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HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Accreditation Report

for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Urban Regeneration, Urban Development & Real Estate

Department: Planning and Regional Development

Institution: University of Thessaly

Date: 18 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 **Urban Regeneration, Urban Development & Real Estate** of the **University of Thessaly** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

Abbreviations

UTh	University of Thessaly
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EEAP	External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel
EDIP / ΕΔΙΠ	Laboratory Teaching Staff
ΕΤΕΡ / ΕΤΕΠ	Laboratory Technicians
HAHE	Hellenic Authority for Higher Education
HNARIC	Hellenic National Recognition and Information Centre
IQAS (ΕΣΔΠ)	Internal Quality Assurance System
MODIP	Quality Assurance Unit (ΜΟΔΙΠ)
OMEA	Internal Evaluation Groups/School's Internal Evaluation Committee
PSP	Postgraduate Study Programme
QA	Quality Assurance

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part A: Background and Context of the Review	5
I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel	5
II. Review Procedure and Documentation.....	6
III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile	8
Part B: Compliance with the Principles	9
PRINCIPLE 1: QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND QUALITY GOAL SETTING FOR THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT	9
PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES.....	13
PRINCIPLE 3: STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT	18
PRINCIPLE 4: STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AND CERTIFICATION.....	21
PRINCIPLE 5: TEACHING STAFF OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES.....	24
PRINCIPLE 6: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT	26
PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	28
PRINCIPLE 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES	30
PRINCIPLE 9: ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC INTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES.....	32
PRINCIPLE 10: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES	34
Part C: Conclusions.....	36
I. Features of Good Practice	36
II. Areas of Weakness	36
III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions	36
IV. Summary & Overall Assessment.....	38

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 **Urban Regeneration, Urban Development & Real Estate** of the **University of Thessaly** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Professor Emeritus Loukas Kalisperis (Chair)**
Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, USA
- 2. Professor Thomas Panagopoulos**
Universidade do Algarve, Faro, Portugal
- 3. Professor Marios C. Phocas**
University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
- 4. Professor Theodore Stathopoulos**
Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
- 5. Mr. Miltiadis Meliadis, PhD Candidate**
School of Spatial Planning and Development, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) reviewed the material submitted by the Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) in **Urban Regeneration, Urban Development & Real Estate** of the University of Thessaly (UTH) in advance of its 'virtual visit' (via tele-conference) and virtual briefing. The Director and staff of HAHE provided the members of the EEAP with the necessary information on HAHE's mission and standards, as well as the guidelines for the review process and the national framework of the higher education institution in Greece. The EEAP met, in private, to discuss the programme review report for the Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) in **Urban Regeneration, Urban Development & Real Estate** of the University of Thessaly, allocate tasks and list of issues for the site 'virtual visit'.

The visit was conducted via online conference meetings (Zoom) and started on Monday, 06 November 2023, and lasted until 08 November 2023. The visit was common for two PSP programmes. The EEAP wrote the report in the following days (November 9-18) through collaborative meetings, held also online via the Zoom platform. The EEAP would like to express its appreciation for the efforts that the university, department, programme staff and HAHE undertook in order for the 'virtual visit' to be a productive and effective experience. Although the EEAP was able to collect enough information for an understanding of the program, the 'virtual visit' was not as effective and rewarding as an in situ evaluation. The schedule for the virtual meetings was very condensed due to the fact that two postgraduate programmes were evaluated concurrently and from distance.

The EEAP met initially with the Directors of the two PSP, the Head of the Department, MODIP and OMEA members, on 06 November 2023, for a brief introductory meeting where some initial presentations of the university and the department took place. The Department Chair and the Director of the Programme gave an overview of the institution and the department and provided useful information about the department's strengths and areas of concern. The morning meetings continued with an in-depth presentation of the programme, by the Director and representatives of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) and the Internal Evaluation Group (OMEA), followed by limited discussion with MODIP & OMEA members, during which the EEAP received some additional information about the programme, the various activities of the curriculum, faculty and staff, student body, and research activities. The EEAP received further documentation and supporting material related to the presentations given by the Director that facilitated their discussions. Consequently, the meetings continued with a video and a PowerPoint tour of the facilities, and a very brief discussion followed in order to address any members' questions. Additionally, the EEAP was introduced, via PowerPoint presentations, to the individual research laboratories operating within the department by faculty members of its research group and their facilities and research activities, and available to the students of the PSP.

Following that, the EEAP reflected on the discussions and prepared for the subsequent sessions of the 'virtual visit', on the second day (07 November 2023), during which it met with faculty members and student representatives. During this meeting the EEAP was given the opportunity to ask detailed questions to better facilitate the EEAP's understanding of the curriculum, internal evaluation review process, adequacy of resources and possible areas of strengths and weaknesses. The teaching staff and students provided the members of the EEAP with valuable information about their study experience, curriculum, and campus facilities. They discussed their priority issues concerning mobility, research, and career opportunities. The students were very hospitable, and helpful. They conducted themselves admirably and were excellent ambassadors of a good educational institution.

