



**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ**  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



**Εθνική Αρχή**  
**Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης**  
Hellenic Authority  
for Higher Education

Αριστείδου 1 & Ευριπίδου 2 • 10559 Αθήνα | 1 Aristidou str. & 2 Evripidou str. • 10559 Athens, Greece  
**T.** +30 210 9220 944 • **F.** +30 210 9220 143 • **E.** secretariat@ethaae.gr • [www.ethaae.gr](http://www.ethaae.gr)

# **Accreditation Report**

## **for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:**

**Political Science and Sociology**

**Department: Political Science and Public Administration**  
**Institution: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens**  
**Date: 30 September 2023**



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



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

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Part A: Background and Context of the Review .....</b>	<b>4</b>
I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel .....	4
II. Review Procedure and Documentation.....	5
III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile .....	6
<b>Part B: Compliance with the Principles.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 1: QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND QUALITY GOAL SETTING FOR THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 3: STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 4: STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AND CERTIFICATION .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 5: TEACHING STAFF OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 6: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 9: ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC INTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES .</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 10: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Part C: Conclusions .....</b>	<b>38</b>
I. Features of Good Practice .....	39
II. Areas of Weakness .....	39
III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions .....	40
IV. Summary & Overall Assessment.....	41

## **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 **Political Science and Sociology** 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. Prof. Emer. Athanasios Gagatsis (Chair)**

University of Cyprus, Department of Education, Nicosia, Cyprus

**2. Prof. Emer. Mary Ioannidou-Koutselini**

University of Cyprus, Department of Education, Nicosia, Cyprus

**3. Prof. Maria Eliophotou-Menon**

University Cyprus, Department of Education, Nicosia, Cyprus

**4. Konstantinos Vagiatis**

Postgraduate Student, Department of Sociology, University of Aegean, Greece

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The accreditation of the new Postgraduate Study Programme of Political Science and Sociology (PSP) of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) was conducted fully in a remote mode during the period of 25-30 of September 2023.

In preparation for the evaluation of the Postgraduate Study Programme of Political Science and Sociology of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, the members of the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) examined a large number of documents provided in advance by HAHE, including the School's Proposal for Accreditation of the Postgraduate Programme, the Study Guide, the description of courses, the HAHE Guidelines and other relevant information about the Programme (statistical data, quality indicators, student questionnaires, strategic goals, etc.). The EEAP also consulted the website of the Department and the School.

The visit was online and took place on Monday 25/09 to Tuesday 26/09/2023. It was followed by further private meetings of the EEAP on the following days to finalise the report. During the visit the EEAP had the following meetings:

### ***Monday, 25 September 2023***

Meeting with the Directors of the two PSP, the Heads of the Departments of both PSP, MODIP members, and Steering Committees/OMEA members. The two PSP were presented and discussed in this meeting. The meeting included an on-line tour for the presentation of facilities related to the two PSP. Administrative staff members and teaching staff members of both PSP were present. This was followed by a debrief Meeting of EEAP members.

### ***Tuesday, 26 September 2023***

Several meetings took place which included the following:

- Meeting with the teaching staff of the Political Science and Sociology Programme. The EEAP discussed professional development, opportunities, mobility, competence and adequacy of the teaching staff to ensure learning outcomes, workload, and evaluation by students; the link between teaching and research; projects and research activities directly related to the programme; possible areas of weaknesses.
- Meetings with students and graduates of the Programme. The EEAP discussed students' and graduates' satisfaction from their study experience and their postgraduate studies, and their career path. Students and graduates were asked to identify weaknesses/areas for improvement.
- Meeting with employers/social partners who discussed with EEAP members various forms and opportunities of collaboration with the Programme, relations of the Programme with external stakeholders from the private and the public sector, other institutions etc.
- Debrief Meeting of EEAP members in which they discussed the outcomes of the virtual visit and prepared the oral report.
- Closure meeting with the Director of the Programme, the Head of the Department, MODIP, and Programme Steering Committee/ OMEA members. In this final meeting, the EEAP provided a general view of some of the conclusions reached.

### **III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile**

The postgraduate degree in Political Science and Sociology (PSP) has been offered since 1995. It is a two-year full-time programme and is currently the only postgraduate degree in this field offered in Greece. In the first year, there are three compulsory courses (Methodology, Political theory and either Political Science or Sociology) in addition to three optional courses and a dissertation. The optional courses are selected from a course list and depending on the choices made, lead to a specialisation either in Political Science or in Sociology. If the Political Science specialisation is chosen, the emphasis is on political theory, electoral behaviour, comparative politics, and political culture. If the Sociology specialisation is chosen, the emphasis is on social theory, employment, and culture.

After a selection process, 25 students are admitted to the Programme every year. Scholarships are offered to some students. During the programme, students attend courses on a regular basis, taking part in seminars, workshops, conferences and other activities organised by the Department. These are often organised in collaboration with the other three postgraduate programmes of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration.

The programme is supervised by a five-member committee which consists of members from the Department of Political Science and Public Administration and from the Department of Social Theory and Sociology.

