Accreditation Report
for the New Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Shipping and Port Management

Department: Ports Management and Shipping
Institution: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Date: 30 September 2023

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the New Postgraduate Study Programme of **Shipping and Port Management** 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 New Postgraduate Study Programme of **Shipping and Port Management** of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. **Prof Ioannis M. Violaris (Chair)**
   City Unity College, Nicosia, Cyprus
   Visiting Professor of Economics and Management at the Frederick, Neapolis and European Universities, Cyprus

2. **Prof Nikos K. Nomikos**
   Bayes Business School, City, University of London, London, UK

3. **Prof Cleopatra Veloutsou**
   Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK

4. **Prof M. May Seitanidi**
   Kent Business School, University of Kent, Kent, UK

5. **Mr. Ioannis Giakoumakis**
   Student, Department of Maritime Studies, University of Piraeus, Piraeus, Greece

II. REVIEW PROCEDURE AND DOCUMENTATION

The Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) has provided the External Evaluation Committee (Panel) the necessary material related to the European qualification framework; the standards applied for the accreditation of postgraduate study programmes (PSP); the mapping grid assessment guide; the template used for preparing the Report, as well as the Accreditation Guide (in total 6 files).

The National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) has provided the Panel a total of 20 files containing inter alia all documents related to the University's policy on quality assurance and procedures used; the study and rationale on the sustainability of the programme; the structure and content of the programme.

The meetings with the university/department/industry representatives has taken place virtually on 26.9.2023 between 5pm and 10.30pm.

During the meetings of the Panel with the University's officials, additional material has been provided through which the Panel members were able to form a complete picture on the programme of study and the procedure used in designing and offering it, as well as the Quality Assurance Policy and procedures applied at the NKUA.

III. STUDY PROGRAMME PROFILE

The National and Kapodistrian University of Athens was established in 1837 originally known as the Othonian University. It is presently composed of 9 Schools under which 43 Departments are operating, offering a wide variety of programmes of study.

Additionally, at the NKUA 5 Research University Institutes, 15 Centers of Excellence, 2 University Hospitals, 76 University Clinics, 210 laboratories, 8 Library buildings and 14 Museums operate, thus offering to academics and students a solid basis for learning and research opportunities.

The study programme under review (Postgraduate programme on Shipping and Port Management) has a duration of 3 semesters, including the summer semester during which students work on their master thesis. During the 2 semesters, fall and spring, students are expected to complete 60 ECTS/10 courses. The master thesis carries 15 ECTS credits, thus the total ECTS to be completed for the award of the master degree are 75. All modules are compulsory.

The programme is offered through the cooperation of two departments, namely the Department of Port Management and Shipping and the Department of Business Administration

The programme was, at the time of the accreditation, supported by 10 Professors at various ranks (1 Professor, 4 Associate Professors and 5 Assistant Professors).

Students are able, if they so wish, to participate on Erasmus programmes for earning a maximum of 30 ECTS. It is also possible for students to study in parallel in an undergraduate and graduate programme or two postgraduate programmes of study.

The current fees for this programme are 2,500 euros per semester.

Several opportunities for scholarships are available, for students excelling in their studies. Students can also waive part of the fees by offering lecturing tasks.

The cooperating departments are expecting an initial registration of about 60 students and project that this number will double in the next 4 years.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 1: QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND QUALITY GOAL SETTING FOR THE NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE INCLUDED IN THEIR STRATEGY THE DEVELOPMENT, ORGANIZATION, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES IN SPECIFIC SCIENTIFIC FIELDS AFTER INVESTIGATING THEIR FEASIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY.

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD IMPLEMENT A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY FOR THE NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC PLANNING.

THE QUALITY POLICY SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AND SPECIALIZED (WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF EXTERNAL BODIES) IN THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND ENFORCED BY ALL INTERESTED PARTIES.

By decision/s of the Senate, the Institutions should include in their strategy the issues of development of new postgraduate study programmes, which support the character, vision, mission, and strategic objectives of the Institution. The Institutional strategy should identify the potential benefits and possible difficulties or risks for the establishment of new graduate study programmes and plan all the necessary actions to achieve the goals as set. The Institution's strategic choices should be documented by specific feasibility and sustainability studies, especially for new postgraduate programmes.

In the case of offering PSP by distance methods, the Institution prepares and implements an e-learning strategy. The Institution's e-learning strategy is integrated into its overall strategy and identifies educational goals adapting to rapid technological changes and changes in pedagogical models. The Institution should include in its strategy the justification and feasibility as to why e-learning has been chosen as an appropriate learning strategy for the particular programmes of study in which it is applied.