The second day, (07 November 2023, second calendar day of the overall visit), continued with subsequent meetings with programme graduates and with employers, social partners, and external stakeholders, both groups representing impressive professional organizations, enterprises, and local authorities. During the meetings the EEAP was able to hear their experiences either during their studies at the *Urban Regeneration, Urban Development & Real Estate* programme and/or their relations with the Department, as well as aiming to address the readiness of the graduates for the market and identify areas of cooperation between the department and employers. All participants spoke enthusiastically of the programme and their affiliation with it. It was evident that the Institution is held in a very high regard by its Alumni and external stakeholders.

The second day (07 November 2023, second calendar day of the overall visit), concluded with a meeting with the programme directors, the faculty working on the Programme Review Report, and MODIP & OMEA, in which a quick summary of the visit was discussed. During the meeting the EEAP was able to further clarify several key points and engage in a detailed discussion on the curriculum and facilities. The EEAP requested additional information about the programme, administrative buildings & resources, library, external relations and the electronic systems for student satisfaction and student records.

The EEAP met via tele-conference, for the remainder of the “virtual visit”, in order to complete the report and submit it to HAHE on Saturday, 18 November 2023.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) in *Urban Regeneration, Urban Development & Real Estate* at the University of Thessaly (UTh) was originally established in 2015 and operated for 3 years with a total of 82 students and an average of 19 students per year. The programme was reformulated and re-established in 2018 at which time the knowledge area of Real Estate was included. This is a 3-semester (one calendar year) postgraduate programme in which students are required to complete a total of 9 courses (7 required and 2 electives) along with the completion of the Research Thesis. The programme has an equivalency of 90 ECTS. Students do not specifically identify any concentration areas in which they select their elective courses and or complete their thesis on similar thematic areas. Course syllabi are available for all courses taught online in the web page of the Programme. Students are given the opportunity to evaluate the courses they attend, and their input might be considered in adjusting course content and delivery aspects.

Students that matriculate in the postgraduate programme have a diverse educational background, included but not limited to civil engineers, architects, surveyors, economists, sociologists, political scientists, and environmental engineers.

Graduates of the programme can be employed in both the private and public sector and most of the graduates have been successfully placed in both sectors after their graduation, in addition to a few starting/completing doctoral studies. Throughout the academic year, limited numbers of seminars and lectures are held with professionals working in the field that provide additional information and exposure to different work environments.

There are 6 core faculty members that support the educational and research activities of the programme and most have doctoral degrees from institutions abroad or in Greece. Additionally, there is one *special teaching staff member (ΕΔΙΠ)*. Most of the faculty members are from the Department of *Planning and Regional Development* of the University of Thessaly with additional members of the teaching staff from other Departments of the University, such as *Economics*. The required Seminar course offered in the First Semester of the Programme is co-taught by several invited faculty from the University of Thessaly and other educational institutions both from Greece and overseas. An issue of impending concern is the ability to replace those that have already or are going to retire in the near future to ensure continuity of the program. Additionally, a point of concern is the disproportionately large number courses that each member of the faculty is involved in both the undergraduate and post graduate programmes. The faculty members involved in the programme have a commendable number of publications and some research activities, both in projects and funds. The Programme has not been externally evaluated but an internal evaluation and some of the recommendations of the report have been addressed or are in the process of been addressed. The Programme mostly follows the required procedure for establishing some quantitative metrics that define their progress, as well as target goals to be achieved in the near future.

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 EXTERNALSTAKEHOLDERS) AT THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Postgraduate Study Programme in *Urban Regeneration, Urban Development & Real Estate* has a multi-disciplinary curriculum geared towards the professional preparation of scientists with different backgrounds involved in the urban regeneration and development while relating to contemporary issues of the Greek cities, the economy and society. It is commendable that the Programme prioritizes a holistic and integrated approach of the various disciplines involved in the three thematic areas. The framework of the Programme complies with EU related aspects of 'Green Transition' and the 'Digital

Convergence', i.e., environmental aspects and new technologies, that constitute significant horizontal quality indicators.

The Programme has taken important commendable initiatives in terms of quality and effectiveness of the teaching / learning process, based on a remote mode participation by the students adopted since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Commendable examples are individual courses and Thesis projects accomplished.

II. Analysis

The academic staff is multidisciplinary, highly qualified, and motivated. It appears also that there is a very good and productive collaboration and teamwork among the faculty that ensures, supported by a high teaching staff / student ratio, a very good result in terms of quality of the Programme's alumni. The EEAP finds that there is a highly diverse, energetic, and innovative faculty among whom a strong sense of community is evident. The faculty members are respected and appreciated by the students and graduates as a primary source for the successful provision of knowledge and skills in the areas of urban regeneration and development.

Research output is good, especially considering the particular conditions of the Department of Planning and Regional Development of the University of Thessaly (small number of staff with high teaching load). The Programme does have its own *Research Committee* as well as relying on the services of the Research Committee of the University of Thessaly.

