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HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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for Higher Education

Αριστείδου 1 & Ευριπίδου 2 • 10559 Αθήνα | 1 Aristidou str. & 2 Evripidou str. • 10559 Athens, Greece
T. +30 210 9220 944 • F. +30 210 9220 143 • E. secretariat@ethaae.gr • www.ethaae.gr

Accreditation Report for the Postgraduate Study Programme of: MA in Black Sea & Eastern Mediterranean Studies

Department: Humanities, Social Sciences and Economics

Institution: International Hellenic University

Date: 24/11/2024



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



NOTES

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Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of
the Postgraduate Study Programme of **MA in Black Sea & Eastern
Mediterranean Studies** of the **International Hellenic University** 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 MA in Black Sea & Eastern Mediterranean Studies of the **International Hellenic University** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. JOSEPH JOSEPH (Chair)
(Title, Name, Surname)
University of Cyprus (Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου)
(Institution of origin)
2. Antoniou Maria
(Title, Name, Surname)
Pace University
(Institution of origin)
3. Chatzikonstantinou Ioannis
(Title, Name, Surname)
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
(Institution of origin)
4. Christophilopoulou Anastasia
(Title, Name, Surname)
The Fitzwilliam Museum University of Cambridge
(Institution of origin)
5. LAZARIS STAVROS
(Title, Name, Surname)
UMR Orient & Méditerranée (Paris)
(Institution of origin)

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

Please refer briefly to the Panel preparation for the postgraduate study programme review, as well as to the documentation provided and considered by the Panel. State the dates of the review and describe the review and the meetings held. Feel free to mention any additional information regarding the procedure, as appropriate.

In reviewing the Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) of Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean Studies: Culture and International Relations of the International Hellenic University, the objectives of the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP, hereafter the “Panel”), as described in the “Guidelines for the Members of the EEAP”, are, among others:

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

Following a well-prepared schedule provided by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE), the Panel held several separate interactive online virtual meetings and visits using the Zoom platform.

On Monday, 11/11/2024, the following virtual meetings took place:

- with the Head of the Department, the Director of the Programme, members of MODIP, OMEA, the Steering Committee and staff
- presentation and on-line tour of classrooms, lecture halls, libraries, electronic platforms, digital tools and other facilities related to the Programme. The on-line tour was followed by a discussion about the facilities in which teaching and administrative staff participated.

On Wednesday 13/11/2024, the following virtual meetings took place:

- with teaching staff of the Programme
- with current students of the Programme
- with graduates who have successfully completed the Programme
- with employers and social partners of the private and the public sector
- with the Head of the Department, the Director of the Programme, members and staff of MODIP, OMEA and the Steering Committee.

During the above virtual meetings, the Panel had the opportunity to meet, talk, and interact with all the participants at all meetings. All the participants were encouraged to express their

views and they did so. It is worth pointing out that the students were especially encouraged to talk freely about their overall learning experience. They welcomed the opportunity to talk to the Panel and to voice their views. The discussions were very constructive, informative and fruitful, and were conducted in a cooperative manner and attitude. All the meetings included presentations, discussions, and question and answer sessions. During the last meeting, some additional clarifications were provided, and the Panel made an informal presentation of some initial key findings.

The Panel also had several private online Zoom meetings throughout the review period (11/11/2024 – 16/11/2024) for deliberations, drafting and approval of the Report. The Panel wishes to express its thanks to HAHE for its overall support, especially for providing documentation and creating and securing the possibility for 24-hour Zoom meetings.

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

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

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

Please provide a brief overview of the postgraduate study programme with reference to the following: history, academic remit, duration of studies, qualification awarded, employment opportunities, orientation challenges or any other key background information. Also, you may provide a short description of the home Department and Institution, with reference to student population, campus or any other facts, as deemed appropriate.

This is a three-semester full-time Master's Programme taught exclusively in English. It is also offered in part-time mode. It is one of two postgraduate programmes offered by the University Center of International Programmes of Studies (UCIPS) of the International Hellenic University (IHU). IHU was founded in 2005 as the first Greek public University where all postgraduate programmes are taught exclusively in English. It is based in Thessaloniki with regional campuses in Serres, Aikaterini and Kilkis. UCIPS was established in 2019 and is based in Thermi, a suburb of Thessaloniki. The Programme started in 2010 and offers courses which are consistent with its research-oriented nature and the Department's and the University's overall objectives. It has an interdisciplinary approach and aims to provide a thorough understanding of the theory, methodology, techniques, and analytical tools of historical research with emphasis on the study of the history and culture of the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean from antiquity until today. Students have the opportunity to focus on their special interests and write an original thesis making use of the knowledge and research skills acquired during the courses. Graduates are expected to acquire critical and analytical skills and become competitive professionals in their field of expertise. The Programme maintains an international character by facilitating cross-border academic and scientific cooperation with other departments and institutions. There are tuition fees, which currently are €2500 payable in instalments. Some scholarships are available. For the completion of the Programme 90 ECTS are required, which are equally distributed in three semesters (30 for each semester). There are compulsory and elective courses. During the third semester, students are required to write and submit a thesis which counts for 30 ECTS. The thesis is written in English. The Programme is supported by the academic staff of the Department as well as academics from other Departments and other Institutions in Greece and abroad. All teaching staff are Ph.D. holders who are active scholars and researchers in their fields.

