ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC

Accreditation Report
for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Arethas

Institution: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Date: 3 July 2023

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Postgraduate Study Programme of **Arethas** of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I.   The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

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

1. **Professor Stephanos Efthymiadis (Chair)**
   Open University of Cyprus, Cyprus

2. **Professor Manuel Español - Echevarría**
   Université Laval, Québec, Canada

3. **Professor Alicia Morales**
   Universidad de Murcia, Murcia, Spain

4. **Ms Aikaterini Iliopoulou, PhD Candidate**
   Department of Philology, University of Crete, Rethymno, Crete, Greece

II.   Review Procedure and Documentation

AP received the accreditation support material concerning the Postgraduate Study Programmes (henceforth PSP) Arethas and Dexippus on Monday, 26 June 2023 and the online visit to the Programmes began on the following day. As a result, there was almost no time to look into the support material before the beginning of the visit, and most of the analysis of the relevant information had to be made during the visit. In addition, the quality of the support material was uneven. On the one hand, some documents (the Student Guides, the Accreditation Proposals or the Courses Descriptions for both Programmes) were very well crafted and designed. On the other hand, all the documents involving any statistical treatment (for instance, Students' Evaluations) were incomplete. In spite of this, during the visit, all the participants involved (MODIP, Teaching and Administrative staff) were prompt to provide us with all the information asked for. In addition, one of the members of AP, Professor Manuel Español-Echevarría, who had been named by the HAHE as Chair of AP, was unable to attend the sessions scheduled on Wednesday, 28 June 2023. Fortunately, another member of the Panel, Professor Stephanos Efthymiadis, was ready to undertake the task in such a short notice and acted as Chair of the AP for the whole duration of the visits.

All the meetings were conducted online in a very friendly and cooperative spirit. The meetings during the visit were scheduled as follows:

Tuesday, June 27, 2023
15:45-16:00 AP members meeting (Zoom meeting)
16:00-17:00, Meeting with the Directors of the PSPs Arethas and Dexippus, the Head of the Department, MODIP, Steering Committees/OMEA Members (Webex meeting)

Professor Dimitrios Karadimas, Vice Rector for Academic and Student Affairs / President of MODIP

Head of the Department: Professor Theodora Antonopoulou
Directors of the PSPs "Arethas" and "Dexippus":
Associate Professor Dionysios Kalamakis (Arethas PSP)
Professor Vaios Vaiopoulos (Dexippus PSP)
MODIP:
Mr Konstantinos Bourletidis, Secretary of MODIP
Mr Theodoros Chajitheodorou, MODIP member

Ms Amalia Nippi, Scientific collaborator of NKUA

Arethas Steering Committee:
Professor Marina Loukaki
Professor Constantine Paidas
Assistant Professor Georgios Pitsinelis

Dexippus Steering Committee :
Professor Stephanos Matthaios
Professor Amfilochios Papathomas

Arethas OMEA members :
Dr Charis (Charalambos) Messis, Member of Teaching Staff (EDIP)

Dexippus OMEA members:
Professor Andreas Michalopoulos
Associate Professor Rosalia Hatzilambrou

17:00-17:30 On-line tour: classrooms, lecture halls, libraries laboratories, and other facilities related to the PSPs (Webex meeting)

Arethas Administrative staff members:
Ms Paraskevi Saitani, Secretary
Dexippus Administrative staff members:
Ms Aikaterini Fotou, Secretary

Arethas Teaching staff members
Professor Theodora Antonopoulou
Professor Marina Loukaki
Professor Constantine Paidas
Associate Professor Dionysios Kalamakis
Assistant Professor Georgios Pitsinelis
Dr Charis (Charalambos) Messis

Dexippus Teaching staff members

Professor Andreas Michalopoulos
Professor Amfilochios Papathomas
Professor Vaios Vaiopoulos

17:30-18:00: Debrief Meeting, AP members (Zoom meeting)

Wednesday, June 28, 2023

15:00-15:45: Meeting with the teaching staff of the PSP Arethas (Webex meeting)

Professor Theodora Antonopoulou
Professor Marina Loukaki
Professor Constantine Paidas
Associate Professor Dionysios Kalamakis
Assistant Professor Georgios Pitsinelis

Dr Charis (Charalambos) Messis, EDIP member

16:00-17:00: Meeting with students of the PSP Arethas (Webex meeting)
Three 1st and 2nd year students