The Programme has given more importance to linking teaching to practical applications rather than research as such. The contents of the curriculum are characterized by plurality of disciplines and horizontally interconnected to provide a holistic and integrated context of observation and analysis. In enhancing the particular character of the Programme, the advancement of multi- and interdisciplinary collaborations among the students themselves in the development of their research is recommended. Furthermore, the enrichment of their research with new digital computational technologies and the expansion of the labs of the Department are expected to forge the Programme's emerging identity.

The Programme claims a continuous quality monitoring. However, there are no yearly or 4-year Evaluation Reports at the external level.

III. Conclusions

Concluding, the Programme's QA policy is fully compliant with the HAHE policy and guidelines and the EU QA standards on Higher Education. Its curriculum has many commendable features. However, the Programme still has to develop further on its identity to achieve unique results in terms of a multi-disciplinarity approach in urban regeneration and development. The remote mode of participation to the Programme of study and other factors outside the Programme (i.e., recent flood in the area, budgetary constraints due to the economic crisis etc.) do not necessarily contribute positively to achieve these goals.

The internationalization of the Programme through participation in *Erasmus+*, organization of international conferences and workshops at the University of Thessaly, collaboration with academic staff from other Universities, as well as the students' and graduates' employment and activities are noted. Equally important must be the acknowledgment by the quality assurance body of the faculty research activities, sabbatical leaves, and participation in international conferences. Nevertheless,

due to the present economic constraints, there is **very limited** financial support for the faculty's research activities.

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

The EEAP recommends that:

- R1.1** An external review of the Programme's identity / branding, vision, and goals, through an independent advisory board, ad-hoc expert panels and/or a dedicated international workshop should be considered. Annual internal reviews need to be further institutionalized by the Programme, as well as external evaluations, organized by the Programme itself every 4 years.

R1.2 The Programme's internationalization through organization of international conferences and workshops at the University of Thessaly, collaboration with academic staff from other Universities, as well as the students' and graduates' employment and activities.

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 Postgraduate Study Programme on *Urban Regeneration, Urban Development & Real Estate* has been operating at the Department of Planning and Regional Development of the University of Thessaly since 2015. Originally the programme of study included the thematic areas of Urban Regeneration and Development. Following the first three years of operation, a revision of the programme of study took place in 2018 to include the area of Real Estate. The revision of the programme addresses contemporary issues of Greek cities, the economy and society. The programme of study has a minimum duration of three semesters and leads to the Postgraduate Diploma in Urban Regeneration, Urban Development & Real Estate.

The Programme's specific contents, objectives and aims comply with the academic and scientific guidelines set by the University. The programme of study is the only one in Greece that includes all three aforementioned thematic areas in a unified context in conducting relevant research tasks of diagnosis, analysis and development proposals based on concrete case studies. The teaching approach is based on a multidisciplinary teaching staff and students with different backgrounds. The mission of the Programme is stated to provide competent and specialized scientists with emphasis on issues of urban regeneration in the context of sustainable urban development, and in light of modern international approaches, new concepts and best practices in European cities. Thus, the Programme refers to Engineers involved in the design of the built environment of cities, and Economists, who focus on the sustainable development of cities and the management of the Real Estate Market.

In the first two semesters, the curriculum covers all three thematic areas, with three respective compulsory courses each semester, a seminar course in the 1st semester and one elective course each semester. The 3rd semester includes a seminar course and the Thesis project. The individual courses of the programme of study comply with the framework of projects in Greece (Plan Greece 2.0) developed through funding from the EU Recovery and Resilience Fund. In Plan Greece 2.0, Pillars 1 and 2 concern respectively the 'Green Transition' and the 'Digital Convergence' that are also partly or completely included in the individual courses of the programme. Thus, a wide range of related fields in the three thematic areas is covered from different disciplines and perspectives within that support the provision of theoretical background, cultivation of applied-based research and their integration within urban regeneration and development at different scales and levels of complexity. Since the individual courses and the Thesis project are primarily of applied nature, students with different backgrounds (ranging from architectural to engineering, economics and social sciences) are capable to attend the courses of the programme without the need for other preparatory courses.

The quality assurance body and the faculty as a whole support the identity of the Programme as formulated above. The EEAP believes that this identity is presently adequately reflected in the structure of the programme of study. The sequence of the compulsory courses is clearly defined with regard to the contents, levels of advancement and pedagogical objectives and the individual courses in each semester act synergistically to the final Thesis project.

The Programme reflects the interests and specializations of the faculty and is comparable with Programmes internationally. The faculty has different profiles ranging from architecture and urban planning to economics and real estate management and an effective synergy between research, practice and teaching is demonstrated. Following the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and in line with the measures for the limitation of the further spread of the virus worldwide, since 2020, the Programme has been offered remotely through on-line participation of the students and teaching

staff. Certain benefits associated to the remote mode of participation refer to a wide-spread geographic location of the students attending the programme and the increase of enrolments to the programme. In building further on these advantages, the faculty maintains an exclusive remote mode of the programme.