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

A Quality Assurance Policy has been approved by the School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Economics of the University Centre of International Programmes of Studies of the International Hellenic University and is posted on the Programme's website (<https://www.ihu.gr/ucips/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2023/02/Internal-Evaluation-Report-TAKOE-2020-2021.pdf>). The quality assurance procedures of the Programme are coordinated and carried out under the supervision of the University's Internal Evaluation Team. The development strategy of the Programme is based on the University's strategy for postgraduate education and perfectly involves the strategic involvement of the School of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Economics. Furthermore, the Panel found no inconsistencies between the information in the documents provided and the presentations and interviews conducted during the meetings.

The development and implementation of the Programme includes activities such as research seminars, mobility, field training and facilitating the participation of students in international conferences to engage with other research groups and explore new opportunities within and outside of academia. The students need to complete 90 ECTS in order to be able to graduate. It takes a minimum of 3 semesters for full-time students to complete the degree (each teaching term has 13 teaching weeks followed by a 10-day exam period). The third period is dedicated to working on the Master's dissertation. Overall, the Programme's curriculum follows a well-thought-out structure that embraces distinct course categories and has pedagogically meaningful streams of prerequisite courses in place. The overall strategic aims for this Programme are to provide students with high-quality education and equip them with the necessary tools they need for a professional career specializing in the history and culture of the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean from antiquity until today. The total cost of the program is 2,500 euros. The courses are taught exclusively in English. After consulting the documentation online and meeting with representatives of the Programme, the Department and the Institution, the Panel confirms that administrative services, libraries, and student welfare office are of high standards. Ensuring high-quality services increases the Programme efficiency and promotes a positive learning and working environment.

II. Analysis

The Panel had in-depth meetings with Programme and University staff to determine when and how policies are implemented and strategic goals are achieved. The Panel feels that the Programme provides a much-needed educational service in the Greek context and is, for this reason, highly sought-after. It is supported by infrastructure and services of very good quality and suitable for further study. The panel noted that the English webpage for the

Student Ombudsman should be updated (<https://www.ihu.gr/ucips/postgraduate-programmes/blacksea#studentombudsman>). In reality, this document is only available in the Greek section of the website (<https://www.ihu.gr/synigoros-foititi>). The Panel notes that the Programme's financial resources, derived from tuition fees, are used cost-effectively and responsibly to achieve the Programme's objectives. In practice, this means careful budgeting, monitoring expenditures, and ensuring that funds are allocated towards activities that benefit students and the Institution, such as improving infrastructure, enhancing educational quality, and supporting research. Based on the available documents, the Panel concluded that there is a adequate number of instructors to meet the demands of the PProgramme, such as covering all courses, offering specialised knowledge when needed, and maintaining appropriate student-to-teacher ratios. The teachers, who come from universities abroad and in Greece, have the necessary academic qualifications, professional experience and specialist knowledge in their subjects.

III. Conclusions

Quality policy controls are institutionalised at all University levels. This is undoubtedly a popular Programme, attracting excellent students with different academic backgrounds. Indeed, the Programme is very well designed in terms of curriculum, course sequence, and overall framework (e.g., clearly defined learning outcomes and appropriate balance between core and elective courses). In addition, students can structure their studies efficiently, complete their Programme requirements on time and receive the necessary academic and administrative support. There is no doubt that it is a popular program that will attract outstanding students from a variety of academic backgrounds. However, the Panel considers that there is room for improvement, particularly with regard to the internal quality assurance policy procedures, which need to reflect better the Programme's objectives, scope, and future strategic objectives. The Panel commends the professionalism and dedication of all Faculty members and recognises that the Programme fully adheres to the provisions of Principle 1.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

