Accreditation Report

for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

e-Business and Digital Marketing

Department: School of Science & Technology

Institution: International Hellenic University

Date: 11 November 2023

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Postgraduate Study Programme of **e-Business and Digital Marketing** of the **International Hellenic University** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I.   The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the postgraduate study programme of e-Business and Digital Marketing of the International Hellenic University comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. **Prof. Nikias Sarafoglou (Chair)**
    George Mason University, Virginia, USA

2. **Prof. Dimitris Petmezas**
    University of Durham, Durham, UK

3. **Prof. Polymeros Chrysochou**
    Århus University, Denmark

4. **Prof. Sotiris Georganas**
    City University London, UK

5. **Mrs. Protonotariou Elisavet**
    Athens University of Economics and Business, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

HAHE is organising the remotely review for the academic accreditation of the following: PSP International Hellenic University – MSc in e-Business and Digital Marketing, from 06/11/23 to 11/11/23.

Meeting with the Director of the PSP, the Head of the Department,

MODIP, Steering Committees/ OMEA members.

- Assoc. Prof. Christos Tjortjis, Director of PSP and Head of the Department of Science and Technology.
- Prof. Panayiotis Bozanis, OMEA member of the Dept. and Steering Committee of PSP.
- Assoc. Prof. Dimitrios Tzetzis, OMEA member of the Dept. Steering Committee
- of PSP.
- Assist. Prof. Spiridon Papakostas, OMEA member of the Dept. Steering Committee
- of PSP.

Meeting with the teaching staff of the PSP

- Assoc. Prof. Vasileios Peristeras
- Assoc. Prof. Konstantinos Asimakopoulos
- Dr. Aikaterini Tzafilkou
- Dr. Dimitrios Karapiperis
- Dr. Paraskevas Koukaras

Meeting with students of the PSP

The evaluation procedure was well structured, thus enabling the EEAP members to form a good picture of the programme.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The International Hellenic University (IHU) is a public, multicampus university located in 9 Greek cities (Thermi, Sindos, Kavala, Serres, Drama, Katerini, Edessa, Kilkis, Didymoteicho).

The IHU was initially established in 2005 in Thermi. It was Greece's first public university where lessons taught exclusively in English.

The IHU was reformed in 2019, by incorporating three Technological Education Institutions (TEIs) from Macedonia and Thrace. The administrative headquarters are located in the city of Thermi.

The IHU is home to nine schools and 33 departments. The IHU is still in a transition phase.

Key statistics:

- Number of FTE students: 59,370
- No. of students per staff: 38.0
- Percentage of International Students: 2%

- *World University Rankings*

Today, the IHU is one of the largest Greek universities. The IHU's funding configuration is determined by the government.

The MSc in E-Business and Digital Marketing is being offered by the School of Science & Technology of the University Centre of International Programmes of Studies of the IHU. The 18-month course will appeal to graduates pursuing a career in entrepreneurial, managerial and marketing positions in the emergent creative economy.

The courses of the programme are taught exclusively in English.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

- *Quality Assurance Policy of the PSP*

- *Quality goal setting of the PSP*

Study Programme Compliance

I.   Findings

The quality assurance policy of each academic unit is in line with the Institutional policy on quality and which is included in a published statement that is implemented by all

stakeholders. It focuses on continuous improvement of the quality of the study programme and its educational, research and administrative work.

The academic unit commits itself to quality procedures that will demonstrate:

a) the suitability of the structure and organization of the curriculum.

b) the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education.

c) the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching.

d) the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff.

e) the enhancement of the quality and quantity of the research output among faculty members of the academic unit.

f) ways to link teaching and research.

g) the level of demand for qualifications acquired by graduates in the labour market.

h) the quality of support services such as administrative services, the Library and the student welfare office.

i) Research Ethics and of the Ethics Committee.

II.   **Analysis**

Faculty research should be evaluated by using bibliometric indicators: journal's impact factor, citations etc. The use of bibliometric indicators should generate publications in higher quality academic journals.

III.   **Conclusions**

The PSP offers a modern and a high-quality degree in MSc. The PSP has implemented an effective Quality Assurance Policy.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

We suggest the use of bibliometrics for better publications.

PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN **A**ND **A**PPROVAL **O**F **P**OSTGRADUATE **S**TUDY **P**ROGRAMMES

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

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

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

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

In addition, the design of PSP must consider:

- *the Institutional strategy*

- *the active involvement of students*

- *the experience of external stakeholders from the labour market*

- *the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) for level 7*

- *the option of providing work experience to students*

- *the linking of teaching and research*

- *the relevant regulatory framework and the official procedure for the approval of the PSP by the Institution*

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

Documentation
- *Senate decision for the establishment of the PSP*

- *PSP curriculum structure: courses, course categories, ECTS awarded, expected learning outcomes according to the EQF, internship, mobility opportunities*

- *Labour market data regarding the employment of graduates, international experience in a relevant scientific field*

- *PSP Student Guide*

- *Course and thesis outlines*

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

Study Programme Compliance

I.   Findings

The duration of the programme is 1.5 years (full-time) or 2.5 years (part-time).