The Department offers the opportunity to graduates to undertake a Ph.D. degree programme, which can be completed in a minimum of three academic years or in a maximum of six. Graduates can take advantage of a range of employment opportunities which include positions in both the private and the public sector.

The Department of Political Science and Public Administration of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens has 37 academic staff numbers whose teaching and research revolves around the following four fields: Political analysis, Social Theory and Sociology, Administrative Science and Public Law, and International and European Studies.

## **PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES**

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Documentation**

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

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings**

Relevant documentation included the Quality Assurance Policy of the PSP and the Goal Setting Strategy of the PSP. Moreover, additional documents were examined in order to assess factors like the suitability of the structure and organisation of postgraduate study programmes, the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education -level 7- etc. The Quality Assurance Policy is available on the website of the Programme. This does not appear to be the case for the Goal Setting Strategy. The Quality Assurance Policy presents the mission of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration and the PSP in particular, with reference to aims and objectives. There is extensive reference to processes and practices associated with the implementation of the Quality Assurance Policy, while the actual quality aims are presented very briefly in bullet point form.

The Goal Setting Strategy of the PSP defines specific strategic priorities and quality objectives. The strategic aims defined concern the following: the quality of the academic environment of the PSP; the continuous improvement of the academic activities of the University; the link between the PSP, society, and the labour market; excellence in research; and internationalisation. Moreover, the Goal Setting Strategy outlines specific indicators, present and future targets, actions to be taken to achieve the objectives, responsibilities and timelines.

Both documents are clearly written and provide a solid basis for planning and implementation in relation to achieving quality standards. Overall, the academic unit has established a Quality Assurance Policy that is appropriate for the PSP and serves as a guideline and a point of reference in future planning and decision making. As regards the content of the strategic aims, it is important to note that the defined aims cover all significant areas/dimensions to a satisfactory extent since reference is made to teaching, research and student considerations. Despite the overall positive picture, areas for improvement exist.

### **II. Analysis**

The information outlined in the relevant documents as well as the information provided by administrators and faculty members indicates that the academic unit is committed to the implementation of the Quality Assurance Policy. There is an acknowledgement of the need to make a commitment towards continuous improvement. The aims of the PSP as they appear in the Quality Assurance Policy indicate the following emphases: a student-centred approach in teaching and learning; a research orientation in relation to the programme of studies; an agenda that takes into account gender equality; factors related to infra-structure; and labour market considerations.



The fact that the Quality Assurance Policy is available on the website of the Programme ensures that stakeholders have access to the information included in this document. However, the Goals Setting Strategy of the PSP is not available on the website, which constitutes a weakness in the provision of information.

The goals set by the academic unit follow the SMART framework in that they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-specific. Quality goals are combined with suitable performance indicators, which creates a framework for relevant planning and initiatives for improvement. These goals are monitored and updated on a regular basis. Internal processes for quality assurance are used to identify areas for improvement.

The specified learning outcomes are in agreement with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. Specific quality goals are defined, discussed and reviewed on a systematic basis. The academic unit has demonstrated commitment to the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching, as indicated by Department actions, policies and initiatives. For instance, this is shown by the fact that the academics recruited and employed in the Programme are highly qualified, with a satisfactory research performance and output. However, it must be noted that there are a few cases of academics with a very low number of publications in refereed journals in the last five years. The quality of support services is high, with students and graduates reporting a high degree of satisfaction.

Moreover, an attempt is made to ensure the efficient and effective utilisation of resources, as shown by the plan formulated for this purpose. In 2017, research was conducted on the labour market position of graduates of the PSP.

Areas for improvement include the need to enhance the information provided regarding the PSP in relation to quality. For instance, the Goal Setting Strategy of the PSP should be available on the website. Moreover, if quality goals are presented, they should be discussed to a satisfactory extent. The provision of bullet points without further discussion/clarification does not provide sufficient clarity. For instance, in the Quality Assurance Policy, the first strategic goal refers to gender issues, without reference to whether this applies to faculty, students or both. The Goal Setting Strategy provides further information but is not available on the website. More ambitious targets could be considered in some cases: For instance, the percentage of women teaching at the Programme is targeted at 18% (from 13.6%). The targeted percentage for participation in international conferences is also relatively low (0.8% from 0.5%).

### **III. Conclusions**

The PSP has established a Quality Assurance Policy which ensures that the PSP is monitored and evaluated on a systematic basis. Stakeholders are aware of this policy and contribute significantly to the implementation of strategic goals and processes. The process provides specific directions for improvement, which is considered necessary for further action. Areas for improvement include the formulation of more ambitious strategic targets and the provision of greater information on Quality Aims.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

- The EEAP recommends the formulation of more ambitious strategic targets (especially in relation to gender issues and participation in international conferences)
- The provision of greater information on Quality Aims on the PSP website is also recommended.

## PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

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

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

*In addition, the design of PSP must consider:*

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

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

### **Documentation**

- *Senate decision for the establishment of the PSP*
- *PSP curriculum structure: courses, course categories, ECTS awarded, expected learning outcomes according to the EQF, internship, mobility opportunities*
- *Labour market data regarding the employment of graduates, international experience in a relevant scientific field*
- *PSP Student Guide*

- *Course and thesis outlines*
- *Teaching staff (name list including of areas of specialisation, its relation to the courses taught, employment relationship, and teaching assignment in hours as well as other teaching commitments in hours)*

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings**

An Internal Quality Assurance System is in force at the University of Athens. It covers the entire range of functions and activities of the Institution. The relevant Quality Assurance Unit (MO.DI.P) undertakes the responsibility for its operation and its restructuring initiatives.

The Programme design is subject to a formal departmental approval by OMEA and it is regularly monitored taking into account the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction and reflecting some main purposes of higher education, such as preparation for sustainable employment and personal development.

According to the Programme presentation during the first day of the evaluation (25-9-23), the Programme covers the scientific fields of Political Science and Sociology aiming at the interdisciplinary treatment of the issues that fall under the knowledge objects of the two areas, targeting the close and seamless collaboration of two related scientific fields. In this way, a balance is sought between specialisation in specific scientific subjects and the provision of a comprehensive approach to the subjects of the Social Sciences.

The Programme of study is structured in 4 semesters and to obtain their MA degree, students need to have successfully passed 10 courses corresponding to 100 ECTS, 10 for each course. The Master thesis is obligatory and corresponds to 20 ECTS.

The Programme offers two specialisations, the one in Political Analysis and Political Theory and the other in Social Theory and Social Research. Each specialisation contains three compulsory courses, 9 ECTS in total out of 100 and 7 electives from a common list of 12 courses. Two research courses are offered, one in Social Theory and Research and another in Research Methodology of the Social Sciences. The first one is compulsory for the specialisation in Social Theory and Social Research, and elective in the specialisation in Political Analysis and Political Theory.

The Department implements the European System of Credentials (ECTS), indicating the study hours for each course, based on the defined learning outcomes and their workload. There is no differentiation of the allocated ECTS in the Programme's courses, assuming that all courses require the same study hours for compulsory and non-compulsory courses.

## **II. Analysis**

The Programme needs restructuring to differentiate the specialisations in order to avoid the paradox of two students with the same diploma supplement, i.e. attending the same courses but being awarded different specialisations. Each of the specialisations includes three or even four common compulsory courses and specialised elective courses, different for each specialisation. The appropriate structure must be decided by the responsible bodies of the Department and the Institution, in order to ensure the quality of the content of the two specialisations in terms of their commonalities and differences. In addition, strengthening of the research orientation of the Programme according to the European Qualification Framework (EQF) will contribute to upgrading of the Programme and in particular to the quality of students' Thesis.

The Department along with the coordinators of the programme and in collaboration with students, who can realistically define the workload in study hours, may consider reviewing the allocated ECTS in the compulsory and elective courses. Since the aim of the ECTS European system is to facilitate comparisons of programmes and courses across Europe, it would be useful for the Department to collaborate with the coordinators of related programmes in other countries. Visiting professors from European countries will also help the exchange of experiences and the enrichment of the specialisations.

## **III. Conclusions**

The Programme is popular, and students and graduates believe that it opens up prospects for further in-depth study in subjects of interest and ensures employment in a variety of services and positions.

The panel believes that some weaknesses in the structure of the Programme should be immediately addressed in order to ensure the quality of the studies and the actual correspondence with similar programmes across Europe.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

- Better structuring of the Programme and the specialisations according to the above analysis, in terms of essential differentiation of the two specialisations and research courses.
- Review of the ECTS and the workload in compulsory and elective courses.

### **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**

It was made obvious through consideration of submitted documentation and the EEAP's interviews with faculty members and students that the PSP meets the necessary conditions associated with the relevant principle. Specifically, the EEAP found that the teaching faculty and staff use a variety of student-centred teaching approaches. During the lectures, instructors foster interactive discussion with students, encourage questioning and exchange of views. Students are given opportunities and support to develop personal as well as academic and research skills. Students informed us that their communication with the faculty is easy and direct. For example, faculty promptly responds to emails and are available beyond scheduled office hours. Moreover, students referred to the personal relationships they developed with the faculty. Faculty staff members have structured their lessons so that there is a designated time for questions, making them more student-centred. However, the students highlighted the need for more research opportunities as well as the need to interact with the professional field through on-site visits to relevant professional or scientific institutions.

The assessment methods and evaluations vary including formal methods at the end of each semester (written or oral exams) or with assignments throughout the semester. Therefore, a special effort is made to ensure that the final performance of students is not only determined by the score of the final examination, but also by intermediate forms of assessment during the academic year. During the interviews with students, it was stressed that they receive continuous monitoring and feedback which helps them to improve their performance. Grade components and assessment methods are published in advance and are available in the course syllabi.

The educational process is evaluated through questionnaires completed each academic semester. The technique assures anonymity, and since the system only generates average statistics for each question, it is impossible to identify specific students. Students are encouraged and supported to take an active role in the teaching and assessment process. The PSP has undertaken initiatives to strengthen student participation in the assessment process so better decisions can be made to improve the operation of the PSP.