In the context of e-learning, innovation strategies, the possibility of revising the programme, the connection between research and learning (requiring knowledge of the latest innovations in order to choose the most appropriate means to achieve the learning outcomes) should be taken into account.

The academic unit's quality policy for new postgraduate programmes is harmonized with the Institution's strategy and is formulated in the form of a statement, which is made public and implemented with the participation of all interested parties. It bears the pursuit of specific goals, related to the assurance and improvement of the quality of the postgraduate study programmes offered by the academic unit. Indicatively, the academic unit's quality policy statement includes its commitment to the implementation of a quality policy, which will promote the academic character and orientation of the new postgraduate study programme, its purpose and objectives, implement the goals and determine the means and the ways of achieving them, and will apply the indicated quality procedures, with the final aim of its continuous improvement.

For the implementation of this policy, the academic unit undertakes to implement quality procedures that will demonstrate:

  a) the appropriateness of the structure and organization of new postgraduate study programmes
  b) the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in line with the European and National Higher Education Qualifications Framework level 7.
  c) the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of the teaching work at the PSP.
  d) the suitability of the qualifications and the availability of the teaching staff for the PSP.
  e) the drafting, implementation, and review of specific annual quality objectives for the improvement of PSP.
  f) the level of demand for the acquired qualifications of the graduates in the labour market.
  g) the quality of support services, such as administrative services, libraries, and student welfare services for the PSP.
  h) the efficient utilization of the financial resources of the PSP that may come from tuition.
  i) carrying out the annual internal evaluation and review of the quality assurance system for PSP with the cooperation of OMEA and MODIP of the Foundation.

Relevant documentation
- The Institutional strategy for postgraduate studies, which includes a special strategy for e-learning as long as it is applied to the Institution's PSP
- Feasibility and sustainability studies for the new PSP
- Quality Policy of the academic unit for the development and improvement of PSP
- Quality Targeting of the academic unit for the PSP

Study Programme Compliance
- **Findings**

The Panel, through the material furnished to its members, as well as through its interaction with the university and department officials, as well as the industry's stakeholders and the Quality Assurance Unit, has been able to assess the appropriateness of the structure and organization of the programme of study; its learning outcomes being in line with the European and National Higher Education Qualifications Framework at level 7. To this extent the syllabi provided have been thoroughly assessed and found to be appropriate. The pathway of the programme is smooth and offers a gradually developing completion of the degree requirements.

The Panel has also been presented with all the details related to the rationale behind structuring and offering this programme and the quality assurance policy related to it.

- **Analysis of judgement**

  The Panel has additionally determined that the department and university are promoting, through a variety of actions, the achievement of quality and effectiveness of the teaching work, for instance through seminars and continuous professional enhancement programmes. Additionally, the faculty lecturing on the programme, is carefully chosen through a detailed procedure that takes into account its qualifications, research records and determination in being part of this historic university.

  Particular care is taken in relation to the future employment of the programme's graduates. Towards this direction, the department has established contacts with key organizations and industry stakeholders, who have embraced the new programme and offered their valuable experience and suggestions for its development.

  Furthermore, the Quality Assurance Unit, in close cooperation with the university's and department's officials, has established a detailed procedure through which the drafting, implementation and review of specific annual quality objectives for the improvement of PSP, is ensured.

  The quality of support services, such as administrative services, libraries, and student welfare services for the PSP is constantly assessed and reviewed and corrective measures are taken as needed.

  The utilization of the financial resources of the PSP that result from the tuition fees students pay, is also efficiently used.

  The department is also carrying out an annual internal evaluation and review of the quality assurance system for the PSP with the cooperation of OMEA and MODIP of the Institution.

  The Panel has identified that the new PSP is viewed only partially as an independent programme of study that needs resources as well as specific strategy and management from both cooperating Departments.

- **Conclusions**

  The Panel is convinced that the department / university has in place an appropriate quality assurance policy and goal setting mechanism, that ensures the achievement of a high-quality programme experience.

Panel Judgement

Principle 1: Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Goal Setting for the New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R1.1 Advisory Board it is highly recommended that an Advisory Board, consisting of faculty members as well as industry representatives, as well as key representatives of the shipping and ports' authorities, is set up and regularly meets, at least twice each year, in order to assess the programme's development and future needs.