The programme of study has a minimum duration of three semesters, while some students need more than one semester for successful completion of their Thesis project. The EEAP recommends addition of a course related to legal aspects of the disciplines of urban regeneration and development. In addition, a course on Research Methods should be a requirement for all students in the 3rd semester of study, to be conducted in parallel to the Thesis project. This course is expected to facilitate the development and successful completion of the Thesis project research in one semester. Furthermore, a possible extension of the minimum duration of study in four semesters should be considered by the faculty to accommodate the plurality of disciplines entailed in the Programme and the breadth of knowledge and skills to be acquired by the students. The EEAP understands that such amendment needs to further consider issues related to the finances of the Programme and its competitiveness to other similar postgraduate degrees internationally.

II. Analysis

The EEAP notes that the remote mode of the programme of study and the individual assignments to the students for successful completion of the courses and the Thesis project limit the opportunity for the advancement of multi- and interdisciplinary collaborations among the students themselves in the development of their research. This issue was also raised by the current students and graduates of the programme in their meetings with the EEAP. Thus, a significant opportunity is currently not utilized to enhance the multidisciplinary nature of the programme of study and apply interdisciplinary research by the students.

Furthermore, some courses of the programme and the final Thesis Project need to be reformulated and further developed, in order to convey the research and its outcomes with a quantitative approach based on new digital computation technologies. In this respect, use of analysis and simulation software in the courses assignments and case studies analysis will enhance the depth and value of the research conducted by the students and facilitate collaborations in project developments and applications with social bodies of competence and community authorities. This will also provide financial and otherwise resources, in order to maintain the future development and sustainability of the programme and can be a mechanism to forge its emerging identity. Presently, the labs remain practically unexploited due to the remote mode of teaching that has been adopted. Thus, the implementation of laboratories and communal infrastructure of the Department is highly recommended. In particular, labs with digital computational facilities need to be further expanded to also serve in support of the acquisition and implementation of research projects, the achievement of diversity within the discipline and potential for interdisciplinary research activities.

III. Conclusions

The Department delivers on the stated intention of creating an extroverted programme and opening the students' horizons to the international circles in academia and practice. The course syllabi support this direction through both project and bibliography. The graduates of the programme spoke highly of the value of their experience noting that the Programme managed to provide them new knowledge and skills for handling related developments in a holistic and resilient way.

There are procedures and regulations for the revisions of the programme, and the EEAP was made aware that the programme of study has been internally monitored and assessed periodically. External consultations and collaborative activities with the private and civil sector are realized in systematic but unofficial way. The students contribute to curriculum revisions. Students have contributed by submitting course and faculty evaluations. We would encourage the use of virtual platforms/social media to enhance student participation and engagement.

The student guide is complete and appropriate. The programme web site is updated and well-structured regarding the courses' syllabi, the academic personnel information, research and networking activities of the program. An inclusion of individual courses and the Thesis project results on the programme web site would further enhance the visibility of the work accomplished throughout all stages of the programme of study. This will allow the students and other stakeholders to access efficiently both, the academic and non-academic resources of the Programme and the University.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that:

- R2.1** The curriculum committee should consult, with all stakeholders, and should have a tight time schedule of meetings and consultations. The central administration should facilitate such endeavours.
- R2.2** Legal aspects of the disciplines of urban regeneration and development need to be included in a course within the programme of study. In addition, a course on Research Methods should be introduced. This course is expected to facilitate the development and successful completion of the Thesis project research in one semester.
- R2.3** The possible extension of the minimum duration of study in four semesters to accommodate the breadth of knowledge and skills to be acquired by the students should be considered.
- R2.4** Multi- and interdisciplinary collaborations among the students themselves in the development of their research based on group assignments and physical attendance need to be implemented.
- R2.5** The courses of the programme of study and the final Thesis Project need to be reformulated and further developed, in order to convey the research and its outcomes with a quantitative approach based on new digital computation technologies with analysis and simulation software.
- R2.6** The labs that the Programme utilizes need to be expanded to also serve in support of the acquisition and implementation of research projects, the achievement of diversity within the discipline and potential for interdisciplinary research activities.
- R2.7** Collaborations in project developments and implementations with social bodies of competence and community authorities need to be facilitated.

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 Postgraduate programme in *Urban Regeneration, Urban Development and Real Estate* is a three-semester academic programme. Most of the students' background is engineering. The first semester consists of 4 required courses and 2 elective courses, from which the students much choose one. The second semester consists of 3 required courses and 3 electives, from which the students much choose one. Finally, the last semester consists of the Thesis Preparation Seminar (3 points) and the Thesis Project (27 points). The total count for each

semester is 30 ECTS and the ECTS for the individual courses varies. The courses are mainly conducted through lectures, while it is worth mentioning that some of them contain lab exercises. Not many contemporary software is being used. The thesis can either be research-associated or literature-based and the choice is up to the student, but the majority, if not all, choose a literature-based thesis.