In circumstances where students desire to make a formal complaint, there is a process in place. The Student Advocate has been established at the institutional level in accordance with the pertinent laws now in effect (law 4009/2011). The duties of the Student Advocate are, in particular, as follows: a) the examination of student requests for problems they encounter with academic and administrative services and the search for solutions to these problems, b) the facilitation of the student's contacts with the administrative bodies and services, c) the examination of reports/complaints of students for violation of provisions and rules of university legislation and ethics, and, d) information to students about their rights and obligations as members of the University Community. Moreover, the Coordinating Committee of the PSP acts as a receiver of complaints and concerns of students in order to address any issues before they become more serious, building confidence among the academic community and ensuring accountability and legitimacy. As far as student objections regarding their grades



are concerned, the current Study Regulation of the PSP defines specific procedures for the management of such issues.

Finally, regarding the Academic Advisor, the Department has established relevant regulations. However, from interviews with students and academic staff, it does not seem to be working satisfactorily.

## **II. Analysis**

The PSP follows the principles of student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment. The findings underscore the significance of student-centred learning, where students are not passive recipients of knowledge but actively participate in their education. This active participation empowers students to construct their own understanding, ask questions, engage in meaningful discussions and collaborate with peers. Moreover, the PSP recognises the importance of assessment methods that reflect the student-centred approach. It acknowledges that traditional assessment methods may not effectively measure the depth of understanding and critical thinking associated with active learning. The assessment strategies not only evaluate students' factual knowledge but also their ability to analyse, synthesise, and apply concepts in complex and practical scenarios, in alignment with the holistic educational goals of a student-centred approach. The student feedback survey aligns with the principles of student-centred learning. It values students' perspectives, making them active participants in shaping their educational experiences. The PSP has established a proper process in place for student appeals through regulation. Finally, there is a need to take measures in order to strengthen the role of the Academic Advisor.

## **III. Conclusions**

The EEAP found that the PSP promotes the importance of student-centred learning and teaching. Measures are being examined in order to enhance students' participation both in the course evaluation process and, more broadly, throughout all stages of the learning journey. The PSP also cultivates and promotes mutual respect between the students and the faculty and staff.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

- The EEAP encourages the PSP to enhance opportunities for students' engagement in research.
- The EEAP recommends measures in order to increase the percentage of students who participate in course evaluation.

## **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 Institution and the Department apply internal regulations for the operation of the Postgraduate Study Programme, and they established a Degree certificate template.

The postgraduate students are supported from the beginning of their studies through a welcome orientation session, the information in the Institution's and Department's website, the e-class material, personal and group informative meetings with the administrative and academic staff and the Institutions' support services. They get also detailed information and guidance for the regulations, the operation of the Library and the electronic systems and services.

The discussion with students and graduates confirmed that the staff monitors students' progression and that the administrative staff supports the smooth processing of their studies.

Students are informed about the procedures and terms for the drafting of assignments and the thesis. The panel did not find any regulation concerning the timetable of starting, drafting, progressing and submitting the thesis and its final form after the first evaluation. The discussion with the panel of students showed that there are issues with the above procedures

which do not provide the necessary flexibility required for the respect of students' pace and the demands of the thesis subject matter.

The Department has established collaborations with a large number of universities from various countries. It has, also, a large list of collaborators and visiting professors, who can contribute to the course's delivery.

## **II. Analysis**

One of the Department's strengths is the employability of the graduates of the postgraduate Programme of Political Science and Sociology and their continuous collaboration with the Department after their graduation. Systematically informed alumni will strengthen the communication between the University, the Department and the graduates and will promote the Programme's value.

The Panel is not sure that the quality of the Master's thesis is monitored in a satisfactory manner due to the lack of prescribed quality processes, as mentioned above in the Findings, and to the danger of recycling the same topics and bibliography, according to indications that emerged during the discussion with students and graduates.

## **III. Conclusions**

The Institution and the Department have applied regulations and procedures for the promotion of the quality of the Programme and the smooth progression of students' studies. Students and graduates are satisfied with their studies as well as with their employability.

There is room for improvement in relation to the thesis monitoring.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

The panel recommends the following for ensuring the quality of the Master's thesis:

- A regular Thematic Analysis, every 2 years of all the submitted theses, based on the quality criteria, which will inform students and the staff about the deficiencies and the strong aspects of students' work.
- Collaboration with the visiting professors and the external experts with whom the Department collaborates (a large list of experts has been provided) for the guidance and supervision of the Master theses.

## **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**

Relevant documentation included documents on the roles, responsibilities and performance of teaching staff members. Moreover, a list of teaching staff members was provided, which included information on research performance and output.

There is a clear set of criteria and procedures for the selection and employment of teaching staff. The number of academics involved in the teaching of modules is satisfactory and includes academics of various specialisations. Academics possess relevant qualifications and teaching experience. However, based on the information we received, it appears that several academics have a heavy workload in their attempt to meet the demands of both the undergraduate programme and the PSP.

The strategic documents provided do not make specific reference to professional development opportunities and there is no direct linkage with a specific target. Several academics are

involved in research activities which include publication of articles in journals and participation in academic conferences. However, as previously mentioned, there are a few cases of academic staff members where an increase in output in certain research areas is necessary, especially in internationally recognised journals.