R1.2 Pedagogical Unit the Panel additionally recommends that the Quality Assurance Unit expands its cooperation with IT experts within the NKUA, as well as the pedagogical unit, so that lecturers and students are constantly updated on the e-class features as well as on distance learning tools. Since most of the lectures are to be offered remotely, this is a necessity.

R1.3 The programme needs to be structured in a way that enables it to operate independently from other offered programmes. (Dedicated structure, management, and administration).

PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP THEIR NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES FOLLOWING A DEFINED WRITTEN PROCESS WHICH WILL INVOLVE THE PARTICIPANTS, INFORMATION SOURCES, AND THE APPROVAL COMMITTEES FOR THE NEW 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 NEW 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. courses 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).

Relevant 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.

Study Programme Compliance

▪ **Findings**

The programme serves the needs of the industry and market. The programme has been designed considering the state of the art in Maritime Research and the State of Practice from similar PG study programmes in Greece and abroad.

The curriculum is considered current and relevant and prepares students for real-life experience in the industry. Yet, more modules must be added in the form of electives.

The programme serves the needs and requirements of market practice.

The programme is multidisciplinary and will recruit from a broad cross section of backgrounds and disciplines. The diverse needs and requirement of the student cohort must be accommodated using a carefully designed induction programme.

The programme should explore offering students opportunities for practical experience and industry internships.

There is absence of a module in Research Methodology.

▪ **Analysis of judgement**

The post-graduate (PG) study programme in Ports and Shipping Management (Διοίκηση σε Ναυτιλία και Λιμένες) is an "intensive" multidisciplinary programme that draws from the expertise of the Departments of Ports Management and Shipping (PMS) and Business Administration (BA). The programme has been designed considering the state of the art in Maritime Research and the State of Practice from similar PG study programmes in Greece and abroad.

Shipping is a strategic economic sector for Greece. It is dynamic and vibrant and offers good employment prospects for young graduates. Shipping executives need to have a diverse skillset that includes knowledge of economics, business, law as well as technology. This multidisciplinary approach is also reflected in the curriculum which is diverse and comprises modules in Economics (Shipping Markets, Accounting), Business Administration (Ports Management), Quantitative Methods, Strategy, International Politics and Environment and Blue Economy. These modules are relevant and are attuned to the needs and requirements of market practice, as evidenced from feedback from market practitioners. However, they must be supplemented by additional elective modules to enable students to specialise in different areas.

There is an informal procedure in place for incorporating feedback from employers and other stakeholders. Although stakeholders (employers) did not have a formal saying in designing the curriculum, it seems that the programme serves the needs and requirements of the market rather well. Going forward feedback from various stakeholders will need to be incorporated into the curriculum formally be setting-up an advisory board.

The programme will be in hybrid form where 70% of the lectures will be delivered synchronously online over weekday evenings and 30% of the lectures will be delivered in-person over the weekend. The course team wants to attract busy executives who work during the day and believes that this model of delivery will be the best choice. Although there is a logic in this argument, the team should also explore alternative combinations (such as 50%-50%) or even deliver the modules exclusively over the weekend in order to capture as much of the market share as possible.

The programme is planning to recruit from a broad cross-section of disciplines and backgrounds which is consistent with its multidisciplinary approach. However, it appears that there is no formal process for integrating students into the programme. Students from different backgrounds have different requirements and gaps in knowledge and having an induction programme, on which the students will have the opportunity to cover basic topics in economics, finance and quantitative methods is essential.

The requirement for English language is also essential. The language of shipping is English, yet the admission criteria give a very low weight to English knowledge and all the modules are taught in Greek.

The programme should offer the opportunity for students to undertake practical work experience, to the extent that this is allowed under the current regulatory framework. This should be in the form of a credit-bearing module which could be selected instead or alongside the dissertation. Employers view the provision of practical work experience favourably and consider it an essential step in familiarizing students with the business world.

Finally, all members of teaching staff are active researchers with significant achievement in publishing research, presenting at international conferences, and managing research grants. Elements of their research are also incorporated into the curriculum which ensures the relevance and currency of the programme.

- **Conclusions**

This is a nicely designed programme that serves the needs of the industry and market well. The curriculum is considered appropriate and covers a wide range of topics that are current and relevant for market practice. All elements of the curriculum are relevant and useful and are also in line with the strategy of the PG programme and the University. Yet, some adjustments are required to ensure that the programme remains relevant and current, especially in adding more elective choices, providing opportunities for practical experience, and ensuring the integration of students from diverse backgrounds into the programme.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2: Design and Approval of New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R2.1: Formalization of feedback processes. The process for incorporating feedback from stakeholders, other external partners (and eventually alumni), should be considered in the quality plan.