According to the curriculum guide, the predominant method of course assessment are short-answer questions, close questions, and multiple-choice questions. The exam period takes place at the end of each semester and the successful completion of each course is mainly based on the performance in the final exam, except for courses with labs or projects.

The university provides students with an evaluation system at the end of each academic semester. This evaluation system is given in the form of a questionnaire, where students can rate the courses, lecturers, lecture content etc. The same platform provides an opportunity for students to express any complaints, dissatisfaction, or harassment.

The teaching staff takes into account the diversity of the postgraduate students, who come from different Schools, not only from Engineering, and have different knowledge backgrounds. The lectures and their contents are understandable to the student population, and the lecturers do not hesitate to respond to any questions.

II. Analysis

The curriculum of this postgraduate programme includes a wide variety of courses covering current and topical issues in the fields of Urban Regeneration, Urban Development and Real Estate and more. Consequently, the theoretical training of the students at the end of the PSP degree is quite satisfactory since they will have expanded and specialised their knowledge in this field. Following this PSP degree, students should have gained a satisfactory degree of experience in their professional fields. However, most of the students and graduates suggested the need for additional laboratory training in various contemporary software, in order to be better prepared for the market.

Despite the heterogeneity of the students, who come from different departments and have different backgrounds, the comprehension of the courses is generally satisfactory. As the students stated, the teaching staff has adapted the content of their courses to accommodate the broad audience, and they are always available to respond to their questions and queries. Unfortunately, most courses are not Erasmus friendly, as they are taught in Greek.

The courses' and teachers' evaluation system are widespread among students. Unfortunately, a very small percentage of students participate in the internal evaluation process; the ones that completed the questionnaires did not express major dissatisfactions.

The majority of students and graduates informed us that most of them chose this PSP in order to be more successful at work or to find a job thanks to this diploma. Many students wanted to participate in Erasmus+ or an internship but due to their personal life and work were not able to do it.

III. Conclusions

The curriculum of the postgraduate programme "Urban Regeneration, Urban Development and Real Estate" is mostly in line with the standards of the HAHE, as it is of satisfactory quality. Graduates are provided with good knowledge and experience in both the professional and research fields.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that:

- R3.1** More and better laboratories with more sophisticated software be provided.
- R3.2** Encouragement for research thesis, as this would help to develop more contacts and relationships with other universities or institutes, should be considered.
- R3.3** A one-day conference to connect graduates with the market should be implemented.
- R3.4** The student's thesis should be posted on the webpage of the programme.
- R3.5** Better communication between the students and the administrative secretary should be implemented.
- R3.6** More small assignments during the semester that encourage critical thinking should be considered.

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

Student admission for this specific PSP is restricted to 35 students per year. Eligible for admission are graduates from various fields of studies.

This PSP started its function in 2018 and offers the diploma of “Urban Regeneration, Urban Development and Real Estate”. Acceptance to the programme is restricted based on a well-defined selection process. The selection of the applicants is based on their undergraduate performance scores, recommendation letters, followed by candidates’ interviews by an established academic committee. These procedures are clearly described in the required supporting documents, which also contain information for the student rights and obligations, and ways allowing to monitor their progression. Research ethics regulations, regulations of studies, internship, mobility, and student assignments are also provided.

There is a good number of non-engineering graduates who apply to this PSP. The ratio of women/men is balanced. Many applicants have a part time / full time job, and they attend the PSP as an additional load. This problem is accommodated by offering some flexible attendance requirements. A hybrid method of teaching exists, live and remote, which is helpful.

The duration of the PSP is one and a half year (three semesters, 90 ETCS in total). Students are evaluated at the end of each semester. Students are also required to write a thesis, which can be either research based or a literature survey. Usually, the students do not require more time to complete the programme. Faculty of the PSP show understanding and flexibility for students that are actively working. The PSP diploma allows students to get a job in the public or private sector (research institutes, private companies etc) with specific requirements, or to further

develop their skills by acquiring a Ph.D. diploma.

There is a very good communication between the students and faculty members of the PSP, who are constantly available in helping the students and provide the necessary information. Progress of the students of the PSP is followed closely by the faculty members.

The programme provides literature-based knowledge and practical training in labs.

The meeting of the EEAP with current and past students of the PSP provided a positive impression of the quality of this PSP. All participants were enthusiastic and positive concerning their experience and knowledge obtained. Several former students are excelling in private companies in good positions, which indicates the importance of this PSP. Several current and past students requested more practical training courses. Concerning the quality and number of courses, students pointed out that courses are well-structured and easy to follow. Similarly, all students and faculty members emphasised that the PSP is rewarding, greatly helping to their development.

The mobility of the students is not satisfactory, even though Erasmus+ and other mobility platforms are available.

The degree certificate template is provided electronically to the students upon completion of PSP.

II. Analysis

This PSP provides an important and interesting basis for further studies in the fields of Urban Regeneration, Urban Development and Real Estate. The PSP fulfils an important need for education and training of allied Polytechnic Schools.