17:30-18:15: Meeting with PSP Arethas graduates (Webex meeting)

Mr Christos Koutavakis, Employed in private Secondary Education (preparatory institution)
Ms Aikaterini Konstantatou, PhD candidate in Byzantine Literature
Ms Anastasia Petropoulou, PhD candidate in Papyrology
Ms Irini Tzima, Employed in private Secondary Education

18:30-19:15: Meeting with employers/social partners of the PSP Arethas (Webex meeting)

Mr Athanasios Varvatsoulis Vice-Director of Lyceum of the private Secondary Education School "Nea Ekpaideuteria G.Maliaras"
Mr Kimon Velitzanidis Owner of "Indiktos" Publishing House and a graduate of Arethas
Ms Pepi Stavropoulou Owner-Manager of the private Preparatory Secondary Education Institution "Frontesterion Diakrotema"

19:30-20:00 Debrief meeting, AP members (Zoom meeting)

20:00-20:30: Closure meeting with the Director of the PSP Arethas, the Head of the Department, MODIP, and PSP Arethas Steering Committee/ OMEA members (Webex meeting)

Head of the Department: Professor Theodora Antonopoulou

Director of the PSPs "Arethas":
Associate Professor Dionysios Kalamakis

MODIP:
Mr Konstantinos Bourletidis, Secretary of MODIP
Mr Theodoros Chajitheodorou, MODIP member

Ms Amalia Nippi, Scientific collaborator of NKUA

Arethas Steering Committee:
Professor Marina Loukaki
Professor Constantine Paidas
Assistant Professor Georgios Pitsinelis

Arethas OMEA members :
Dr Charis (Charalambos) Messis

All these meetings were held with the assistance Ms Athina Kontostavlaki, Member of the Technical Laboratory Personnel.

On Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 30 June – 2 July 2023, AP members met to produce the Accreditation Report (AR) and submit it to the HAHE.

III.   Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The PSP "Arethas" offers a two-year MA degree in Byzantine Philology/Literature. The Programme was founded in 2018 within the Philology Department of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. It provides a high-quality research-oriented formation provided by six members of the academic staff and is supported by appropriate facilities (three labs, the library of the School of Philosophy, seminar rooms, etc.). The PSP also ensures a rich intellectual life for the students with a good number of conferences and talks delivered by invited professors.

Students must follow nine mandatory courses during the three first semesters in the PSP (90 ECTS) and write an MA Thesis in the fourth semester (30 ECTS). According to the research orientation of the PSP, a number of graduates continues on with a PhD Degree, but there are also students who have been employed in other areas: secondary education (public or private sectors) or edition and publishing.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I.   Findings

The "Arethas" PSP has established a Quality Assurance Policy which follows the University's Policy on Quality and involves a commitment to its implementation with the aim of continuous

improvement. Each year an internal evaluation is carried out to audit all processes, detect weak points, and establish improvement actions. Accordingly, the PSP establishes specific and measurable Quality goals. All these processes are carried out under the supervision of MODIP (the Quality Assurance Unit of the University) and are communicated to all parties involved (teaching, administrative, and technical staff as well as students). The documentation with the general lines of the PSP Quality Policy, its strategic goals, and the self-assessment report are posted on the PSP's website (http://www.phil.uoa.gr/metaptyxiakes-spoydes/programma-metaptyxiakon-spoydon-toy-tmimatos-filologias-are8as.html).

II.   Analysis

The purpose of the PSP is to provide quality and specialised scientific knowledge concerning Byzantine Philology/Literature in the first place and Byzantine culture in the second. It has clearly formulated objectives and learning outcomes which are appropriate for level 7 according to the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education.

A weak point that should be improved is the data collection and analysis system. AP has barely had access to data and statistics on the students' profile, study progression or percentage of students who participate in satisfaction questionnaires. Aware of the difficulty of implanting a culture of participation in quality processes, AP considers that effective means must be sought to increase student participation in this field.

Finally, the documentation about PSP Quality Policy, objectives and learning outcomes is provided only in Greek. It would be essential for the dissemination and internationalisation of the PSP if this information were also available in English. It is expected that this omission will be remedied when the English version of the website that is currently under construction will be functioning.