R2.2: Introduce Elective Modules. Complement the existing curriculum with carefully selected elective modules that will enable students to specialise. Ideally, more electives should come from the department of Business Administration which is currently underrepresented.

R2.3: Practical Training. Explore the option of giving students the opportunity to do practical training along-side or instead of the MSc dissertation.

R2.4: Mode of Delivery. The course team should also explore alternative combinations of hybrid and in-person elements consistent with the requirements and needs of the local market.

R2.5: Induction. Set-up (formally) an induction programme to cover basic economics, QM and finance so that students coming from diverse backgrounds can get up to speed and up to the level required for attending the MSc.

R2.6: English Language. Increase the threshold for English Language for admission into the programme and introduce some modules or seminars in English.

R2.7 The Panel recommends the addition of a Research Methods module (Qualitative and Quantitative) that will equip students with the necessary skills to undertake and complete their Master thesis and be able to apply this knowledge in future projects

PRINCIPLE 3: STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AND DEGREE AWARD

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

The Institution should have drawn up and published the internal regulations prescribed by law which, among other things, should regulate all matters of postgraduate studies from the beginning to the end of the studies.

Indicatively:

- Students' selection procedures and required supporting documents.
- The rights, obligations, and monitoring of student progress.
- Internship matters (if applicable) and scholarship matters.
- The procedures and conditions for preparing theses and dissertations.
- The process of awarding and recognizing degrees, the duration of studies, the conditions for promotion and ensuring the progress of students in their studies.
- The terms and conditions for enhancing their mobility.

In the case of offering the PSP with distance learning methods, the Institution should have a regulation for e-learning, which includes in particular the following topics:

- ➤ Services of the Institution to support e-learning.
- ➤ Course development and implementation methodology.
- ➤ Ways of providing the teaching work and variety of forms of teaching and assessment of the students
- ➤ General standard of course structure.
- ➤ Student support system.
- ➤ Supporting faculty/teachers with mandatory e-learning training for new staff members.
- ➤ Offered technological infrastructures of the Foundation.
- ➤ Student identity confirmation system (student identity check, assignment and exam writing process, security, and degree award issues).
- ➤ The institution should establish rules to provide appropriate access and ensure the participation of students affected by disability, illness, and other special circumstances.
- ➤ With the regulation on e-learning, ethical issues are regulated, such as those of protecting data privacy or intellectual property rights and rules to deal with fraud.

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

Relevant documentation
- Internal regulation for the operation of the Postgraduate Study Programme.
- Special regulation for the implementation of e-learning if the PSP is offered by distance methods.
- Research Ethics Regulation.
- Regulation of studies, internship, mobility, and student assignments.

- Degree award template.

Study Programme Compliance
- **Findings**

At this point it is unclear how the students will be admitted to this MSc programme. Some general principles with limited specificity were presented, such as "first degree mark - 40%" or "interview – 20%". However, the criteria were not specific. As an example, it is unclear how one with a degree with a 5 mark will be scored against somebody with a higher degree mark, while the criteria of the interview were also not specified. It was interesting to see that the academics suggested that the interview is the most important component of the selection process, but it is given 20%. Additional criteria were also provided, including the relevance of the first-degree subject or the dissertation mark (if available), but these criteria that was stated that are also taken into account were over and above the 100% of the previously listed criteria, making it impossible to understand the selection procedure.

It was stated the English is very important because some of the readings are in English, but having a relevant qualification is suggested to have 15% of the total evaluation weighing, allowing candidates that are not qualified in English to enter the programme.

The number of students that will be admitted seemed to be very close to those applied, making one question if the quality of the applicants is planned to be taken into account. The predicted number of students in the first run of the programme is expected to be 50-60.

Students are expected to come from different backgrounds in terms of their prior studies. It was highlighted that each student will have an advisor of studies, who will be one of the 10 academics who will be delivering courses in this programme. No other academic staff is expected to be involved.

There is no evidence of dedicated secretarial or other support for the programme.

The duration of studies is expected to be one calendar year, consisting of two academic semesters and a three-month dissertation in the end. To complete this programme the students will have to take 5 courses per semester, and each course will need a three hour lecture a week – making it 15 hours of attendance a week.

The programme currently is suggested to consist of 10 core courses and a compulsory dissertation.

All courses are expected to be delivered in one uniform way – 13 3-hour lectures, the first 3 in a class and the other 10 online. No tutorials or other additional resources are planned.