The length of studies of this PSP is generally considered satisfactory from the EEAP. However, the EEAP thinks that more sophisticated software is necessary, especially for simulation purposes.

The EEAP considers that students' mobility is very limited.

An issue is that many students of the PSP have full or part time jobs. This plays a significant role in the length of studies and the availability of the students when close interactions between students and faculty members are necessary. Although online teaching is more desirable in general by working students, the EEAP considers the need for collaborative work and face-to-face consultation.

III. Conclusions

This is a well-organized and designed PSP in the fields of Urban Regeneration, Urban Development and Real Estate. The laboratory training, as well as the length of the studies for graduation, are satisfactory. An effort should be made to use Erasmus+ and other existing mobility platforms more actively.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that:

- R4.1** The programme make more efforts towards the recruitment of additional students highlighting the benefits of completing the programme.
- R4.2** The programme generate a more extensive library of thesis topics, from which the students could select.
- R4.3** The programme proceeds with the organization of an informative day, in which the various stakeholders could explain the possibilities of mobility, job opportunities, and the like.
- R4.4** The programme consider inviting lecturers, word leaders in the field, from abroad or Greece.

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 EEAP was satisfied with the design and delivery of this PSP on Urban Regeneration, Urban Development and Real Estate. The programme is well designed and covers a broad selection of topics in the fields of Environmental Engineering, Economy, and Science. There are several elective courses addressing the professional interests of all students including those with scientific (social or natural) but non-engineering background. There is minimum overlapping with the content of similar undergraduate courses, so the students' needs to upgrade their knowledge with the concepts of green cities and sustainable development is fully successful. A very successful aspect of this programme is the interdisciplinarity of the teaching Faculty including professors from other institutions. Many of the faculty teaching in the programme are active in research and supervise the projects of the students in the program, alone or in teams. The faculty workload is manageable but the opportunities for professional development are quite limited. Students and graduates of the programme interviewed by the EEAP expressed their satisfaction with the curriculum and the student processes followed, although they brought up delays occurring occasionally in updating them about changes.

II. Analysis

The analysis of data and information received by the EEAP during the interactive virtual visit, has shown that the professional development of faculty teaching in the programme should be

actively addressed. The sabbatical leaves available to the teaching staff is underutilized and attention to professional development is paid to different degrees by various members. Resources must become available for all members to be able to benefit from opportunities of additional training. The faculty workload is satisfactory, sometimes the student faculty ratio reaches the 1:1. level. It is also worth noting that several faculty members keep their contact with the outside practice and enrich the programme with the organization of seminars and other valuable activities enhancing the quality of the programme and benefitting the students.

III. Conclusions

In conclusion, the EEAP found the programme compliant with the accreditation requirements of this principle, although it makes some recommendations to enhance it – see below.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that:

- R5.1** The collaboration with stakeholders in the professional development of teaching staff should be enhanced.
- R5.2** The importance of professional development and the provision of resources for this purpose should be emphasized.
- R5.3** Introducing the function of External Advisory Board (EAB) in order to capitalize on the available expertise and resources of stakeholders of this programme be imperative.

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 PSP has building and laboratory facilities adequate for its mission. It should be noted that all spaces are easily accessible to individuals with disabilities. The human resources of the PSP consist of the Teaching and Research Staff; additionally, there is 1 member of the Laboratory Teaching Staff supporting the educational activities of the PSP. The administrative staff of the PSP comprises 1 member (technical support). The main service for supporting learning and academic activities is the network of libraries within the institution. Several courses have their own virtual classrooms where various materials, announcements, and other information are posted. There are about 20-25 students registered every year with 10-15 of them graduating from the program. Participation of students in the course evaluations is on the low side, although students and graduates interviewed by the EEAP were quite enthusiastic about this programme in terms of meeting their needs.

II. Analysis

In analysing the data and the information provided the EEAP found that the percentage of students graduating from this programme (75%) is satisfactory and consistent with other

similar programmes. The needs of all students are considered, including factors like their employment status, and any disabilities they may have. The PSP provides all the learning resources and student support personnel and services needed. The careful coordination among all Offices and Services needed for successfully administering the PSP is clear. The remote delivery of the programme has been successful and critical for its development, notwithstanding the general concern of the EEAP about the remote learning mode, particularly for laboratory courses – although most laboratories use software - and technical visits.

III. Conclusions

The committee has concluded that the PSP has carefully considered and planned for all aspects of university resources and student support needed for the implementation and smooth function of the PSP.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that:

- R6.1** Incentives to attract more high-quality students be considered.
- R6.2** The introduction of some preliminary introductory level courses to expose students to the new material they will be faced within the program, due to the diversity of the admitted students be considered.

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

Through the application of respective information technology services provided by the University (e.g., eUniversity, Open eClass, MS Teams, information system of quality assurance body, students' practice experience), a comprehensive information system of data collection and recording has been developed regarding the overall operation of the institution. The data refer to the academic faculty, the administration, and the students. Further data have been collected by the research financial services and the library. The information obtained from the satisfaction surveys by the students and the graduates databank is limited. Key Performance Indicators of the students and staff are not available and there are no graphs displaying student numbers evolution and success to visually display trends. Additionally, limited data were provided for student satisfaction during several years of evolution in all courses as well as Indicators about professor's performance.