Teaching takes place in English, which is unique for the public universities in Greece. The Department has developed and integrated postgraduate curriculum enhancing laboratory studies, the use of IT-tools, the utilization of e-classes and the creation of quality culture. The PSP provides postgraduate students with skills that could be applied in the professional work. This PSP in E-business and Digital Marketing generates a value added for students with different backgrounds.

The Departmental programme develops learning outcomes of the programme of studies in collaboration with stakeholders, by using educational visits in local businesses.

The internationalization of the higher education is very important in worldwide contemporary society.

II.   Analysis

The Erasmus+ programme could be utilized more, both for students and the teachers. But the other programme AIESEC does not exists which is obvious shortcoming!

AIESEC is an acronym for Association Internationale des Étudiants en Sciences Économiques et Commerciales. By now, over 230,000 experiences have been provided. Finally, AISEC promotes and drives youth participation in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

III.   Conclusions

The demographic profile of the students in this PSP is between 25 to 45 years old with a work and a family. It is obvious that the internationalization is not so important for them, but their future work might be international. The Erasmus+ or AISEC programmes could be significant experiences in their lives!

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Establish an Advisory Board, to develop the links with industry and other stakeholders.

- The internationalization of the PSP should be developed.

- The department should increase the response rate in quality surveys.

PRINCIPLE 3: Student-Centred Learning, Teaching, And Assessment

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE THAT POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES PROVIDE THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE LEARNING PROCESS. THE ASSESSMENT METHODS SHOULD REFLECT THIS APPROACH.

Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in enhancing students' motivation, their self-evaluation, and their active participation in the learning process. The above entail continuous consideration of the programme's delivery and the assessment of the related outcomes.

The student-centred learning and teaching process

- *respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs by adopting flexible learning paths*
- *considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate*
- *flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods*
- *regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods aiming at improvement*
- *regularly evaluates the quality and effectiveness of teaching, as documented especially through student surveys*
- *strengthens the student's sense of autonomy, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teaching staff*
- *promotes mutual respect in the student-teacher relationship*
- *applies appropriate procedures for dealing with the students' complaints*
- *provides counselling and guidance for the preparation of the thesis*

In addition
- *The academic staff are familiar with the existing examination system and methods and are supported in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The assessment criteria and methods are published in advance. The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Student assessment is conducted by more than one examiner, where possible.*
- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and conducted in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *The function of the academic advisor runs smoothly.*

Documentation
- *Sample of a fully completed questionnaire for the evaluation of the PSP by the students*

- *Regulations for dealing with students' complaints and appeals*

- *Regulation for the function of academic advisor*

- *Reference to the teaching modes and assessment methods*

Study Programme Compliance

I. **Findings**

The e-Business and Digital Marketing programme, totalling 90 ECTS, can be completed within 3 semesters on a full-time basis or 5 semesters on a part-time basis. In the final

semester, students undertake a thesis worth 30 ECTS. Lectures mainly take place on weekday evenings (usually after 5pm), and on Saturday and/or Sunday mornings. The programme is offered as hybrid allowing students to follow lectures online, with only requirement of a physical presence during the exams.

The programme is among the few programmes in Greece offered in English. The English language allows the programme to attract international students. However, the number of international students is very low (the relevant indicator is 0.06%). During the EAAP meetings it was not clear if the strategy was to increase the intake of international students and how, although the target value is set to increase to 5%.

The main aim of the programme is to equip graduates with in-depth, up-to-date knowledge in their fields so they can use it effectively in their jobs. Graduates are also expected to have strong theoretical, and adaptability skills to keep up with the ever-changing demands of e-business. The teaching content is of good quality, however, from the course descriptions it was not clear to the committee members how much they are adapted to the dynamic nature of the technology.

Course evaluations take place close to the end of each course. During the EAAP meetings and the assessment of material provided to the committee, it was noted that student evaluations concerning study material was sufficient (mean 4.3/5.0). However, it was not clear what specific roadmap and action are taken to meet the target of 4.6/5.0. Course evaluations are discussed in the department council, but they are not discussed with students.

The teaching approach is student-centred, and the programme offers a variety of teaching methods (e.g., tutorials, case studies). Some courses are more practical, but in the discussion with students the general feeling was that there is more emphasis on theory and less opportunities are offered to students to be engaged with and exposed to practical problems. Thus, more emphasis on introducing cases studies, guest speakers from industry, company days/events, and collaboration with research labs would be necessary.

The programme supports career development through a dedicated career office. However, most students already work, and thus their role is rather redundant. It should be noted that since students take lectures in the afternoon access to such facilities is not possible (including secretariat, library) as those operate within working hours.

International exchange opportunities are possible, but it seems that students do not take this option (mainly for personal reasons). Some emphasis should be put in promoting such opportunities for the students, for example, through the Erasmus program.