The dissertation is expected to be supervised by the 10 members of staff that will be delivering courses in the programme. It was suggested that each student will have 3 supervisors. In the dissertation course description, there is no reference to the three supervisors and their role.

The dissertation is carrying 20 hours load for the members of staff.

All classes are planned to be delivered in 3 afternoons a week, and in particular 6:00-9:45. This is because the team suggested that they are expecting some of the students in the programme to be working and come after their work commitments to attend the lectures. No clear explanation was offered on how real participation will be secured in the online delivered courses (that at this point are planned to be 70% of the delivered time). The main highlighted aspect of the online provision was synchronous online lecturing.

No mention of ethical considerations in online teaching was mentioned.

There is no additional provision for students me disabilities who might find it challenging to follow the online class. For the traditional conventional classroom delivery there is provision.

The university offers technical assistance and support for online provision.

There are contacts with the industry, but not formal advisory board for the programme.

- **Analysis of judgement**

    There is very limited specificity in the student's selection criteria.

    No provision has been made to help students that lack skills because of their previous studies in issues like computation or principles of the various subjects (such as accounting) or soft skills if required (such as essay writing).

    There are no electives offered in the programme. This is quite surprising for a programme with the number of students predicted here and out of line with the international practices.

    There is no variety in the delivery of the courses.

    The supervisory arrangements are unclear. The role of the three supervisors is also unclear.

    Given that there are 10 members of staff and 50-60 students, they will have to act as advisors 5-6 students each, each dissertation needs 20 contact hours and the programme is expected to recruit 50 students, the 100 load for each member of staff (50 or 60 x 20=1,000 or 1,200 hours and 1,000 or 1,200/10=100 or 120 hours) over and above their other commitments seems excessive. Details on the other commitments they already have in the undergraduate provision was not provided but offering a course of contact 40 hours (and more hours for preparation), advising 4-6 students and supervising 5-6 more dissertations each a year looks like almost half of the teaching work load that academics in Universities in many European institutions have.

    The time allocated for the delivery of the courses a week (6:00-9:45 3 times a week – or 11 hours and 15 min) is not sufficient to home the 15 contact hours that are needed a week. The only way to deliver this is with no break for over 3 hours. However, the students cannot follow lectures for 3 hours and 15 minutes without breaks. This non-bread over 3 hours' contact is even more surprising as a suggestion, since some of the participants are expected to attend these sessions after an 8-hour work in their jobs.

    The mode of delivery (70% online and 10% in a conventional class) needs far more detailed planning and resources to be delivered. Synchronous online lecturing for 3 hours is very

challenging to be delivered to a group of 50-60 students in an interactive and engaging manner.

- **Conclusions**

Very many aspects and procedures are still not in place and confirmed in a way that the programme can be fully delivered. More resources are needed in terms of academic and administrative staff and courses for the programme.

Panel Judgement

Principle 3: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Postgraduate Studies, and Degree Award	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R3.1 Procedures and processes is advised to be carefully revisited and designed to the fine detail before the programme gets its first students.

R3.2 It is advisable to have English certification as a pre-requisite to be admitted to the programme. Alternative exams on specialised and technical terminology needed to read the teaching materials in English could be provided as an alternative to prior certification.

R3.3 Resources in terms of academic and administrative staff seem to be lacking at this point to deliver this programme.

R3.4 It would be helpful to establish a formal advisory board that will actively participate in the structuring of the programme.

PRINCIPLE 4: TEACHING STAFF OF NEW 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, and 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.

Relevant documentation
- Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment and retention, and obligations of the teaching staff.
- List of teaching staff including subject areas, employment relationship, Institution of origin, Department of origin.

Study Programme Compliance

- **Findings**

  The profile of the Department is multidisciplinary, consistent with the multidisciplinary nature of the PG programme.

  Faculty members are active in externally funded research, national and international.

  There is a clear research culture in the faculty. The University encourages faculty to participate in professional conferences and has developed and supports research activities.

  Resident faculty members are well qualified to teach on the core modules, however more diverse faculty may be required for teaching at the electives.

- **Analysis of judgement**

  Election of new Faculty members is performed transparently and according to standards recommended by the Hellenic State and in compliance with the European Principles.

The profile of the Department is multidisciplinary, comprising such specializations as Environment, Blue Economy as well as New Technologies, all the way up to the 'core' areas of the programme, i.e. the economics and management aspects of shipping; ports; transport; and logistics. This is also reflected in the diversity of resident faculty expertise, the skills of which fit well. The said composition is essential and particularly desirable in the case of externally funded projects, consisting of consortia of many diverse partners, as well as in supervising PhD students.