None

PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP THEIR POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES FOLLOWING A DEFINED WRITTEN PROCESS WHICH WILL INVOLVE THE PARTICIPANTS, INFORMATION SOURCES AND THE APPROVAL COMMITTEES FOR THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES. THE OBJECTIVES, THE EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND THE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS ARE SET OUT IN THE 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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Programme currently offered by the School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Economics of the University Centre of International Programmes of Studies of the International Hellenic University is a modern, forward thinking postgraduate programme. Among the principles of the Programme is its interdisciplinary nature to the study of the history and cultures of the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean regions. It is designed with two distinct specializations, the “Archaeology and Cultures” Stream and the “International Relations and History” Stream. The two specializations offer students the ability to deepen their knowledge and gain unique skill sets in subject areas such as Archaeology, Ethnography, Historical Geography, Art, Religion, Mythology, History, International Relations, Politics and Diplomacy. Furthermore, the methodology on which teaching is based, promotes learning and teaching characterized by a diversity of methods, including in person lecture-style teaching, in person seminars, and keynote lectures by invited specialists as well as a hybrid provision for every course offered. This means that every lecture or seminar is also available online in real time for all postgraduate students who are unable to attend in person, at a specific lecture or throughout the duration of the course's run due to professional or other commitments. The procedures established by the Programme regarding the selection and admission of suitable prospective students are transparent, efficient and suitable for the needs of the Programme. Students are selected, following a careful process, from a wide pool of undergraduate first degree holders from departments of History, Archaeology, Social Sciences, Humanities, Political Sciences, Geography, International Relations, Theology, and other related subjects. Procedures for revising and updating courses for the needs of the Programme are robust and subject to both internal quality control, as well as mechanisms imposed by the Ministry of Education.

II. Analysis

The Programme is designed as a full-time postgraduate programme with an intensive pace of study and attendance throughout the year, additionally providing the opportunity for students to attend the Programme on a part-time basis. This gives the Programme an important advance in terms of other similar

programmes offered in Greece and abroad. The dual nature of the Programme also contributes to increased diversity and mobility of the student population. Similarly, the design of the Programme, taking also into account the small size of the permanent core Faculty members of the Department, guarantees that there is diversity and plurality among the teaching staff, as it allows academic professionals from other institutions, to teach specific modules.

In terms of the design and provision of the essential courses of the Programme, the structure in place is well thought and has so far yielded very positive results in terms of the students' progress and academic achievements. As it stands at the moment, the Programme comprises two parts of courses taught during the first and second semester and a third part which consists of a dissertation. Students must attend and pass eight (8) courses in total (Core, and Stream Electives) corresponding to sixty ECTS credits. Upon completion of those, they must also successfully complete a Master's Dissertation, which corresponds to thirty ECTS credits.

The Programme comprises three parts. Courses are designed with long teaching hours (i.e. each lecture lasts for three hours) which ensures that a wide amount of content can be taught during each one in the core courses, such as those of the Archaeology of the Black Sea, Historical Geography and Cartography of the area in Antiquity, the period of the reign of Alexander the Great and the Formation of a New World, or other subjects such as International Relations in the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean Region and modern history courses of the region, such as the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean from the 19th until the end of the 20th century. It would be good to ensure however, given the long teaching hours of the courses, that interactive and student engaging practices are implemented while teaching so that students don't lose their interest and continued participation is ensured.

The choice of the Elective Courses (4 out of 6) in either the direction of Archaeology and History or the International Relations and History direction of the Programme, are carefully designed to ensure a multiplicity of scholarly voices, in their respective fields. Some examples of the elective courses that illustrate this, include, 'Topics in the Prehistoric Archaeology of the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean', 'Historical and Cultural Aspects of the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean in the Hellenistic and Roman periods' or 'Conflicting National Strategies: Georgia-Russia, Ukraine-Russia, Armenia-Azerbaijan, Greece-Turkey-Cyprus' or 'War and Revolution in the Middle East: From the Arab-Israeli Conflict to the Arab Spring'. Certain topics play a vital role in bringing scholarship related with history and archaeology, in dialogue with cultural matters and geopolitical issues of today, an important dimension for making humanities relevant to today's world and thus creating graduates with good professional opportunities out of this Programme. The Faculty members responsible for designing those should be praised for their decisions.

The dissertation requirement ensures students engage deeper with the scholarly direction of their choice, and also that they are given an opportunity to apply theory and concepts learned across the taught modules of the Programme. It further trains students to apply analytical techniques to evidence, whether archaeological, historical or modern geopolitical data, and to develop their skillset further. The provision of face-to-face supervision meetings throughout the year ensures good progress and problem serving where the need arises.