III.   Conclusions

The Academic Unit involved in the PSP has demonstrated its commitment to continuous improvement in relation to learning outcomes, adequacy of teaching staff qualifications, research output, activities and services offered to students, and infrastructures and resources. AP has verified this commitment in the different interviews held with teaching staff members during the visit.

The Programme is scheduled to provide a high-level training in the field of Byzantine Philology and to guide its students towards research in the discipline. It offers a solid base for the achievement of level 8 of the European Qualifications Framework (PhD). It is commendable that many of its graduates pursue Doctoral studies.

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	√
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Improve the data collection system and the statistical analysis
- Inquire into new ways to promote the participation of students and graduates in the evaluation processes
- Produce an English version of the information on Quality Policy and Evaluation processes, as well as on PSP objectives and expected learning outcomes

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 PRORAMME DESIGN. DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES, THE DEGREE OF ACHIEVEMENT OF THE LEARNING OUTCOMES SHOULD BE ASSESSED. THE ABOVE DETAILS, AS WELL AS INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME'S STRUCTURE ARE PUBLISHED IN THE STUDENT GUIDE.

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

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

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

In addition, the design of PSP must consider:

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP has been designed according to appropriate standards, taking into account the current scientific advancements and covering a wide range of topics and fields. The curriculum has been designed adhering to the universally accepted standards for the area of study. The structure of the Programme is rational, but its articulation needs improvement. There is a Programme revision procedure in place, although it does not involve consultation with stakeholders, external experts, students, and graduates. The Student Guide is complete, concise, and adequate.

II. Analysis

The PSP is one of the PSPs offered by the Department of Philology and its establishment has been approved by the University Senate (Decision: 751/21-6-2018). The structure of the curriculum and the overall number of ECTS adhere to the standards for master's degrees in Europe and to the universally accepted standards for the area of study. The PSP has a two-year curriculum of nine required courses, spread over three semesters (10 ECTS per course). A master's thesis (which corresponds to 30 ECTS) is written and submitted during the last (4th) semester, upon successful completion of all required courses (a total of 90 ECTS). Admission to the PSP includes an admission test, which, inter alia, is meant to assess the good quality of the incoming students. The PSP awards a master's degree in Byzantine Literature, which equates to 120 ECTS. The design of the Programme includes the objectives, expected learning outcomes, and employment prospects, all of which are clearly articulated in the Student Guide of the PSP, which by and large fulfils its purpose. AP considers the structure of the Programme to be rational and functional. However, the course outlines need improvement, as their clarity and precision fail to be satisfactory.

There is a committee in place, which is responsible for the periodical curriculum revision. The committee takes into account the outcomes of the periodic internal evaluation (questionnaires) alongside the updates in the bibliography and good practices in the relevant scientific area. It would be desirable that, in addition to the PSP teaching staff, social partners, external experts, students, and graduates could also participate in the revision committee. Since their formal participation is not compliant with state law regulations, the participation of the aforementioned stakeholders could take an informal role.

III. Conclusions

The PSP exhibits a clear research-oriented character. Students and graduates informed the AP that such a focus was a decisive factor in their decision to opt for this particular PSP. Teaching and research are successfully intertwined, as teachers bring their research interests and findings into the class, while students are actively encouraged to disseminate their research findings.

Descriptions of courses in the Student Guide must be improved and filled out providing further information on the character, orientation, and other details of the course offered.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Introduce revisions to the Student Guide and improve the course outlines in terms of clarity and precision.
- Engage stakeholders, external experts, students, and graduates in the periodical revision of the PSP curriculum.

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

All in all, the PSP fulfils the student needs. AP noted its flexibility, student involvement, and guidance at all stages of the learning process.

II. Analysis

A student-centred, flexible approach is formally adopted. The courses can be assessed through exams or an essay, while different modes of lecturing and grading are available for students with special learning needs or students with disabilities. The different modes of assessment, as well as the accommodations provided for are published in advance and included in the student guide. AP's interviews with the students and graduates of the PSP confirmed that the assessment is tailored to the individual educational needs and level of students, aiming to bring out their potential. In addition, the interviews showed that students are encouraged to develop individual skills and take an active role in the teaching/learning process. Students are invited to choose the subject of their seminar essays and assignments in tune with their scholarly interests, always under the guidance of the course lecturer/teacher. It became evident to AP that the learning environment is friendly to the students and much support and guidance is offered to them by the teaching staff.

