic information discussions, laboratory visits, conferences/workshops on a subject related to that of the program, lectures, or other scientific events.

At the end of each semester, postgraduate students evaluate each course and each instructor through specially designed questionnaires approved by the Special Inter-institutional Committee.

For working postgraduate students, the possibility of part-time study is foreseen. Part-time attendance is also allowed for non-working students who are unable to meet the requirements of full-time study for reasons of health, family, military service, etc.

Students who meet the necessary economic or social criteria and the conditions of excellence in the first cycle of studies are exempt from tuition fees.

The availability of an academic advisor seems to be working well; however, the process does not receive a general approval by the student community. According to the study guide "Following a proposal by the coordinating committee, a member of the post graduate program is appointed as an Advisor for each program and monitors the progress and counsels students on issues related to his/her attendance at the post graduate program".

At the end of the term of office of the Coordinating Committee, under the responsibility of the outgoing Director, a detailed report is drawn up of the research and educational work of the program, as well as its other activities. These aim at upgrading the studies, ensuring better utilization of human resources, optimization of existing infrastructure, and socially beneficial use of the available resources.

II. Analysis

The aforementioned Government Gazette shows the mode of operation and all the relevant procedures concerning the postgraduate program. Reference is made to the admission procedures of new students, their selection criteria in the educational process and its evaluation in general. The availability of an academic advisor is not described anywhere.

There is also no reference to the internal evaluation carried out annually by the *Quality Assurance Unit* (MODIP), as well as in the external evaluation carried out *by the National Authority for Higher Education* (HAHEE). The only relevant reference is made in the study guide posted on the website of the program "The internal and external evaluation [...] will be carried out in accordance with the applicable provisions".

III. Conclusions

The program is fully compliant with Principle 3.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To enhance adherence to Principle 3, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

- Create a sample of a fully completed questionnaire for the evaluation of the MSc by students in the annex of the Government Gazette Re-establishment
- Describe the existence and operation of distance education (synchronous, asynchronous)
- Include the electronic platform accessible to persons with disabilities in the Rules of Procedure.
- Describe the regulation to teaching methods and methodology.
- Describe the methods that ensure access to students with disabilities and/or special needs to attend the postgraduate program.
- Encourage the participation of students in European programs e.g., Erasmus.
- Include a reference to the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) or to the National Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) regarding internal and external evaluation in the internal regulation.
- Provide additional details for the role of academic advisor in the study guide.
- Describe the availability of excellence awards or the methods of selection.
- Describe the procedure for possible appeals by students in the printed regulations.

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The selection of the students is carried out by the Coordinating Committee based on the following criteria: Degree grade, average grade in undergraduate courses related to his/her subject, relevance of the Diploma (thesis), Certified knowledge of the English language, Possession of a second degree, Research activity, Professional engagement, Publications, Letters of recommendation, and in-person interview. Based on the overall criteria, the Committee draws up the Evaluation List of candidates.

Students have all the rights and benefits provided for students of the first cycle of studies, until the expiration of any granted extension of study, except for the right to receive free textbooks. In addition, during their studies, Postgraduate Students attend a series of Seminars and Lectures without credits. Attending courses/workshops, etc., is mandatory and controlled by the instructors. The duration of studies is precisely defined in the Rules of Procedure.

Teaching takes place through in-person classes, lectures, scientific workshops, and symposia, as well as practical training.

The inter-institutional committee at the end of the first semester, upon the recommendation of the coordinating committee, decides to award 1-2 scholarships. These depend on the number of students of the same academic year and are based on the performance of postgraduate students in the courses of the first semester. The scholarships allow for an exemption of the scholarship holder from the payment of tuition fees for the next three semesters. Part-time students are not entitled to the aforementioned scholarship.

II. Analysis

The rules of procedure analyze how the postgraduate program is organized. These rules refer to the detailed selection criteria of students and how they are admitted to the postgraduate program. Reference is made to the way of attending classes, mainly in person meetings, and practical training. The rules also mention the granting of performance-based scholarships in relation to non-payment of tuition fees for subsequent semesters.

III. Conclusions

The program is fully compliant with the Principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To enhance adherence to Principle 4, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

- Include the regulations concerning traineeships in the regulations.
- Include Research ethics regulation missing
- Enhance student mobility and participation in European programs.
- Include description of the external evaluation, the functions of the academic advisor, and the framework of distance education (synchronous and asynchronous) in the internal regulations.