III. Conclusions

The design and implementation of the Programme is good and adheres to both Greek and European Universities requirements. As course content and practice of learning, it has yielded high degrees of satisfaction among the student population but also among the Faculty and temporary teaching personnel. A suggestion for further improvement would be for Faculty members and course designers to study what is offered in the field of Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean Studies programmes internationally in order to ensure that this Programme provides unique and attractive content and learning outcomes for the students.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

None

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching respects student diversity and addresses their varied needs by adopting flexible learning approaches. It employs different delivery methods and a variety of pedagogical techniques, regularly evaluates and improves these methods, and assesses the quality and effectiveness of teaching through student feedback. It enhances student autonomy, ensures adequate guidance and support from Faculty and academic staff, manages student complaints, and provides counseling and guidance for thesis preparation.

II. Analysis

Current students and graduates emphasized the advantage of the courses being taught in the English language. This offers them valuable knowledge for publishing their work in international journals and presenting in international conferences, shaping thus their identity and personality as future researchers and specialists. They particularly value the fact of becoming familiar with the terminology used in their areas of specialization through the attendance of the specific Programme. The Programme blends in-person and distance learning, leveraging modern technology. The combination of a hybrid mode of instruction, has been evaluated as best practice by Faculty, students and graduates and for multiple reasons (time restrictions, hectic working schedules, financial burdens etc). Each postgraduate student's final assessment is based on written exams, assignments, or a mix of both, as determined by the School's Graduate Program Committee. Proven special cases of students with disabilities and/or special educational needs receive special attention to ensure the principle of equal treatment is upheld. The criteria and methods for student evaluation are announced beforehand. Evaluations measure how well students achieve the expected learning outcomes. Academic staff provide students with information and advice on the learning process. Where possible, evaluations involve multiple examiners. The process is consistent, fair, and follows established procedures. There is a formal process for student appeals, and the role of the academic mentor is supported by the academic staff of the Programme. An application form for unforeseen obstacles or difficulties in performing a student's duties (extenuating circumstances form) is available. Additionally, students can submit concerns and complaints to the Faculty members teaching in the Programme and the course office, as well as during the established meeting with student representatives (Representatives' Meeting), which are forwarded to the Director of the Programme for resolution.

III. Conclusions

Based on the materials submitted to the Panel well in advance (e.g. attached questionnaire file, extenuating circumstances form, Postgraduate Program Handbook and Postgraduate Program Regulations) along with the discussions

during the online meetings, the Panel confirms that the Programme is fully compliant with Principle 3.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

- Make the lectures available in the Programme's online learning platform. This will ensure that students can review the material and will aid students with learning challenges to absorb knowledge at their own pace strengthening the equality in the academic environment.
- Extended hours of library operation to facilitate the working students, especially since the classes take place in the afternoon/evening.

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Economics of the University Center of International Programmes of Studies of the International Hellenic University offers the Programme in accordance with the Policy for Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Postgraduate Studies, and Certification established by the International Hellenic University. Indeed, the admission and progression criteria, such as the Recognition of Postgraduate Studies, are clearly articulated in the Programme's official materials, mainly in the well-structured and user-friendly website, including a brief Student Guide. The admission process provides a comprehensive overview of the steps involved in completing and submitting the application, including relevant deadlines and the required supporting documentation.

The total cost of the Programme is 2500 Euros, with the option of paying in instalments. A number of scholarships are available from the University and external institutes for students who meet the eligibility criteria and are successful in their applications. Applicants are encouraged to consult the official website for detailed information regarding the admission criteria, the application procedure, the requirements for student visas, and the relevant deadlines. Candidates are selected on the basis of an international call for expressions of interest. The Programme is open for applications from prospective students throughout the entire year, until the maximum number of students permitted is reached. The academic year commences each year in October.

Applications are evaluated according to academic standards that align with international norms. It is the responsibility of the prospective student to complete the application form, gather the requisite documentation and submit their application via email. It is notable that neither the website nor the student guide contains any information regarding the maximum number of participants.

The necessary documentation comprises a personal statement of 500 words, a copy of the candidate's curriculum vitae outlining their academic and professional background, and proof of English language proficiency (IELTS: academic 6.5 or above, TOEFL: IBT, 95 and above, TOEIC: 745 and above, or a recognised by the Greek State certificate of advanced C1 knowledge in English). Furthermore, applicants must possess an undergraduate degree in a relevant field from an accredited institution. For those who have obtained their qualifications from a Greek university, a clearly legible photocopy or scanned copy of the degree certificate and transcripts is required, detailing the courses studied and grades attained. In the case of graduates from institutions outside of Greece, copies of the degree certificate and transcripts are required, providing details of the courses studied and grades attained. All documents must be officially translated into English and validated by an appropriate authority.