Teaching staff is regularly evaluated by students through evaluation surveys even though not all students participate in the process.

Overall, employment regulations, staff policies and recruitment processes appear to be highly effective in achieving successful teaching and learning outcomes. There are clear provisions for the systematic evaluation of staff members. However, several areas for improvement exist.

## **II. Analysis**

As previously mentioned, there are well defined criteria for the selection and employment of teaching staff. Even though the full extent of the meritocratic procedures used for recruitment cannot be assessed, there is strong evidence to suggest that the process followed, and the criteria used ensure that the academics employed in the teaching of modules are highly competent and effective as instructors. The regular evaluation of teaching staff by students is considered a strength if appropriate action is taken based on the feedback received.

Even though emphasis is placed on research and development, more can be done in terms of formulating a detailed research strategy for the PSP. Moreover, more can be done to promote links between teaching and research, especially at the student level based on findings from our interviews.

Consequently, based on our findings, areas for improvement include the need for more academic staff members and less workload, greater links between teaching and research, and more professional development opportunities.

## **III. Conclusions**

The processes used for the staff recruitment are specific and transparent. The PSP is supported by an adequate number of academics who, in some cases, are forced to undertake a heavier than desired workload in order to meet the demands of both graduate and undergraduate programmes. Specific mechanisms for the evaluation of staff members by students are used on a systematic basis. Areas for improvement include the need for more academic staff members and less workload, greater links between teaching and research, and more professional development opportunities.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

- The EEAP recommends the increase of the number of academic staff members, less workload, greater links between teaching and research, and more professional development opportunities.
- It is also recommended that the Programme and the Department should consider alternative ways to increase the faculty's international scientific collaborations and mobility.
- The performance of the teaching staff in scientific research should be based to a greater degree on internationally recognised systems of scientific evaluation (e.g., Google Scholar, Scopus, etc.).



## **PRINICPLE 6: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT**

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

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

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

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

### **Documentation**

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

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **I. Findings**

The Institution and the Department have sufficient resources and means to support learning and academic activity in general. They have libraries with specialised journals and books supporting the Programme and students' studies, electronic databases, and sufficient study rooms, IT and communication services, support and counselling services. The Department provided a video produced for the evaluation purposes.

The Electronic system to support the learning process (E-class), the Electronic platform of administrative support, the facilities for e-library and the Department's web page adequately

support students and their studies. The discussion with students verified the infrastructure and services made available by the Institution to support teaching and learning.

The availability of staff for providing technical support to students and to the teaching staff of the Department facilitates the academic work of all.

## II. Analysis

The infrastructure and the technological support of students and staff is satisfactory and makes the everyday life and studying easier and comfortable.

The panel did not have the opportunity to visit classes and resources, but they find the information and the on-line tour in classrooms, lecture halls, libraries, laboratories and other facilities adequate. The staff responsible for the technological and administrative support is well qualified and willing to support whoever and whenever needed.

## III. Conclusions

The infrastructure and services made available by the Institution to the Department seem to be, at present, sufficient to support learning and other academic activities. All services and the Institution's responsible bodies should be able to meet the future students and staff's needs.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 6: Learning resources and student support</b>	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

None.

## **PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Documentation**

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

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **I. Findings**

In order to provide accurate information about a number of crucial actions (planning, evaluation, information) and services provided to students, graduates and academic staff, the administrative team at the PSP takes care to record, manage, and monitor the data of students, academic staff, the structure and organisation of the courses, the teaching and the provision of services.

The PSP makes use of a variety of information systems and approaches to collect data efficiently. These include working with different organisations and stakeholders, surveys, electronic databases, and academic records. To ensure the acquisition of accurate and recent data, the PSP takes a data-centric strategy.

The following are involved in the process of collecting and analysing information: The Coordinating Committee of the PSP, the Committee of Internal Evaluation (OMEA) of the Department, the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) of the Institution, the Secretariat of the Department as well as the Assembly of the Department in some cases.

The PSP is supported by a unified Information System, named “UniTron” that manages and monitors the data of students and academic staff as well as data relating to the structure and organisation of courses, teaching and the provision of services to students. The Information System provides basic tools used to analyse information and draw conclusions.

Moreover, regular surveys that measure student satisfaction are a crucial component of the PSP's efforts to collect data. These surveys provide insightful information about the experiences and issues and are used to arrive at suggestions for improvement. At the end of the semester and for each course they took, students are asked to complete surveys, though this is not required. From the limited number of student evaluations, there appears to be a high degree of satisfaction with the courses provided and the level of teaching. The PSP hopes to eventually obtain higher participation rates than the present percentage of students.

The Committee of Internal Evaluation (OMEA) of the Department feeds every year the information system of ETHAAE with quality census data of the previous academic year. Performance indicators are derived from these and the drafting of the annual PSP target setting is largely based on these, in accordance with the guidelines of the Internal Quality Assurance System of Institution and the guidelines of the Quality Assurance Unit.