A formal procedure of appeal is in place and a committee is in charge thereof. Student satisfaction surveys are conducted for each course at the end of the semester, as part of the internal evaluation of the PSP. The interviews of AP with current students and graduates revealed that the function of academic advisor is not implemented in practice. However, on the basis of the interviews held, AP considers that, due to the very low number of current students in this PSP (all in all 3), the function of academic advisor is informally implemented, with all faculty members actively acting as advisors.

III. Conclusions

Students are active partners in the teaching/learning process and other activities of the PSP. They find strong support among the members of the teaching staff and are encouraged in pursuing their individual goals.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Further support the role of academic advisor.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

I.   **Findings**

The PSP offers a two-year (four semester) formation organized as follows:

- 9 mandatory courses (90 ECTS) during the first, second, and third semesters, and

- 30 ECTS allocated to the writing of an MA Thesis.

All the relevant information about admissions, progression of the students in the Programme, graduate seminars, and the research thesis is available in the Student Guide, so far published in Greek in its entirety.

Candidates to the PSP are admitted through entrance examination followed by an interview. The Programme admits a maximum of 10 students per year, but the recruitment of students in the last two academic years is exiguous. As a matter of fact, two students enrolled in 2021-2022 and only one in 2022-2023.

The canonical status of the students in the PSP is that of full-time students. According to the Department's policy, part-time students are not admissible unless they fulfil precise criteria.

Students are encouraged to participate in the Erasmus+ mobility programme and the newly-introduced CIVIS.

A Diploma Supplement is available to the students, yet under request.

II. Analysis

AP discussed with the Director of the Programme and other members of the teaching staff the question of the low number of current students and inquired into different possibilities of recruiting more students in the PSP.

A change in the regulation of the Department regarding the admittance of part-time students could help with attracting more population in the PSP. The offer of the PSP as a Programme in Byzantine Civilisation/Culture should also be seriously considered.

III. Conclusions

Further considerations must be made and actions be taken in order to improve recruitment rates and ensure its viability.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Take action in order to enhance interest in the PSP and increase the number of applicants.
- Issue Diploma Supplement in Greek and English without request.

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

AP interviewed six academic staff members of all professorial ranks. All explained the kind of teaching, mentoring, and supervising that the PSP involves, and expressed their satisfaction with regard to the overall quality of the students admitted to the Programme. Moreover, they gave details about the progress of their students in terms of continuing their studies at a doctoral level, publishing articles in scholarly journals or being employed in institutions related to secondary education. They also shared their concerns about the students' decrease of interest in applying for the PSP, a fact reflected in the low number of students enrolled in the last two academic years. Some of them considered this being a temporary issue occasioned by the repercussions of the pandemic, the return to face-to-face courses, and the overall switch of the graduates' attention to MA Programmes of pedagogical orientation.

II. Analysis

The teaching staff of the PSP consists of academic members of the Division of Byzantine Philology and Folklore Studies. Their selection follows, on the one hand, suggestions of this Division and decisions made in Departmental meetings and, on the other hand, an expression of personal interest in teaching at the PSP. The wide range of research expertise that the teaching staff of the PSP represents permits the integration of basic and specialized courses into the Curriculum as well as a constant renewal of the courses offered.

The Department follows precise processes for the recruitment of properly qualified staff. Although three professors of Byzantine Philology retired in recent years, no recruitment of teaching staff in Byzantine Philology/Literature has been made possible other than the appointment of an assistant professor in 2022. Against the poor number of students enrolled, this must not be viewed as a serious issue for the PSP. Yet, it must be noted, teaching at the PSP may increase the overall load of the faculty given that all its members take up heavy teaching duties in the undergraduate Programme of Studies. In principle, as members of the faculty of the PSP, they are engaged with three hours of teaching and three hours of consulting/supervising of the students per week.

At times the PSP invites visiting professors to teach and give seminars, either on a semester basis or for a limited period of time. This is made possible thanks to Erasmus or other programmes of academic mobility.

The Department encourages the participation of the faculty in international conferences and their study in libraries abroad. The teaching quality of the academic staff of the PSP is regularly evaluated by the students under the criteria and circumstances set by the OMEA and MODIP. Those current and past students interviewed by the AP were enthusiastic about the high level of the courses offered and the support they receive(d) from the teaching staff. They further assessed that the PSP is a research-oriented Programme that enables them to deepen their knowledge of Byzantine literature and culture and develop personal scholarly skills. They acknowledged the value of colloquia organised by and for the sake of postgraduate students and spoke favourably of their significance and success.