The progression of students during their postgraduate studies is monitored closely, and they are provided with guidance by their tutors and academic advisors on research opportunities and career development. Furthermore, a coherent and structured programme of study, combined with the option of free seminars, facilitates student progression. All the necessary information pertaining to the curriculum, faculty, student mobility, and student life in general is available on the website and in the Student Guide. Student progress is evaluated through a combination of criteria, including performance in oral presentations, participation in seminar discussions, written assignments, and the Master's thesis.

The evaluation of the courses is based on two principal criteria: examinations and work assignments. All coursework and examinations are marked without the marker candidate being aware of the identity of the marker. The assignment of

the Master's thesis is made subsequent to the completion of eight courses. The thesis must be original, of a research nature, and written in accordance with international standards. The language of the postgraduate thesis is English. In order for a thesis to be approved, the student must present and defend it to a three-member examination committee. Prior to its evaluation, each thesis can be checked for plagiarism and AI use through the available tools of the International Hellenic University. A three-member examination committee is responsible for evaluating the postgraduate theses. Once approved, the theses are subsequently deposited in the University's electronic repository.

Students may also have the opportunity to undertake voluntary internships in research programmes, excavations, archives, museums and collaborative research centres, with the aim of gaining the requisite practical experience under the guidance and supervision of the supervising Faculty member. The International Hellenic University has its own excavation project at Neo Rysio in Thessaloniki. The excavation employs an innovative interdisciplinary methodology, offering students the chance to receive training in both the excavation of an archaeological site and the detailed analysis of the material recovered from it. The excavation team is constituted of archaeologists duly qualified in a range of disciplines. The excavation is still in its infancy and, as a result, some modifications are required in order to better serve the needs of the students. Thus far, the students have been responsible for bearing the costs associated with travel and accommodation. A comparable approach is observed at other Greek universities, wherein all or a substantial proportion of travel expenses are subsidised, in addition to accommodation and a minimum of one meal. In view of the favourable relationship between the University and the municipality of Thermi, it is recommended that the municipality assumes a more active role in supporting the excavation by providing accommodation for the duration of the project.

Furthermore, students have the option of joining the Erasmus+ Programme for the purpose of undertaking a period of study or traineeship at a university or research centre abroad. All pertinent information is available on the Department's website. The objective of student mobility for internships abroad is to gain work experience that is relevant to the subject matter of their studies. Such visits can be conducted in person at the host institution in the host country. Any public or private organisation active in the labour market or the fields of history, archaeology, research, and innovation may be designated as an eligible host organisation.

II. Analysis

The Programme website is well-structured and user-friendly, and its content is generally kept up to date. The website contains the institutional regulations, which provide all the essential information that a postgraduate student from

abroad is entitled to. The rights and obligations of students are clearly and comprehensively defined and explained. Despite the limited funding opportunities for scholarships or internships, students are made aware of them through the recommendations of their academic advisors and the announcements of the Department's administrative office. Furthermore, students are aware of the procedures and terms pertaining to the drafting of assignments and the preparation of the final thesis. Furthermore, they are adequately informed about the procedure for the award and recognition of their degree, as well as the duration of their studies. European mobility is strongly encouraged by academic supervisors, particularly in the form of a funded traineeship following the completion of their studies.

III. Conclusions

Students are fully aware of the possibilities to pursue their education. The Panel notes that students strongly appreciate the support they regularly receive from the teaching and administrative staff. It also believes that the methods of student admission, progression, recognition of postgraduate studies, and certification are precisely described and adequate.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

- It is strongly recommended that the University seeks ways and means to provide financial assistance to students participating in the excavation, especially covering travel and accommodation expenses.

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Department (University Center of International Programmes of the International Hellenic University), in which the Programme is offered, recognising the importance of teaching and research, follows a clear, transparent, and fair process for the recruitment of qualified staff. Their expertise, international background, high qualifications, and enthusiasm enhance the quality of classroom teaching and research output. All of them are Ph.D. holders, active researchers, productive scholars, and dedicated teachers. Visiting professors and guest speakers from other countries and institutions, deliver lectures and participate in

teaching and other academic activities of the Programme and the Department. The Programme relies, to a good degree, on visiting professors and teaching staff employed on a contractual basis. New technologies are widely used for teaching in the classroom (when courses are offered with physical presence or hybrid form) as well as when courses are offered exclusively on-line. Electronic means including teaching platforms, websites, email and social media are widely also used when interacting with students. The staff-student ratio is very good.