PRINCIPLE 5: TEACHING STAFF OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The documentation covering the procedures and criteria in the recruitment of teaching staff is appropriate and clear, as well as the documentation for employment regulations or contracts and obligations of the teaching staff.

There is detailed documentation of the individual performance of the teaching staff in scientific research and teaching work. The strategic goals provided make it clear that faculty members have opportunities for professional development through research and teaching. The research data cover a broad range of activities: number of articles in international journals, studies in proceedings of professional conferences, research projects, advisors to doctoral dissertations, membership in doctoral committees, advisor, or committee member of master theses. Finally, the brief report on the teaching staff's achievements in scientific research and teaching work provides the H-index for Google Scholar and Scopus as measures of evaluation of scientific work. Eight faculty members have more than 100 publications in international journals.

The Postgraduate Study Program (PSP) in Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment is strongly associated with the Hellenic Center for Marine Research (ELKETHE). A total of 23 researchers from ELKETHE have a significant record of publications and participation in the research and teaching activities of the PSP. This association with ELKETHE is vital to studying complex research projects requiring a multidisciplinary approach. It is beneficial to students because of increased opportunities to learn through various activities, both in the classroom, the laboratory, and in the field.

Participation in the CIVIS network of European Universities and Erasmus Mundus provides additional professional development opportunities and offers students opportunities to cultivate relationships with foreign institutions.

The research record of the teaching staff is variable. There is a need for a few faculty members to increase their publications, especially in internationally recognized journals.

Students have the opportunity to evaluate the teaching staff yearly with the use of a detailed and well-structured questionnaire.

There is a comprehensive listing of teaching staff, including their academic ranks, web page, areas of specialization, institution of degree, teaching hours per year, and other teaching activities calculated in hours.

II. Analysis

The processes and criteria for recruitment and employment of teaching staff are clear and detailed. The existing process attracts competent and productive scholars and effective teachers. The student evaluation of instruction collects useful data regarding the student, the instructor and the class or laboratory of the program. These data identify areas of strength and weaknesses, and they are used for program changes.

The program emphasizes research and teaching, including participation in European institutions like CIVIS and Erasmus Mundus.

In summary, the processes and criteria for staff recruitment are clear and transparent. An adequate number of teaching staff support the Postgraduate Study Program (PSP). The formal student evaluation of instruction takes place annually

III. Conclusions

The programme is fully compliant with this Principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To enhance adherence to Principle 5, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

- Consider including the Web of Science SI metric in reporting the publication record of the teaching staff since it is highly respected in many fields of science.
- Create a one-stop location that houses faculty publications, theses, and other documents of scholarly activities.
- Cultivate a stronger relationship between the Department and its graduates, as well as strengthening the relationship with the practitioners in the field.

PRINCIPLE 6: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The administrative organization of the postgraduate program is established by the General Assemblies of the four participating Departments of the School of Sciences, i.e., Biology, Geology and Geoenvironment, Physics, and Chemistry, which elect representatives of the Departments to the Special Inter-institutional Committee. The Department of Geology and Geoenvironment has administrative and secretarial duties. The Administrative support staff of the postgraduate program is described in detail on the website of the department where the names of the staff, their work phone numbers, and their email addresses are listed.

The Postgraduate courses are taught by professors of the four Departments of the School of Sciences of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Researchers and Special Operational Scientists holding a PhD from the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, retired

members of the four Departments of the School of Sciences of the University, as well as other members e.g., special and research staff, special teaching staff, special technical laboratory staff of four Departments of the Faculty of Sciences of the University, and holders of a PhD working on a relevant research project. In addition, scientists of recognized record, and individuals with specialized knowledge. In addition, postdoctoral fellows who can be employed as academic scholars by decision of the Assemblies and act of the Presidents of the collaborating Departments may carry out teaching and research work.

For the smooth operation of the IPPS, there are classrooms, amphitheatres equipped with audiovisual media, scientific laboratories of the collaborating Departments of the University and the Institutes of the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research. Its oceanographic vessel is also available for instruction. The administrative and secretarial support of the MSc "Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment" is provided by the Secretariat of the Program located at the Department of Geology and Geoenvironment of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

The operating costs of the I.P.P.S. "Oceanography and management of the Marine Environment" are covered by the tuition fees of 2,400 euros paid by the postgraduate students. Other sources of income to the PSP include a) donations, benefits, bequests and any kind of sponsorships of organizations, and resources from research programs, b) resources from programs of the European Union or other international organizations, c) part of the revenues of the Special Accounts for Research Funds (ELKE), d) any other legal source. The imposition of a tuition fee is necessary because studies in Oceanography have a high cost, due to the combination of work in the laboratory and in the field using expensive equipment and consumables.