III. Conclusions

AP acknowledges the determination and commitment of the faculty to offer a high-quality teaching and support of the students of the PSP. AP did not have access to data concerning

recruitments or the recruitment process of teaching staff but, judging from the data provided, it can be assessed that all faculty members appear to be actively engaged in research and publish either in international languages and peer-reviewed journals or in fora well-known in the Greek academia. Most of them maintain collaborations with prominent academics and institutions abroad which can be of benefit for their students alike. AP considers that increasing the visibility of the PSP would be of much significance for the viability and progress of the PSP.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations
- Increase the number of permanent members of the faculty by hiring more teaching staff.
- Improve the visibility of the PSP and attract more BA graduates into the scholarly study of Byzantine Philology/Literature.

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 LEARING 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

As far as financial resources are concerned, the PSP has no tuition fees but is financed from the budget of the Ministry of Education and the University. These financial resources are mostly used to enrich the library with books and journals related to the discipline.

The Faculty of Philosophy provides to the PSP classrooms of different capacities implemented with the usual audio-visual equipment. In addition, the PSP's further activities take place in the premises of the Department of Philology, specifically in the Palaeography, Papyrology, and Digital Humanities labs. As a rule, facilities are so designed as to make them accessible to students with disabilities.

On the other hand, the new centralised Library of the Faculty of Philosophy (opened in 2019) offers modern and excellent facilities, study rooms, and provides students with free access to all resources: books, scientific journals, databases, interlibrary loans, digital collections, etc. Students also have the possibility to receive support from specialised staff or attend seminars of training. Another useful service available to students is the Foreign Language Teaching Service (Διδασκαλείο Ξένων γλωσσών), offered to the PSP students at a reduced fee.

Administrative support is provided to students by members of the departmental Secretariat. In addition, at the beginning of each academic year, an orientation day is organised for newcomers who may be informed about the structure of the Programme, the functioning of the Secretariat, and the library and services available to them.

Finally, the students of the PSP have at their disposal the wide range of services offered by the University of Athens: cultural and sports facilities, career counselling, student welfare office, etc. All services are advertised on the Departmental and University Websites.

II.   Analysis

The facilities of the School of Philosophy have substantially been improved in recent years with the renovation of classrooms and offices, the updating of new technology equipment, and, last but not least, the creation of the new Library. In the interviews held, teachers and students alike expressed their overall satisfaction with the facilities available.

However, the lowest rating in the student satisfaction questionnaires is given to the availability of bibliographic resources. Members of the teaching staff also consider that more financial support is needed for the purchase of books, journals, digital editions, etc.

Given the small number of students, as indicated by the lecturers and corroborated by students and graduates, there is a personalised monitoring and mentoring of students' progress and flexibility to adapt to their needs.

III.   Conclusions

As stated above, in general both teachers and students are satisfied with the facilities, infrastructures, and services provided by the University and by the Department. In this respect,

there has been a clear improvement in the last years in areas such as the library, the renovation of classrooms and offices, let alone the updating of technology equipment. However, there is still insufficient funding for the acquisition of bibliographical resources.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Provide more financial support for the acquisition of bibliographical and other research resources.

PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

I.   Findings

The PSP has not yet established mechanisms for the collection of data and indicators regarding student population profile (age, provenance of their BA, grading in the admission exam), student progression, and drop-out rates, if any. Several such data were transmitted to AP during the interviews and the accreditation process. Satisfaction questionnaires are regularly conducted, and the OMEA analyses and communicates the information to the PSP. AP has pinpointed elsewhere in this Report the issues deriving from the low rate of the students' response to filling out such questionnaires and the fact that the submitted ones have not been properly worked out by the MODIP and the PSP. By the same token, it must be pointed out

that the latter has not developed mechanisms to gather systematically data on the professional status of its students and the employability of graduates.

II. Analysis

All in all, the lack of mechanisms for collecting data may be chiefly due to the poor support that the PSP appears to receive from the Department's administration. It must be also acknowledged that the PSP had to collect all this information in a limited period of time, as it had to respond to HAHE's call for accreditation at short notice. At any rate, given the limited number of the graduates of the Programme since it began to function in 2017-2018, the collection of the above information as well as the opinion and demands of external stakeholders cannot be a complicated process.