II. Analysis

The teaching staff follow innovative and widely used pedagogical practices and instructional methods that meet international standards. There is enthusiasm and skills in utilizing new technologies, for teaching, communication and interaction among faculty, students and University Services. The Panel had the opportunity to talk and listen to students and received the impression that they think very highly of their teachers. Current students as well as graduates, who have successfully completed the Programme, talked with respect, gratitude and admiration about their professors, the Departmental and Programme culture, and the learning environment. They confirmed that their teachers are committed, accessible, understanding, and ready to provide support and guidance. Overall, the teaching, encouragement and advising provided by faculty members are evident and highly appreciated by the students.

III. Conclusions

The Department and the University provide encouragement and adequate opportunities for the professional development of the faculty, although there is room for improvement. All teaching staff should be commended for their firm commitment, concentrated effort, and enthusiasm in maintaining high-quality teaching and research despite the obstacles and difficulties created by limited resources and other external factors for which the Department and the University cannot be blamed. It is pointed out that there is a collaborative climate in the Department and the Programme built on, and reflecting, mutual respect and collegial spirit, not only among faculty members, but also between students and teaching staff. Considering the small number of permanent teaching staff (μέλη ΔΕΠ) supporting the Programme, it would be a good idea for the Institution and the State provide to consider providing resources for hiring more permanent teaching staff.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

- The Department and the University could seek ways and means to provide further support to faculty members to enhance research and intensify their efforts for attracting external funding, especially through international and European projects. This is in line with the broader need and duty of the State to address the general systemic problem of an inadequately funded public university system.
- Faculty members could intensify further their efforts and enhance their high-quality research output, especially by publishing in international peer-reviewed journals and publishing houses.
- The excellent collegial atmosphere in the Department and the Programme, and accessibility of faculty by the students should be maintained and further enhanced, as it is instrumental in sharing experiences and getting feedback.
- The Institution and the State may wish to consider providing resources for hiring more permanent teaching staff (μέλη ΔΕΠ) to support the Programme.

PRINICPLE 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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Programme is dedicated to the provision of an inclusive learning environment that is responsive to the diverse needs of all students, irrespective of age or biological sex. Moreover, those enrolled in the Programme have the option of studying on a part-time basis. Students may attend compulsory courses in person or online, subject to approval by the academic advisor and academic staff. Once approved, students may access flexible modes of student-centred learning and

teaching. All students are aware of the full range of services available, as detailed on the website. Furthermore, the Institution's internal quality assurance process ensures the quantity and quality of the available facilities and services.

II. Analysis

The Programme and the International Hellenic University are equipped with the essential resources and infrastructure to facilitate sustained learning and academic development, thereby guaranteeing students the opportunity to pursue their studies at the highest possible level. Furthermore, students are permitted access to several libraries and archives in Thessaloniki, in addition to the University library. The library contains a substantial number of publications pertaining to the history and archaeology of the Black Sea. However, there is a need for further enrichment of the collection with materials concerning the archaeology of the Eastern Mediterranean. Additionally, students have identified the necessity of renewing several subscriptions to journals and series of books. Moreover, the current opening hours of the library are inadequate to meet the needs of the student body. In order to extend the opening hours, additional personnel are required.

Besides the academic programme, students are encouraged to participate in activities that facilitate collaboration and knowledge exchange. Such activities include field trips, group work, seminars and conferences. Furthermore, participation in the University excavation project affords students the invaluable opportunity to develop their abilities in teamwork, collaboration and leadership.

The students and recent graduates interviewed by the Panel expressed high degrees of satisfaction with the academic and administrative support they received. Teaching staff were consistently accessible in response to any queries relating to the academic programme, while administrative staff provided students with ongoing assistance throughout their studies.

III. Conclusions

The Programme is perceived to be of high quality by its student body and alumni. In order to further enhance the already positive outlook on student assistance throughout the educational process, it would be beneficial to consider the enrichment of library with up-to-date international publications and journal subscriptions, as well as the extension of library opening hours.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

- Extension of library working hours.

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The School employs the Unitron - Ylida information system to manage and monitor student data, teaching staff, course structure and organization, teaching activities, and the services provided to postgraduate students.

II. Analysis

The aforementioned information system feeds data into the internal quality assurance system of the Programme. Specifically, the School ensures the collection of information on issues such as key performance indicators, student

profiles, study progress, success and dropout rates, student satisfaction with the Programme they are attending, the availability of learning resources and student support, and the evaluation of teaching staff. Various methods are used to collect this information. Moreover, students and academic and teaching staff participate in the collection and analysis of information and in the planning of its future management. At the beginning of each calendar year, the Internal Quality Assurance Unit of the University (MODIP) requests the submission of the Annual Internal Evaluation Reports of the Academic Units for the previous academic and calendar year. This report also includes detailed information about each Postgraduate Programme within the Academic Unit.