II. Analysis

Through the program, provision is made for exemption from tuition fees for students who meet the economic or social criteria and the conditions of excellence during the first cycle of studies. There is extensive reference to access to the University's facilities for people with disabilities on the department's website, but not in the internal regulations. Full reference is made to the teaching staff participating in the postgraduate program from the website as well as its infrastructure.

There is relevant informational / promotional material given to students regarding the available services on the official website of the postgraduate program.

III. Conclusions

The program is fully compliant with the Principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEA Panel has no recommendations for Principle 6.

PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The information about the PSP gathered from the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) encompasses the following thematic areas: (a) Students and Graduates; (b) Human Resources; (c) Structure and Organization of Studies; (d) Infrastructure and Services; (e) Research Activity; (f) Financial Data; and (g) Internal Quality Assurance System. The analysis of MODIP data involves quality indicators, such as ratio of active postgraduate programmes to the Institution's undergraduate programmes, number of classrooms allocated to the PSP, proportion of students (active undergraduates, postgraduates, and PhD candidates) as to the total seat capacity of the Institution's libraries, percentage of fed students in relation to the total number of students (active undergraduates, postgraduates, PhD candidates) of the Institution. These indicators offer insights into the sufficiency of the Institution's infrastructure and services for the optimal operation of the PSP.

The Department consistently gathers data on faculty and teaching quality via MODIP's information system and postgraduate electronic evaluation questionnaires, formerly

completed on the e-class platform. This academic year, the department will gather student feedback on teaching through online surveys hosted by the Institution's designated service and facilitated by the Network Operation and Management Center. Annual surveys gather precise details about the department's faculty and instructor members, including publications, research projects, awards, international academic experience, ERASMUS student and staff mobility, teaching assignments within NKUA or other institutions, and the research laboratories' suitability for the department's educational and research requirements.

The PSP uses the Unitron system to collect additional data on active students and graduates, monitoring their academic progress and completion rates. It also offers insights into the student demographic profile, including special categories, international students, ERASMUS participants, and other relevant statistics. This data is crucial for pinpointing the strengths and weaknesses of the PSP and its courses, including course difficulty and grading trends. Such analysis aids in refining and enhancing the programme.

II. Analysis

The PSP is fulfilling the requirement to implement and maintain an information system designed for the administration and oversight of data related to students, faculty, course frameworks, teaching methodologies, and student services. This system is instrumental in ensuring the effective management of academic and student-related information.

The data being collected encompasses critical areas, including key performance indicators (KIPs), demographic details of the student cohorts, progression trends along with completion and attrition statistics, levels of student satisfaction with their courses, and the accessibility of educational materials and student support services.

III. Conclusions

The programme is fully compliant with the Principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To enhance adherence to Principle 7, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

- Adopt a variety of metrics that capture operational issues of the programme. It is unclear how this information is aggregated and disseminated in the form of key performance indicators (KPIs) to communicate goal setting and compliance. It is therefore recommended to establish an annual report summarizing these metrics. It is also recommended to identify the appropriate dissemination route and format for such content to ensure that stakeholders (e.g., faculty members) have full access to it. Making the source data available in digital format (rather than just reports summarizing aggregated data) would allow further analysis and extraction of knowledge by the stakeholders.
- Take full advantage of available networking solutions to reconnect with the PSP alumni, share the annual progress reports, and seek for ongoing advice. This may be an issue that needs to be addressed at the level of the Institution (NKUA), not just at the department level.
- Create a centralized collection of faculty publications, research lab reports, and theses on the department's website or in the library, serving as a unified resource for all PSP scholarly works.

PRINCIPLE 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES
INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC
ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES IN A DIRECT AND READILY
ACCESSIBLE WAY. THE RELEVANT INFORMATION SHOULD BE UP-TO-DATE, OBJECTIVE AND CLEAR.

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP has an informative website with detailed information on the faculty and the university, the personnel, the current student support services, and its quality assurance policy, targets, and metrics. The department uses all-available information technology systems to inform students on courses, syllabi, exams, workload and marking. Moreover, it uses social media to distribute announcements and opportunities (e.g., seminars, research projects, conferences, etc.), already published on the webpage, to the student community.

The educational and research endeavours undertaken by the students and the teaching faculty of the PSP are showcased, alongside information aimed at upholding the standard of education. The PMS website also features information in English to acquaint Erasmus programme participants with necessary details.