Faculty members appear to be quite active in externally funded research, national and international. This demonstrates the Department's 'societal impact' as well as openness («εξωστρέφεια»). Research funds are also used to create and fund successful and innovative research laboratories that the department is running.

The Department encourages Faculty to participate in professional conferences and has developed and supports research activities. Most faculty members are active researchers, participating in international academic conferences and publishing in peer-review academic journals. Having active researchers is essential as it is a way through which the PG programme remains current and relevant.

Faculty members quoted that teaching on the proposed PG programme is not going to impose extra burden on them and is within the requirements set by Greek law. We note that having a rigid policy of teaching loads, is not conducive to creating an effective and productive research environment and puts pressure on research-active faculty members to work more than what is statutory required. This committee feels that any additional research or administrative academic activities should be properly recognized and rewarded, either financially or in the form of a reduced teaching load.

The focus and expertise of faculty covers the core teaching of the programme which ensures, to some extent, standards, and quality in the delivery of the programme. However, it seems that the skills and expertise of faculty will need to be expanded in order accommodate teaching at non-core modules as well as electives. The faculty teams must prepare a plan for faculty (resident and faculty) to teach at the electives. In the case of visiting faculty, they must also prepare a plan for their training and induction to maintain the quality and high standards of teaching.

- **Conclusions**

The faculty of the department are active researchers and well known internationally in their respective fields. They can cover the core requirements of the programme and have the expertise and qualities to attract students. As the programme expands, they will also need to think and plan in terms of recruiting and attracting new faculty members.

Panel Judgement

Principle 4: Teaching Staff of New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R4.1: Visiting Lecturers. Devise a plan to engage and train visiting lectures to cover the elective modules in a way that ensures and maintain the quality and standards of the programme.

R4.2 Expand the use of academics from the Department of Business Administration and Organizations, which is currently underrepresented.

PRINCIPLE 5: 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, 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-centered learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organized 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.

Relevant 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
- **Findings**

The National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) is a well-known and longstanding University, which has satisfactory foundations such as: instructing spaces,

classrooms, auditoria, laboratories, and other offices, all of which are able be utilized as required for this modern Postgraduate Programme on Shipping and Port Management. For that portion of the Programme that will take place by psychical presence, the University plans to supply suitable classrooms within the primary building of NKUA, in Athens. The educating zones have advanced varying media and computing hardware, through web association capabilities, as well as specialized databases (with budgetary information). The research facilities of the MSc are completely prepared with advanced computer research facilities accessible to all learners. The workstations that exist at the University incorporates an adequate number of 40 PCs.

Postgraduate students will have available all reading material with the working details of the electronic course (e-class), the electronic stage Webex and other vital applications. For specialized IT support, the Staff of the KLEIDI Service (IT and technical services) of NKUA, will be available for identifying any specialized issues that will arise. For the foremost viable integration of students and their unhindered participation and completion of their postgraduate studies, the Academic Advisors' role is significant. The relevant Regulation alludes to the activities embraced by the Academic Advisor in orienting not just newcomers, but all students, including those of the Postgraduate Programme.

The internal quality assurance process systematically monitors the quantity and quality of available infrastructure and services. Students' awareness of the services provided is ensured, while appropriate support actions are promptly promoted. Students can be informed about the services provided on the website of the Intensive Postgraduate programme as well as through regular announcements of the Secretariat. An important role in the wider support, information and mobilization of students is played by the cooperation of students with the Academic Advisor, as mentioned above.

The total number of human resources employed in the Intensive Postgraduate programme " Shipping and Port Management " consists of 11 Teaching Research Staff, 1 Special and Laboratory Teaching Staff and 2 administrator employees. Also, and as was stated during the Panel meetings, IT support and troubleshooting is on a 24/7 basis.

- **Analysis of judgement**

Based on the above information and also on the findings of the meetings conducted, the Panel unanimously judges that all the issues included in this Principle (5) are dealt with in a Substantially compliant manner**.**

- **Conclusions**

As far as the infrastructure, although there is no doubt that they are more than enough, for this specific MSc programme, they seem to have minimum positive impact since the

actual hours that they will have direct interaction is at 30% of the total duration of each lecture.

Since it is a new Postgraduate programme which has not yet started, we cannot provide any feedback on whether the students are fully informed regarding the services that the programme provides to them, or whether they are functional and easily accessible.

As estimated, the amount of the students will be approximately 60 while the teaching staff is only 10, the matter of proper supporting each individual student during the writing of their Master Thesis is questionable.