Annually, data from the Institution, Departments, Undergraduate Programmes, Postgraduate Programmes, and Doctoral Programmes are submitted to the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA). This data, pertaining to the previous academic and calendar year, is completed by designated users from each Department. Twice a year, during the fall and spring semesters, students evaluate courses, faculty, facilities, and administrative services through the Internal Quality Assurance Unit's Information System at the University. The collected data is processed by the Internal Evaluation Group (OMEA), appointed by the General Assembly of each Department.

III. Conclusions

On the basis of the available documents and online discussions with the Director, faculty, students and alumni, the Panel confirms that the Programme is fully compliant with Principle 7.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

- The Panel emphasizes the importance of maintaining consistent data collection. This is crucial for ensuring the quality and effectiveness of the Programme. Regular data collection helps in monitoring performance, identifying areas for improvement, and making informed decisions.

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Programme has designed and provided a number of online and conventional resources in order to disseminate its scope, ambitions and learning outcomes. These resources are addressed to a variety of prospective student audiences both within Greece and in other countries. The main means of the dissemination of the Programme are the website accessible in this address: <https://www.i.hu.gr/ucips/postgraduate-programmes/blacksea>. The website covers all aspects of necessary information for prospective students, looking for a MA program, including the Programme's overview and course content, the teaching schedule and information on various teaching methods and resources, information on excavation participation opportunities, the Faculty members and their scholarly remit, the evaluation procedures for student work, as well as information on the Programme's fees and scholarships. The website highlights the main aspects of the Programme, including its interdisciplinary nature and the fact that it is one of very few internationally oriented programmes within Greece. Further resources ensuring the wide dissemination of the Programme include the website of the Greek Ministry of Education, where a concise description of the Programme exists, under this address: <https://masters.minedu.gov.gr/Masters/viewMaster/en/1489>. The information provided is quite concise and includes crucial information on the Department hosting the Programme, the language it is taught in (exclusively in English), the format of the course, in person and in hybrid form, the semester duration, total ECTS units, tuition fees and scholarships offered, the admission processes as well

as the opportunity for part- time study.

II. Analysis

The measures implemented by the Faculty and the Hellenic International University for the public dissemination of the Programme are adequate and have good functionality. Current students and alumni have reported very high levels of satisfaction with the usability of the website that provides the core information for the Programme. Faculty and additional teaching staff also report being pleased with the system provided.

The website offering public information on postgraduate programmes of the University is also well functioning and directs prospective as well as current students to the different programmes offered (<https://www.i.hu.gr/ucips/shsse/postgraduate-programmes>). The individual pages of the offered programmes also include information on the teaching methodology of the MAs, the schedule of taught courses per semester, and concise information on the requirement of the final dissertation. The website also includes information about the opportunity for graduate students to participate in the excavation conducted by the University. While all the above are designed as information for current students, they also act as a way of disseminating information to the public, which can attract prospective students.

The Faculty have also undertaken measures to advertise the Programme via websites of other institutions and newsletters where prospective students might be looking for information in order to enroll to a master's programme. One of these cases that presents a good summary of the Programme is the following: <https://daysofart.gr/en/education/ma-in-black-sea-and-eastern-mediterranean-studies-culture-and-international-relations-from-the-international-university-of-greece/>

A number of other websites and internet outlets offer information on the Programme emphasizing its interdisciplinary approach to the study of the history and culture of the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean region, and the two specializations that students can take by enrolling into it.

III. Conclusions

As a further suggestion for improving the public dissemination of the Programme, one could suggest that the Department ensures the regular review and upkeeping of the MA's webpages in order to emphasize its uniqueness and distinctiveness from other similar and competing programmes in the country.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

None

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The self-assessment, the external evaluation, the MODIP indicators, and the questionnaires of students and graduates are the key sources that contribute to the ongoing monitoring and periodic review of the Programme. Indeed, institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve their objectives and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme, which is the case for this Programme. In fact, the curriculum reflects

the most current research, theories, practices, and innovations within the discipline. This ensures that the Programme remains academically rigorous and that students have the most recent knowledge and skills.

II. Analysis

Procedures for evaluating students seem very well established. All students and graduates interviewed expressed their satisfaction with the evaluation process and felt that it has strengthened their critical capacities and the Programme's accountability. The Panel is satisfied with ongoing monitoring of the Programme as well as with the students' evaluation results and feedback.