The Coordinating Committee collects, analyses and utilises the above information when drafting the periodic Internal Evaluation Reports. Moreover, the process of utilising the results of the internal evaluation is done under the responsibility of the Coordinating Committee of the PSP, with the participation of staff members and students and for all levels of its operation.

## **II. Analysis**

The EEAP thoroughly investigated the PSP's information management, spoke with staff, students, and stakeholders, and reviewed relevant materials. The PSP demonstrates a commitment to the efficient use of information obtained through satisfaction surveys. Analysis of the data collected methodically identifies trends, areas for growth, and strong points of the PSP. The findings are shared with the appropriate parties, ensuring accountability and openness. Importantly, the data is actively used to improve the academic unit's many aspects, including teaching strategies, support services, and resource accessibility.

## **III. Conclusions**

The PSP deploys a blend of information systems and methodologies to ensure data accuracy and comprehensiveness. The system of collecting, analysing, and using information is quite satisfactory and has proven helpful for the identification of problems and the development of

appropriate solutions. As such, the PSP is in line with the institutional principles which govern the collection of data regarding students, teaching staff, course structures, annual monitoring, assessments, progression, and completion rates.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 7: Information management</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

None.

## **PRINCIPLE 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES**

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

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

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

### **Documentation**

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

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings**

The Department has set up a mechanism for public information and it primarily disseminates information through its website ([https://www.pspa.uoa.gr/metptychiakes\\_spydes/pms\\_politiki\\_epistimi\\_kai\\_koinoniologia/](https://www.pspa.uoa.gr/metptychiakes_spydes/pms_politiki_epistimi_kai_koinoniologia/)) and the PSP's website (<http://www.pss.pspa.uoa.gr/>) to all interested parties (current and future students, researchers, alumni, etc.).

The Department's website in the Greek and English language provides brief historical and descriptive information about the PSP and redirects users to the PSP's website. The PSP's website in Greek contains accurate information about its structure, mode of attendance, degree awarded, tuition fees, study regulations and admission procedures. Moreover, all course outlines for the Programme -whether extensive or not- and course schedules are available online on the website. Additionally, the Department's academic unit Policy for Quality Assurance is accessible online on the website underscoring the Institution's commitment to maintaining academic excellence and quality standards. All scientific events, collaborations and activities organised by the PSP and its members are announced on the website. Also, information about academic staff is available but complete faculty CVs and/or information about the academic staff are not. The website's English language edition requires further development. It contains some information that has been translated into English, but it needs to be updated if it is to have the potential to increase the Department's awareness outside.

Apart from the website, the members of the academic community of the PSP are further informed about its activities through e-mails sent to their individual e-mail addresses.

Finally, the PSP ensures that there is printed information material which is posted at focal points of the Department.

## **II. Analysis**

The EEAP discussed with staff, students, and stakeholders, examined relevant materials and thoroughly studied the PSP' public information system. The Coordination Committee, as well as the Secretariat, plays a key role in monitoring, controlling, and ensuring the quality, validity and timeliness of public information concerning the PSP. The PSP distinguishes itself by ensuring that information is up-to-date, clear and objective to interested parties in multiple ways as described above. In addition, the PSP promotes transparency, accountability and relevance, providing comprehensive information about quality, regulations and admission issues. In general, the analysis showed that the PSP has put much effort into presenting itself to its students and the public, but additional efforts must be taken in order for this endeavour to be more focused and comprehensive.

## **III. Conclusions**

Overall, the EEAP believes that the PSP provides a wide array of useful information for interested parties. This dedication is in line with the demands placed on Institutions to provide accurate and current information about their postgraduate study programmes and benefits both the institutions and the individuals, ensuring informed decision-making, accountability, and the overall quality of higher education. There is a need to further develop the website of the PSP.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

- The EEAP encourages the PSP to enrich the English version of their website.
- The EEAP encourages the PSP to provide information on faculty members (e.g. CVs) in the departmental website.



## **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**

According to the academic accreditation proposal of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), since the establishment of the Postgraduate Study Programme in Political Science and Sociology, quality assurance and evaluation procedures have been adopted, which are carried out through the process of the NKUA entitled "Internal Evaluation". In fact, this is based on the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of the NKUA, that covers the entire range of the various functions and activities of the Institution. The annual Internal Evaluation process highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the operation of the PSP and aims, among other things, to establish new objectives and match them with the desired quality levels. The evaluation of the Postgraduate Study Programme is coordinated by the Steering committee of

the PSP in collaboration with the Department's Evaluation Working Group (OMEA), supervised by MODIP and carried out in accordance with the procedures defined by the HAHE. Internal evaluation mechanisms serve the formative purpose of evaluation. As a consequence, the PSP and the Department have developed a comprehensive strategy for continuous quality improvement that is based on evidence. The EEAP has found that PSP is regularly reviewed and revised with the participation of students, graduates, members of the administrative and technical support, and faculty members. The Director of the PSP, Associate Professor in Sociology-Social and Political Institutions, Panayis Panagiotopoulos has presented to the members of the EAAP an indicative timetable of the procedures of the annual periodic evaluation of the PSP in Political Science and Sociology. According to the report (28/12/2022), the following are evaluated:

- The content of the Curriculum and the courses outlines according to the most recent research in the specific subject of the PSP, so as to ensure the modern character of it.
- The workload of the courses and of the thesis of the Programme and the completion of postgraduate studies by students.
- The degree of satisfaction of students' expectations from the Programme of Study, the offered support services for their studies and the learning environment. Students mainly answer questionnaires that mainly concern the quality and the means of research and teaching, the structure and content of studies, the workload of the students, and the internal evaluation procedures applied.
- The internal evaluation procedures applied to the PSP in terms of effectiveness and compliance with the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of the Institution.
- The changing needs of society, the labour market and the adaptation of the content and procedures of the PSP to them.
- The internal evaluation concludes with the writing of the internal evaluation report of the PSP.