Due to the number of workstations (40) and taking into consideration the expected number of students (approx. 60), the Department informed the Panel that the students will be divided into groups for the smooth delivery of the lectures that require psychical presence.

Panel Judgement

Principle 5: Learning Resources and Student Support	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R5.1 Taking into consideration that 70% of the lectures will take place on a remote basis, an installation manual for each software that is needed to be installed on student's PCs is suggested to be provided, together with clear and analytic instructions regarding the set up and the usage of every online platform, that student will have to use.

R5.2 Also, it is suggested the administrative support of the PSP to be reinforced with an adequate number of staff, in order to provide the proper support to the students of the programme.

R5.3 The University needs to examine the possibility for students to gain practical experience by establishing collaboration agreements (Placements) with the extensive professional network of external stakeholders of the programme. Students that will choose this option of Placement, will need to produce a Business Report instead of a Master Thesis with a minimum of e.g., 7.500 instead of 20.000 words.

PRINCIPLE 6: INITIAL INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVALUATION AND MONITORING OF NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS AND ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD HAVE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM, IN WHICH THEY WILL INSTIGATE THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE NEW POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES, SO AS TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE QUALITY REQUIREMENTS OF THE PRESENT STANDARD. IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ABOVE ACTIONS IT IS NECESSARY TO INFORM ALL INTERESTED PARTIES.

The internal evaluation of the new PSP includes the evaluation of the certification proposal as well as the documentation material in accordance with the requirements of this Standard and the quality procedures of the Institution's Internal Quality Assurance System.

The internal evaluation of new postgraduate degree programmes also aims to ensure the quality level of educational services and to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

The Institution, through its Quality Assurance Unit, and the corresponding academic units organizes and supports the external evaluation procedures of the new PSP according to the specific instructions and directions of the HAHE.

The above includes:

- The objectives, content, and structure of the curriculum, the knowledge offered and the level of science and technology in the subject, to ensure the modern nature of the PSP, in accordance with the relevant documentation listed in the decisions of the competent bodies.
- The evaluation of the workload for the development and completion of postgraduate studies.
- The satisfaction of student expectations and needs from their study programme.
- The learning environment, support services, and their appropriateness for the mentioned PSP.

Postgraduate study programmes are designed and established in accordance with the provisions of the Institution's internal regulations and with the participation of students and other interested parties.

Relevant documentation
- The Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) procedure for checking the requirements of the Standard for the quality of new PSP as well as a procedure for organizing and supporting their external evaluation procedures (A6).
- Assessment and feedback mechanisms of the PSP quality strategy and targeting and relevant decision-making processes (students, external bodies) (A7).

Study Programme Compliance

▪ **Findings**

Given that the Postgraduate Study Programme of Shipping and Port Management is a new programme, currently at the end of the first design phase, there are no internal and external evaluations available. Hence, the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) policy document provided (A6) consists of principles derived directly from the QAU of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) and expressions of intentions to fully align its implementation with NKUA's quality assurance recommendations. Essential to the obligations is the internal annual assessment demonstrating commitment to building a culture of academic excellence through ongoing quality assessment efforts. The relevant documentation (A6) demonstrates full intention alignment with the NKUA's QA policy, it however lacks application in the context of Postgraduate Study Programme of Shipping and Port Management. Hence, the assumption is that during the next phase of programme and policies' design full application will take place in the policy document to set clear contextualised guidance and expectations for the annual assessment (e.g. given the dual mode of student engagement opportunities for student feedback, essential for improving the overall quality of education to inform departmental decisions should be offered online and offline. In addition, how student feedback will be incorporated in the module and programme design).

Furthermore, the relevant documentation that refers to the quality assurance objectives of the New Postgraduate Programme (A7) appear at large generic and also require significant contextualisation to correspond to the details of the programme (e.g. if English is not a prerequisite and the teaching takes place in Greek, then quality objectives 4.1 and 4.2 are redundant).

The involvement of external partners, such as industry partners, and their ongoing involvement in shaping the new programme is positive aspect in the development of the new programme. Systematising their involvement by establishing an Advisory Board of practitioner experts and similarly an Academic Board of academic international experts will safeguard alignment with industry requirements and forthcoming regulations. The industry experts were keen on their participation in an advisory board, and the Panel's discussion with them demonstrated that their input could offer substantial benefits. Engaging with external stakeholders, will ensure that the programmes meet industry standards, provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in their chosen fields and potentially offer opportunities for placements.