III. Conclusions

Further to what has been stated above, it is important that the PSP creates a network of Alumni aiming to obtain information on their satisfaction with the Study Programme and on their career paths. AP would welcome such an initiative and encourage the PSP to expand it in the future. Such a network will also help increasing the visibility of the PSP.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Collect students' data systematically and inquire into their outcomes.
- Create an alumni network.
- Enhance the visibility of the PSP.

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

All the information concerning the teaching and academic activities of the PSP can be accessed at the Departmental webpage, the Student Guide, and a recently created Facebook page, (https://www.facebook.com/PMSArethas). The Student Guide is available in Greek in its entirety and partially in English, but the relevant Departmental webpage is available only in Greek. The AP was assured that the English version is under construction and will soon appear on the web.

II. Analysis

Additional efforts are necessary in order to improve the visibility of the Programme in the web and the dissemination of the teaching and academic activities related to the PSP. These efforts may indirectly be useful in relation to the recruiting problems set forth above.

III. Conclusions

The PSP must seriously consider the question of spreading information about the character, function, and qualities of the PSP. It cannot be dismissed that a Study Programme in Byzantine

Philology/Literature, which, moreover, is supported by a good number of teaching staff, is a rare case worldwide.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Improve the presence of Arethas in the social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and in the community in general.
- Disseminate information concerning the PSP in Greece and abroad.

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

A quality assurance system is in place, and it is implemented by the PSP and by the MODIP of the institution.

II.   Analysis

Students are asked to complete questionnaires, which recently took the form of online questionnaires, providing data on their satisfaction (regarding the teaching methods, course material, learning outcomes, and infrastructure) and giving recommendations. For each

course, a questionnaire must be completed towards the end of the semester. Student participation in the evaluation process is mandatory. Nevertheless, there is no penalty for non-participating students. An internal evaluation committee is in place, and it is responsible for the self-assessment procedure, and the analysis of the questionnaire data. The outcomes of self-assessment are recorded and submitted to the MODIP, which is in turn responsible for compiling the annual quality report, identifying problems, making recommendations to mitigate weaknesses, and developing strategies and the overall quality goal-setting. This process results in the compilation of an action plan which is communicated to the PSP and implemented in the following year.

III. Conclusions

Monitoring and periodic internal evaluation are implemented by the PSP and by the MODIP of the University.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations
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

Since the PSP in its current configuration was launched in 2018, the present external evaluation is the first to be conducted. Nonetheless, both the Department and the University have accumulated extensive experience in external evaluation and accreditation processes. In the years 2013 and 2019, the Department and its Undergraduate Study Program were evaluated by Panels of external experts obtaining very positive judgements.

As described in the Accreditation Proposal, a process for the analysis of the results of the external evaluation is foreseen. This procedure will involve all partners of the academic unit (OMEA, teaching staff, administrative staff) in cooperation with the University Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP).

During its visit, AP has had the opportunity to assess that the members of the Department involved in the PSP under evaluation are fully aware of the importance of the external evaluation and showed their commitment to the process.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I.   Features of Good Practice

- Comprehensive Curriculum that covers a rich variety of genres of Byzantine Literature
- Commitment of the Programme to orient students towards research and the promotion of scholarship.
- Cultivation of productive enthusiasm among students
- Organisation of scholarly activities supported by the Programme.
- Collaboration with foreign Universities
- Good infrastructure (teaching classes, seminar rooms, labs, library, etc)

II.   Areas of Weakness

- Low number of enrolled students
- Omissions in collecting data about students' progress, employability, etc.
- Lack in financial support of the students
- Lack in flexibility for an open admission of part-time students
- Deficient description of courses and seminars offered.

III.   Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Enhance the visibility of the PSP in society and in international academic fora.
- Seriously consider of offering a Programme in Byzantine Civilisation/Culture in replacement of or in addition to the PSP
- Inquire into external resources of funding.
- Undertake internal evaluation on a more systematic basis.

IV.   Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 3, 5, 6, 9, and 10.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **2, 4, 7, and 8.**

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

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname   **Signature**

1. **Professor Stephanos Efthymiadis (Chair)**
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2. **Professor Manuel Español - Echevarría**
   Université Laval, Québec, Canada

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