## **II. Analysis**

Based on the above findings, the EAAP believes that the PSP and the Department take the results of their internal evaluation report seriously into account. In fact, this is confirmed by various actions of the Programme committee and the Department:

- The results of the internal evaluation are communicated to all members of the PSP community, using the appropriate means. According to the results of the last internal evaluation, a serious problem lies in the small number of students participating in the evaluation of the courses (Appendix A8). On the other hand, the relations with external stakeholders like employers or other social partners from the private and the public sector are also considered, and they seem to be very good. Moreover, the academics' number of publications in peer-reviewed journals, the number of references to the staff publications, and generally speaking the quality of the research of the staff research are also taken into account. The EEAP believes that the performance of the teaching staff in scientific research, could be based to a greater degree on internationally recognised systems of scientific evaluation (e.g., Google Scholar, Scopus, etc.).

- Moreover, the adequacy of the resources and the infrastructure required for the implementation of the Programme and the feedback of the teachers are ensured.
- The teaching methods, the structure and content of courses, the proposed bibliography, the methodology and the supporting material available to students are updated on an annual basis.

This became obvious also during the meetings with the Head of the Department and the Director of the PSP. As a consequence, findings of the internal evaluation are used for improvement purposes. Procedures for readjustment and modernisation of the material of the study programme are also established based on the results of the internal evaluation and specific recommendations for improving the quality of the teaching and research work of the PSP emerged.

### III. Conclusions

Based on the findings related to the material of the PSP and on the analysis of the material, the members of the EAAP believe that a comprehensive monitoring system of the PSP is in place. The internal evaluation of the Programme is regularly conducted by MODIP. In fact, the Programme is regularly reviewed and revised with the participation of students, graduates and faculty members. The information collected is analysed and the programme is modified according to the internal evaluation data. The EAAP believes that the whole internal evaluation process is fully satisfactory. Although the process of internal evaluation is sound, the panel points out some essential points of the Programme that the Department should revise as shown in the previously presented analysis of this report.

#### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 9: On-going monitoring and periodic internal evaluation of postgraduate study programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
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**

#### **I. Findings**

This is the first external evaluation of the Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) in Political Science and Sociology that is conducted in the context of ETHAE. As such there are no prior recommendations of external evaluations of ETHAE to be followed. Moreover, no other activities of external evaluation exist concerning the PSP in its previous form. The external evaluation and accreditation process of the PSP " Political Science and Sociology " follows the guidelines of the "Quality Standard for the Accreditation of Postgraduate Programmes", issued by HAHE in 2022 and is in line with the Principles and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

At the NKUA, an Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) is in place, covering the entire range of the various functions and activities of the Institution. Its constant development and implementation fall under the responsibility of the relevant Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP). MODIP handles all the different procedures and processes required by the Institution for the external evaluation and improvement of all educational and research work carried out at NKUA.

The EEAP reviewed the digital material and all available documents of the PSP's website (<http://www.pss.pspa.uoa.gr/>) and of the Department's website ([https://www.pspa.uoa.gr/metapychiakes\\_spydes/pms\\_politiki\\_epistimi\\_kai\\_koinoniologia/](https://www.pspa.uoa.gr/metapychiakes_spydes/pms_politiki_epistimi_kai_koinoniologia/))

Moreover, the EAAP conducted extensive online interviews with the Director of the PSP, Associate Professor Panayis Panagiotopoulos and the teaching staff of PSP.

The Quality Policy followed by the PSP is communicated electronically (via email) at the beginning of each academic year to the members of the teaching, administrative and technical staff employed in the PSP, and at the beginning of each cycle of implementation of the PSP to the new entrant students.

The members of the EAAP verified that the PSP and the Department have a process for reviewing the findings and recommendations of such external evaluations. This includes a preliminary review by the Director of the PSP and the Chair of the Department and notification of the evaluation results to all faculty and staff of the PSP. A faculty meeting is scheduled to discuss the findings and recommendations and identify the next steps for action. These recommendations and the incorporation in their processes include the compliance with the MODIP requirements, the development of strategic goals and the policy for quality control.

The EAAP also found that the PSP and the Department have undertaken a multidimensional activity in creating more digital skills courses and they have balanced the distribution of all courses in the Scientific Fields of the PSP courses. Moreover, they have strengthened the relations with social partners and have developed cooperation with Institutions that are related to the PSP of Political Science and Sociology. The Director of the PSP has also provided information about the activities of different committees of the Programme, the intended learning outcomes of the courses, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the learning opportunities available to their students and the degree awarded.