Overall, the Panel recognises the ongoing efforts and intentions for internal and external engagement with broad group of stakeholders, including the future strategic partners, for the ongoing assessment and improvement of the programme, its policies, practices, and processes.

▪ **Analysis of judgement**

Since this is the first accreditation of the new Postgraduate Programme of Study and given that there is no history of an internal reviewing process or its results it is understandable that the above are significant limitations in assessing outcome quality based on actions and results. However, it's important to note that having a well-defined and well-described process is a good starting point for ensuring the success of the programme.

During the virtual meetings, it was evident that the staff members fully appreciated the importance of the internal and external evaluation of the programme's quality assurance contributing substantially to improvements. Similarly, all stakeholders engaged in the discussions and participated actively.

▪ **Conclusions**

The quality assurance policy and quality assurance objectives have been set up according to NKUA's QA policy and international standards but should be contextualised for the specific programme of study and its specific components. Efforts should be made to ensure the necessary involvement of external partners (e.g., advisory board, MOUs, industry talks) and appropriate processes for the engagement of internal stakeholders (members of staff-academic and professional staff; students, other departments).

Presently, the New Programme of Study fully complies with the principle and intention of initial internal and external evaluation and monitoring of New Postgraduate Study Programmes. However, a meaningful assessment of Principle 6, cannot occur during the first accreditation event.

Panel Judgement

Principle 6: Initial Internal and External Evaluation and Monitoring of New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R6.1 Contextualise the <u>quality assurance policy</u> and objectives in the new programme of study.

R6.2 Institutionalise the participation of <u>internal and external stakeholders</u> in the quality assessment of the programme.

R6.3 Determine how the <u>feedback received</u> will inform the decisions and actions of the department.

R6.4 The Panel recommends that the Department further forms <u>international partnerships</u> with higher education institutions to stay updated with the latest developments in the global higher education sphere.

R6.5 The documents provided to the Panel were highly informative and detailed, providing the necessary information to conduct its evaluation. It is recommended that these <u>documents be updated</u> to aid future external evaluation processes according to the final design of the new programme of study.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. FEATURES OF GOOD PRACTICE

- The programme is considered current and relevant and has been designed considering the state of the art in Maritime Research and the State of Practice from similar PG study programmes in Greece and abroad.
- The programme is multidisciplinary and reflects the composition of the teaching faculty. Resident faculty members are well qualified to teach on the core modules.
- The programme will recruit students from a broad cross section of backgrounds and disciplines.
- There is a clear research culture in the faculty. The University encourages faculty to participate in academic conferences and has developed and supports research activities.
- The faculty demonstrated exemplary enthusiasm and commitment to the success of the new programme of study.

II. AREAS OF WEAKNESS

- The programme does not include elective modules thus not currently offering any opportunities for specialisation.
- The lack of an induction programme does not cater for the diverse needs and requirement of the student cohort.
- There is currently no provision for practical experience (placement) in the industry.
- Admission and hybrid delivery of the programme is not sufficiently developed at a level to be ready for immediate delivery during the Fall 2023 semester due to the programme's requirements.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

- <u>Formalization of feedback processes.</u> The process for incorporating feedback from stakeholders, other external partners (and eventually alumni), should be considered in the quality plan.
- <u>Introduce Elective Modules.</u> Complement the existing curriculum with carefully selected elective modules that will enable students to specialise. Ideally, more electives should come from the department of Business Administration which is currently underrepresented.
- <u>Practical Training.</u> Explore the option of giving students the opportunity to do practical training along-side or instead of the MSc dissertation.
- <u>Mode of Delivery.</u> The course team should also explore alternative combinations of hybrid and in-person elements consistent with the requirements and needs of the local market.

- <u>Induction.</u> Set-up (formally) an induction programme to cover basic economics, QM and finance so that students coming from diverse backgrounds can get up to speed and up to the level required for attending the MSc.
- <u>English Language.</u> Increase the threshold for English Language for admission into the programme and introduce some modules or seminars in English.
- <u>Visiting Lecturers.</u> Devise a plan to engage and train visiting lectures to cover the elective modules in a way that ensures and maintain the quality and standards of the programme.
- <u>Establishing Advisory Boards (separately of Professionals and Academics).</u> Such boards will strength the links with practice and academia within Greece and internationally.
- Given the significant differences in the programme of study the <u>quality assurance documentation</u> must be contextualised to correspond to the specific requirements of the programme.

IV. SUMMARY & OVERALL ASSESSMENT

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

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **2, 3 and 5.**

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**

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