The EEAP was provided with a table of long-term targets for the programme but without performance indicator as the length of the targets runs to the end of the calendar year.

Some relevant data are presented on the web sites of the Programme, including related

announcements, and the information of the courses.

II. Analysis

The updating quality of the Department's and programme site and electronic presence is not at the level that it should be and the completeness of the sites, especially for the English version, is not satisfactory. The information obtained from the satisfaction surveys by the students and the graduates is very limited. The EEAP became aware of some concerns that students and teaching staff expressed with the electronic platform delivery of courses (eClass) and the lack of appropriate mechanisms for electronic management and administration of distance education. Key Performance Indicators should be presented for several years (since 2018); The information should be analysed annually, and targets should be established for improvement in the future.

III. Conclusions

The Programme and the Department involved in it should evaluate the data collected and present some of the results in quantifiable measures in terms of the programme, and key performance indicators. The data should assist in the preparation of internal evaluation reports and related improvement proposals.

There is able evidence for the immediate need of additional resources necessary for the operation of the Secretariat and the digital and network operation of the Programme.

The development of an alumni body has also been proposed by the graduates of the programme in their meeting with the EEAP members.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that:

- R7.1** The programme formalizes the organizing of its alumni via platforms of social media, such as *LinkedIn* and others.
- R7.2** The University re-evaluate the platform for delivery of coursework and enhance the programme's resources for upgrading the network and electronic record keeping systems.

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

Vital information about the University of Thessaly, the department, and the PSP “Urban Regeneration, Urban Development and Real Estate” are available online. The University of Thessaly website is organised in 4 categories. The main tabs consist of the following:

- Studies, which includes the PSPs and online services
- Research
- International
- Life (student welfare, Career, Culture Support)
- The University (Contacts, News, Organization, and the Quality Assurance Unit).

The tap of the University of Thessaly PSPs is grouped in Schools and Departments. The PSP “Urban Regeneration, Urban Development and Real Estate” has the following link: http://www.prd.uth.gr/m_urudre/ at the Department of Spatial Planning, Urban Planning and Regional Development. There is no independent webpage of the PSP.

II. Analysis

The departmental website offers sufficient information in Greek and lacks on the English one. The majority of the information is provided and covers institutional activities such as the post-graduate program, intended learning outcomes for every module, degree awarded, graduate employment perspectives, teaching-learning procedures used and announcements. It also covers basic information about e-services, academic calendar, teaching timetable, infrastructure, research laboratories, and other information about the Department.

Content is available both in Greek and English, however a discrepancy is found on the information quantity.

Active LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter (X) and Facebook profiles for the Department have been set up, raising visibility of events, lectures and accomplishments of students and staff.

Accessibility options (Text to Speech, Text Readability, Colour Contrast) are not provided. It will be useful to be added by pressing an appropriate button, making the website accessible to vision or hearing-impaired visitors.

There needs to be more information about public transportation to the institution's facilities.

The release of all information is subject to a quality control of QAU of the Department, being responsible for the curation of the material.

The EEAP encourages the use of virtual platforms/social media to enhance student participation and engagement. An inclusion of individual courses and the Thesis project results on the Programme’s web site would further enhance the visibility of the work accomplished throughout all stages of the programme of study. This will allow the students and other stakeholders to access efficiently both, the academic and non-academic resources of the Programme and the University.

III. Conclusions

Although the Department provides information about both teaching and departmental activities in Greek, the website could be more thorough and contain more content in English. The website of the Post-graduate Programme could have more marketing information about the programme's usefulness, job opportunities and testimonies of Alumni.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that:

- R8.1** Google Scholar, Web of Science, ORCID and/or Scopus ID for each Staff member on the webpage of the PSP be included. Homogenization is needed of all accessible information regarding faculty: education, published work, collaborations, research areas of interest.
- R8.2** The web site of the Programme be better developed in order to promote the work of the students and faculty more adequately.
- R8.3** Relevant information for prospective incoming ERASMUS+ students be provided. In particular, it should be simple to locate the English courses offered each semester. An “International/Exchange students” button could be used.

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 self-assessment of the programme is based on procedures and continuous improvement of the level of educational offerings along with supporting the learning environment, ensuring the current character of the programme, and the strategic goals of the Institution. Factors considered for the assessment include the student's workload, students' expectations, and the assessment of the students. Also, scientific, and technological developments, societal and job market needs, and national, European, and international environmental policies are considered. The programme director collects information from the delivery of the programme along with scientific, technological, business, and societal developments. The Director collects all requests for changes to the programme, such as changes to the course content, course schedule and calendar, faculty workload, proposals for new courses, etc. Using the student course/instructor evaluations along with requests related to suggested changes, a proposal is submitted to the School assembly. The annual report is submitted to QAU for review, and recommendations are shared with the Department general assembly. Decisions are made at the end of the academic year and are implemented at the beginning of the following academic year.