II. Analysis

The department discloses information about the PSP operations, which includes the study programs available, the target educational objectives, the degrees issued, the strategies for teaching, learning, and assessment, the rates of student success, and the educational options open to their students.

III. Conclusions

The programme is fully compliant with the Principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To enhance adherence to Principle 8, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

- Pursue professional networking activities (ranging from groups on LinkedIn to dedicated websites accessible through the Department website) to better link with its highly visible graduates in academia, research, and practice, and foster community-building activities. It would also be beneficial to the students to be aware of the activities offered through this programme.
- Place more emphasis on providing detailed information about the career opportunities available to graduates of the PSP.
- Consider alternative social media platforms that are more popular to young adults, such as Instagram and TikTok.

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

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

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

The above comprise the evaluation of:

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) has established quality assurance and evaluation procedures through the process of "Internal Evaluation," following the guidelines of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of the NKUA. The Steering Committee of the PSP coordinates the evaluation of the PSP in collaboration with the Evaluation Working Group (OMEA) of the Department of. MODIP supervises the Departmental OMEA under the procedures defined by the HAHE.

The annual Internal Evaluation process highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP), identifies points that need improvement, determines applicable improvement actions, and takes initiatives for independent improvement wherever and whenever possible.

The OMEA conducted the Internal Evaluation with the participation of students, administration and technical support members, and faculty members. The Director of the PSP formally presented the relevant findings of the most recent evaluation to the EEAP panel during the review process. The MODIP unit of NKUA summarizes the many dimensions of the PSP in Appendix A8. The findings of the MODIP Report identified strong and weak points and suggested corrective/preventive actions. The Department administered a 23-question structured self-administered questionnaire for the Student Evaluation of Instruction using a 5-point Likert scale. Questions 1-3 pertain to the student, 4-16 pertain to the class or the laboratory, and questions 17-23 pertain to the instructor. Appendix 9 summarizes the results in a series of bar graphs. The same document identifies the lack of classroom textbooks as a weakness. As a remedy, some instructors publish their own textbooks to improve the situation.

The MODIP Report presents the results of the Internal Evaluation of the PSP based on the following sources of data:

- The Courses Outlines.
- The available Quality Data from the Information System (OPESP) of ETHAAE from 2015-2016 and beyond
- The student evaluation questionnaires
- The Annual Internal Report of the Working Group of the Certification of the PSP
- The targeting of Academic Years 2022-2023
- Procedure Manual of the ESDP NKUA

Areas identified as strong points by MODIP Report

- Use of interactive educational material in the program courses
- Scientific training, notable research presence, and quality teaching offer of faculty members teaching in the graduate program (unpaid)
- A satisfactory number of secretarial support persons
- Sufficient number of students participating in the evaluation process
- Satisfactory number of lectures, in addition to the course material

II. Analysis

The Department conducted a thorough annual internal evaluation as per University requirements by MODIP. The PSP Directors were forthcoming with the EAPP panel and made all documents and findings available for review. Based upon the findings reviewed and the faculty presentations to the panel, the EEAP concludes that the Department of Oceanography and Marine Environment has instituted a comprehensive PSP monitoring system. Most importantly, faculty actively participated in the process, and demonstrated their willingness to analyse student feedback and suggest recommendations to increase student participation in future internal evaluations of instruction.

Some of the identified areas for improvement include: a) Insufficient logistical infrastructure (Room for exclusive use and use of its PC specific PSP); b) The lengthy process of completing the diploma thesis delays awarding the master's degree, usually by one semester. This is particularly true for those students who experienced difficulties in the Compulsory Course of

either Physical Oceanography or Chemical Oceanography due to their different theoretical (graduate) backgrounds.

III. Conclusions

The programme is fully compliant with this Principle.

Panel Judgement

Principle 9: On-going monitoring and periodic internal evaluation of postgraduate study programmes	
Fully compliant	x
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

To enhance adherence to Principle 9, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

- Increase student participation in the process of student evaluation of instruction by simplifying the current structured questionnaire of 23 questions.
- Establish the student evaluation process as mandatory for participation in the commencement process.
- Develop the laboratory infrastructure (rooms with computers, software supply, etc.)
- Reinforce teaching in courses, as deemed necessary.
- Render the Diploma Supplement in Greek/English.
- Develop more field experiences and practical tasks.
- Strengthen the distance education material on the e-class platform.
- Search for companies/organizations that could cooperate with the PSP in the implementation of the internship/diploma.
- Present the PSP and interface with the local community, schools, local government, and Prefecture to attract students.