## **II. Analysis**

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the EAAP verified the procedures adopted by the Director of the PSP, the Department and MODIP, concerning the different dimensions of the PSP and the planning of their actions in order to fulfil the possible suggestions for the improvement of the PSP.

Some of these procedures and actions are:

- An extensive analysis of the results of the evaluation and the recommendations of the EAAP in the context of the functioning of the OMEA, the Department and the implementation team of the PSP in Political Science and Sociology. The results of the external evaluation will be used for the continuous improvement of the PSP in Political Science and Sociology.
- Special Meeting of the Steering Committee for the findings of the external evaluation within two months of their communication in order to harmonise the operation of the PSP with the recommendations of the Committee.
- The disclosure of the content of the Committee's recommendations and suggestions, as well as the full text of the Report of the EAAP (Rector's authorities, faculty members, EDIP, the Head of the Department, the Director of the PSP).

- A creation of a comprehensive action plan to incorporate the accepted observations of the EAAP.
- A continuous monitoring by the Director of the PSP and the OMEA of the Department of the implementation of the EAAP's recommendations in the timetable set.
- If major, and not minor, issues arise from the external evaluation in relation to the structure, content, and operation of the PSP, a joint meeting is convened of the two founding sectors of the PSP, the Discipline of Political Science and the Discipline of Social Theory and Sociology, in order to address them.

### III. Conclusions

This is the first external evaluation of the PSP in the context of HAHE, so there is no track record of prior recommendations. Nevertheless, the discussions with the faculty indicated that they understand and value the importance of such external reviews and are receptive to recommendations to improve their programme and showed a positive attitude towards addressing recommendations. The EAAP believes that the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of the NKUA, the procedures adopted by the Director of the PSP, the Department and MODIP constitute a strong guarantee for the implementation of the possible suggestions of the EAAP.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

None.

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

### **I. Features of Good Practice**

- The Programme has put in place robust internal monitoring systems to consistently assess and enhance the Programme's quality. This includes the implementation of precise key performance indicators, attainment targets, defined timeframes, and assigned responsibilities.
- The teaching methods, structure and content of courses are monitored and improved on an annual basis if necessary.
- The teachers of the PSP possess significant teaching experience at the postgraduate level and overall high scientific quality.
- The adequacy of the resources and infrastructure required for the implementation of the Programme and the feedback of teachers are ensured.
- The annual student enrolment is relatively low, enabling the programme and the Department to offer personalised support and address each student's unique needs effectively. This student-centred approach also promotes collaboration and interactions among students.

### **II. Areas of Weakness**

- The two specialisations offered by the PSP are not differentiated to a satisfactory extent.
- The strategic aims and targets are, in some cases, set at low levels. This is especially the case for the percentage of women teaching at the Programme and the participation of academics in international conferences.
- Both the Greek and the English version of the website require an update based on the provision of additional information (e.g. information on faculty members).
- A serious problem lies in the small number of students participating in the evaluation of courses, resulting in a small number of electronic questionnaires answered, while for some courses no answers appear at all.
- In some cases, a long time is recorded for the delivery of the PSP dissertation, resulting in delays in the award of the postgraduate degree. Moreover, there is room for improvement in relation to the monitoring of quality of the dissertation.

- There is room for improvement in academic staff publications in international peer-reviewed journals, which is necessary to posit the work of the programme to the wider research community beyond Greece.

### **III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions**

- Measures should be taken to improve the structure of the Programme and differentiate the two specialisations.
- Some strategic aims and targets should be revised in order to set more ambitious goals (especially in the percentage of women teaching at the Programme and faculty participation in international conferences).
- The Programme and the Department should consider alternative ways to increase the faculty's international scientific collaborations and mobility.
- Overall, the teaching staff of the programme has good scientific training and a remarkable research presence in Greece and abroad. The EEAP believes that their performance in scientific research should be based to a greater degree on internationally recognised systems of scientific evaluation (e.g., Google Scholar, Scopus, etc.). The Programme staff should aim for publishing their research work in international peer-reviewed journals to present the work of the Programme to the wider research community beyond Greece.
- Measures must be taken to improve the monitoring and the quality of the Thesis.
- It is necessary to take measures in order to increase the participation of students in the evaluation process, which is currently at a very low level. The use of paper-assessment questionnaires could be considered.
- The Programme needs to improve and enrich the English version of the website in order to promote its work to the international community and increase its visibility and internationalisation.



#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

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

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **2.**

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

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

Overall Judgement	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname	Signature
<b>1. Prof. Emer. Athanasios Gagatsis (Chair)</b> University of Cyprus, Department of Education, Nicosia, Cyprus	
<b>2. Prof. Emer. Mary Ioannidou-Koutselini</b> University of Cyprus, Department of Education, Nicosia, Cyprus	
<b>3. Prof. Maria Eliophotou-Menon</b> University Cyprus, Department of Education, Nicosia, Cyprus	
<b>4. Konstantinos Vagiatis</b> Postgraduate Student, Department of Sociology, University of Aegean, Greece	