II. Analysis

Through the process of internal review and continuous improvement plan, the positive aspects of the programme are reinforced by adding new topics based on scientific developments. The collected information is analysed, and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up to date. There is a strategically designed consideration for improving courses using the course evaluations by students. Programme weaknesses are immediately addressed when problems are identified with the programme in students' evaluation. Remediation of knowledge gaps of the students was achieved through special seminars, extended office hours for the faculty to assist students, in addition to the availability of the academic advisor.

The PSP is reviewed and revised but without the direct involvement of students and other stakeholders. Extension of collaborations with international sectors and further involvement in external activities such as conferences should be common practice. Enrichment of learning materials should be more frequent and be more specific.

III. Conclusions

The self-assessment procedure of the programme is frequent but does not include external stakeholders.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that:

- R9.1** The students' participation and the involvement of external stakeholders in the study programme revisions should be enhanced.
- R9.2** Enrichment and update of learning materials should be more frequent.
- R9.3** A fourth semester could be beneficial to the PSP and also the upgrade of the Thesis to 30 ECTS.

PRINCIPLE 10: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP of “Urban Regeneration, Urban Development and Real Estate” does not have an external evaluation. Following the instructions of HAHE to this Principle, the EEAP utilised the IQAS Accreditation Report (2019) of the University of Thessaly. Although, the original submission to HAHE did not include an adequate response to the previous External Evaluations, the relevant information was provided, upon the request of the EEAP.

II. Analysis

The PSP did not provide a detailed response about the previous external evaluations, but the Department has appeared to take seriously into consideration those recommendations and is willing to proceed with their implementation for the PSP.

The recommendation of development of procedures for the sustainable and continuous engagement of stakeholders has not yet been implemented.

The recommendation about the inclusion of alumni and students in continuous improvement was not fully implemented.

III. Conclusions

The recommendation from the previous external evaluations were not fully considered.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that:

R10.1 The Programme should act upon the recommendations of the IQAS Accreditation Report in 2019.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- High quality of educational process and curriculum, following the best contemporary practices.
- Excellent collaboration between teaching staff, administrators, and students.
- The preparation that the programme affords their alumni which manifest itself in excellent and remarkable professional careers.
- Good balance between academic research, professional work, and projects.
- Ratio of academic staff to students.

II. Areas of Weakness

- Interaction with the local community partners, both in the public and private sectors.
- High workload for some of the teaching staff.
- Updating and improvement of existing infrastructure.
- Conditions for appropriate faculty development, systematic self-evaluation process, and opportunities for mobility.
- Remote mode of operation.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Establish an External Advisory Board (EAB) to enhance the further development and delivery of the programme and to create a permanent link with the outside professional world.
- Consult with all stakeholders in the development of the curriculum on an annual basis, at a minimum. Encourage research thesis project, in collaboration with partners and stakeholders. Enhance the collaboration with stakeholders in the professional development of teaching staff. Create an extensive library of thesis topics, from which the students could select.
- Institutionalize annual internal reviews, as well as external evaluations, organized by the Programme itself every 4 years. Implement promptly the evaluation recommendations.
- Organize international conferences and workshops at the University of Thessaly and collaborate with academic staff from other Universities. Invite several word leaders in the field, from Greece or abroad, to lecture.
- Implement annual one-day workshops (colloquia) in order to connect graduates with the market.
- Collaborate with social bodies of competence, community authorities and stakeholders for project development and implementation.
- Legal aspects of the disciplines of urban regeneration and development need to be included in a course within the programme of study. In addition, a course on Research Methods should be introduced. This course is expected to facilitate the development and successful completion of the Thesis project research in one semester.

- Consider the possibility of an extension of the minimum duration of study to four semesters, in order to accommodate the breadth of knowledge and skills required.
- Provide funding for additional and better equipped laboratories and the acquisition of contemporary software.
- Develop a proper electronic presence which would include:
 - students' theses
 - organizing of alumni
 - Google Scholar, Web of Science, ORCID and/or Scopus ID for each Staff member
 - relevant information for prospective incoming ERASMUS+ students
- Re-evaluate the platform for delivery of coursework and enhances the programme's resources for upgrading the network and electronic record keeping systems.
- Enhance the recruitment of students highlighting the benefits of completing the programme.
- Emphasize the importance of faculty professional development and provide resources for this purpose.
- Improve course evaluation procedures to increase their effectiveness.
- Better communication between the students and the administrative secretary.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

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

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **7, 8, 9, and 10.**

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

- 1. Professor Emeritus Loukas Kalisperis (Chair)**
Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, USA
- 2. Professor Thomas Panagopoulos**
Universidade do Algarve, Faro, Portugal
- 3. Professor Marios C. Phocas**
University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
- 4. Professor Theodore Stathopoulos**
Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
- 5. Mr. Miltiadis Meliadis, PhD Candidate**
School of Spatial Planning and Development, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki,
Thessaloniki, Greece