PRINCIPLE 10: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The EEAP is the first external evaluation of the Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) in Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment as mandated by ETHAAE. This evaluation is being conducted by the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP). The external evaluation and accreditation process follow the guidelines set by the "Quality Standard for the Accreditation of Postgraduate Programmes," issued by HAHE in 2022 and by the Principles and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

The Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) and the Unit of Internal Departmental Evaluation (OMEA) of the **Department of Geology and Geo-Environment** of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens** (NKUA) were fully committed to the external evaluation and participated actively throughout the process. They were eager to learn from the EEAP evaluators and to incorporate recommendations for improvement within the program.

The EEAP evaluators had access to a multitude of sources, including members of the Departmental OMEA and MODIP. They provided a wealth of information to the EEAP about its activities, including the Postgraduate Study Programme, the expected learning outcomes, the teaching and evaluation procedures, and the degree awarded. In addition, current and graduates of the program were available for interview sessions.

II. Analysis

Because this is the first external review of the Postgraduate Programme (PSP), no prior recommendations exist for comparison purposes. The faculty participated actively in the external review process and were highly responsive and forthcoming during the program discussions. They were open to discussing their program's strengths and weaknesses and

understood the review process's value and importance. Furthermore, they showed a positive attitude toward implementing possible suggestions for program improvements, and they recognized the substantive review by the EAAP and expressed their gratitude. The EAAP believes that the statements of the Director of the PSP, the Department Head, and the Head of the MODIP constitute the strongest guarantee for the implementation of possible EEAP suggestions.

Stakeholders of the academic unit were actively engaged in the process, as evidenced by their participation during the three-day review process.

There is a procedure to distribute the findings of this external evaluation at all levels of the university evaluation structure, which will set the stage for implementing the recommendations.

III. Conclusions

The programme is fully compliant with this Principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To enhance adherence to Principle 10, the EEA Panel recommends the following:

- Develop a systematic process for maintaining and strengthening the relationship between the Department and its graduates to enhance future recruitment, learn from their experiences, and modify the programme accordingly according to their recommendations.
- Identify opportunities to strengthen existing relationships and develop new connections within the industry. This could potentially culminate in the establishment of an External Advisory Council with strategic representation of key industry leaders and stakeholders to advise the PSP regarding curriculum design and content, possible opportunities for internships/placements, and other relevant consultative issues.
- Promote the internationalization of the programme by encouraging the participation of Department students and faculty in the Erasmus Mundus, CIVIS, and other international exchange programmes. This will help to attract a larger pool of international students and expose Department students and faculty to the curriculum and practices of prominent foreign departments.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- The University and the Department have implemented compliant and efficient mechanisms for monitoring and ensuring a high-quality education and services relative to the PSP **Oceanography and Management of the Marine Environment** of the **National Kapodistrian University of Athens**. The existing quality assurance and continuous improvement policy and practices followed by the PSP align with the strategic objectives of the **Department of Geology and Geo-Environment** and the University.
- The faculty and staff are enthusiastic and dedicated to their mission.
- The students' overall experience is very positive. The enthusiasm of current students, recent graduates, employers, and stakeholders was evident.
- Employment of the postgraduate study programme graduates in public and/or private positions is very high.
- Employers and social partners praised the postgraduate study programme and indicated that there is a strong need for its graduates.
- Overall, this is an outstanding PSP with the potential to become a leading program internationally.

II. Areas of Weakness

- There is no structured, well-defined process for students, graduates, and external stakeholders in the PSP improvement.
- Student participation in Internship training in industry is limited.
- There is no published historical track of actions in response to past evaluations (students, external and internal evaluations).
- There are limited interactions with stakeholders and alumni after graduation.
- There is no formal External Advisory Board.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Consider establishing a formal External Advisory Board comprised of faculty, graduates, and social partners to actively assist and guide the continuous review, revision, and further development of the PSP curriculum, enhance the entire programme, as well as attract resources.
- Publish on the PSP website all actions in response to past evaluations (students, external and internal evaluations).
- Increase mobility of students, faculty, and other scientific personnel.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,9, and 10.

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:
None.

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:
None.

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:
None.

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

- 1. Professor Emeritus Nikolaos Katopodes (Chair)**
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA
- 2. Professor Emeritus Stavros Constantinou**
Ohio State University, Mansfield, OH, USA
- 3. Professor Emmanuel Stefanakis**
University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada
- 4. Mr. Giotopoulos Georgios**
PhD Candidate, University of Patras, Greece