III. Conclusions

The self-assessment outcomes are properly recorded and submitted to the Institution's QAU/MODIP several months before the external accreditation process was conducted by the Panel. The findings of the Programme's self-assessment are shared within the academic unit, and the Panel confirms that specific action plans exist to address the issues identified in the self-assessment report.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

None

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

During the current external review, the Panel had the opportunity to assess the initial internal review and accreditation proposal, as well as the documentation provided in accordance with the principles, standards and quality procedures of the Institution's internal quality assurance system. The internal review report and accreditation proposal as well as other extensive material were made available to the Panel electronically in advance through HAHE. More information and material were made available during the on-line meetings with representatives of the Programme, the Department and the Institution. All of them worked diligently in preparing materials, presentations, as well as in organizing and hosting the on-line virtual meetings with the Panel. All the meetings included presentations, discussions, and question and answer sessions. The Panel had the opportunity to meet, talk, and interact with all the participants at all meetings. The discussions were very constructive, informative and fruitful and were conducted in a cooperative manner and attitude. The efficiency and eagerness of the Department and the staff supporting the Programme to answer questions and provide additional information and clarifications during the meetings are worth noting. It is the feeling of the Panel that the Institution, the Department and the internal quality assurance units (MODIP, OMEA, Steering Committee etc.) performed an excellent job throughout the external evaluation process and the

objectives of its objectives have been fully met.

II. Analysis

Based on the materials submitted and the information gathered during the on-line presentations and discussions, it seems that all members of staff (teaching, administrative, support services), as well as social partners and other stakeholders are aware of the importance of the external review, its usefulness and the contribution it can make in improving the Programme. Throughout the current external evaluation process, it was convincingly demonstrated that the Department and the Programme are committed to the letter, spirit and process of quality assurance and external review. There is already in place a step-by-step action plan for utilizing the findings and recommendations of the external evaluation. As they pointed out during the meetings, it will help them become better by enabling them to identify any problematic areas and find suitable solutions.

III. Conclusions

It is the impression of the Panel that the Programme, the Department and the Institution have in place appropriate quality assurance mechanisms and procedures, and are committed to external evaluation and monitoring. They worked diligently to facilitate the current external review and meet its objectives. Overall, their positive approach towards quality assurance and external review is expected to have a positive impact on the Programme and contribute to its continuous improvement, while upgrading support services and the learning environment.

Panel Judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

- Maintain and further enhance the existing positive attitude towards the external review

process, its findings and recommendations.

- The Department's and the Institution's quality assurance units may wish to consider having a more structured procedure -- such as regular scheduled meetings and timeframes -- to ensure that ongoing monitoring and periodic reviews are sustained and further enhanced.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

Please state aspects of good practice identified, with regard to the postgraduate study programme.

- Positive attitude toward the internal and external review process.
- Student-centred pedagogical approach to teaching and learning.
- Excellent collegial atmosphere in the Programme and the Department.
- High quality of faculty.
- Transparency, meritocracy, impartiality and accountability.
- Accessibility of faculty by the students which is instrumental in sharing experiences and getting feedback.
- Departmental strategy encouraging and ensuring that students complete the Programme on time.
- The Programme's cosmopolitan profile and multicultural character.
- Interdisciplinary Programme taught exclusively in English.

II. Areas of Weakness

Please state weak areas identified, with regard to the postgraduate study programme.

- The Programme needs additional permanent teaching staff (μέλη ΔΕΠ) and

recommends that the Institution and the State pay attention to the teaching staff needs and provide necessary funds to remedy them.

- Limited sources to support research, which is in line with the broader need and duty of the State to address the general systemic problem of an inadequately funded public university system.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

Please make any specific recommendations for development.

- Consider conducting a survey for collecting views and feedback from alumni that could play a role in updating and improving the Programme.

- Explore options for further improving, modernizing, and updating the website.

- Intensify efforts to attract external research funding, especially through international and European projects.

- Consider ways of boosting participation rates for the course evaluation to gather a more comprehensive understanding of students' views on course and teaching quality.

- Ensure updating and enriching the annual Study Guide.

- Consider enhancing the core courses of the Programme that are unique to its content, especially the rich cultural and historical identity of the Black Sea region.

- Faculty members could intensify their efforts to enhance their high-quality research output, especially by publishing in international peer-reviewed journals and publishing houses.

- Consider expanding library hours.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 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
JOSEPH JOSEPH	Signed by JOSEPH JOSEPH - 24/11/2024 08:16:59 +02:00
Antoniou Maria	Signed by Antoniou Maria - 24/11/2024 08:16:59 +02:00
Chatzikonstantinou Ioannis	Signed by Chatzikonstantinou Ioannis - 24/11/2024 08:16:59 +02:00
Christophilopoulou Anastasia	Signed by Christophilopoulou Anastasia - 24/11/2024 08:16:59 +02:00
LAZARIS STAVROS	Signed by LAZARIS STAVROS - 24/11/2024 08:16:59 +02:00