In discussions, the EAAP members found that current students and graduates of the programme expressed high satisfaction with the teaching and learning process. They particularly appreciated the approachability, mentoring, and professional interaction with faculty. However, an alumni association for its graduates is not formed. Such alumni could strengthen a sense of community building and support connections with the industry.

The building facilities are suitable, and accessible for persons with disabilities. The rooms are well equipped to support the teaching requirements. In meetings with students, the EAAP members received positive feedback regarding building facilities and the overall environment. In a similar vein, students expressed their satisfaction with the online teaching

platform. However, given that lectures take place in the afternoons the access to the campus is not easy with public transportation, while canteens are not open (in fact, there is no canteen).

II. Analysis

The programme prominently features a student-centred learning approach, permeating every facet of its design. This approach is underpinned by the unwavering commitment of the faculty to support students in their academic journey, fostering a closely-knit student-faculty interaction. This engagement has not gone unnoticed, as students have expressed their satisfaction with the mentoring they receive from faculty members. Perhaps the hybrid approach and the fact that several students follow the lectures from distance does not support engagement. Nevertheless, it was expressed by faculty members that several students prefer to participate in person.

The programme actively seeks and values student input through the administration of satisfaction surveys. This practice underscores a genuine concern for students' opinions and a readiness to address their study-related issues. This demonstrates a proactive approach to enhancing the overall learning experience. In summary, the programme excels in its student-centric approach, faculty support, transparency in assessment, and responsiveness to student feedback.

III. Conclusions

The programme's strength is that it is being offered in English which acts as competitive advantage for its graduates. The employability of students is high, which also mirrors the right positioning of the programme, and the good level and high relevance of the educational content. By continuing to maintain this strong student-faculty interaction and responsiveness to evolving educational needs, the programme not only upholds its commitment to excellence but also paves the way for a bright and dynamic future in the field of e-business.

Overall, the programme is underpinned by a resolute commitment to a student-centred approach, fostering a learning environment where mutual respect between students and faculty thrives.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R3.1 Consider emphasizing more practical content by introducing cases studies, guest speakers from industry, company days/events.

R3.2 Seek richer qualitative feedback from student evaluations by following up with them on the evaluation results of each course.

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**

Based on the documents provided to the Panel, there are well outlined procedures with respect to all phases of studies (admission, progression, recognition of studies and certification).

Throughout the study period the student progression is monitored by the academic advisor as well as the academic staff that teaches the courses. The course sequence ensures that the students acquire the necessary knowledge to take the more advanced courses in subsequent semesters. There are mostly group assignments and exams in place. The student assessment allows the students to demonstrate what they have learnt. Several meetings with students are conducted to ensure that the progression is smooth and to resolve any potential problems faced by the students. Finally, the Panel was able to confirm that a formal procedure for student appeals is in place.

The program also offers seminars on researching and writing the master's thesis. There is also a well-defined set of quality requirements for the implementation of the thesis and a Thesis handbook available. There is also a well-defined code of research ethics.

Currently, there is not an established External Business Advisory Board. There are scholarship opportunities for up to 30% of total admissions.

With regards to progression, 100% of the registered students graduate within the expected study tenure. With regards to marking distribution, the 62.8% of students received their master's average score between 8 and 9 out of 10.

The master's degree applies and recognises the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) consistently across the curriculum and is in line and harmonised with international guidelines. The students should receive, in total, 90 ECTS to obtain their master's degree (with 10 courses of 6 ECTS credits each and a thesis dissertation which accounts for 30 ECTS credits).

Furthermore, the Department provides the diploma supplement in both Greek and English language that officially recognizes and certifies the skills and knowledge acquired, the context within which the culmination of knowledge took place as well as the status of the studies.

Apart from the Erasmus+ programme opportunities the department has not signed an MOU with a foreign institution, which could further facilitate students' mobility.

II. Analysis

The Department has established well-defined admission criteria. There is a highly structured process for newly admitted students from the point of entry (welcome week) where students are welcomed and provided with guidance and activities related to the question of managing their transition from their bachelor's studies to the Master's studies.

The students become aware of the facilities provided by the University which is communicated by both the academic and administrative staff. This procedure ensures that new students have a smooth transition.

In addition, the Department has institutionalised the role of academic advisors as a supplementary contact point. The academic advisor informs, discusses and advises students regarding the structure and curriculum of the program in order to optimize performance in the program's examinations, the syllabus/student guide and outlines of the elective courses, the job placement opportunities, and available liaisons with the labour markets.

III. Conclusions

Very good procedures with respect to all phases of studies (admission, progression, recognition of studies and certification). Lack of internship opportunities and of an external advisory board.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Panel encourages the Department to seek for collaborations with companies which could offer internship opportunities for the students. The internship can be offered as an option in the third semester (instead of a dissertation).

The Panel encourages the Programme team to seek the opportunity of creating an External Advisory Board.

The Panel encourages the Programme team to seek for collaborations with foreign institutions by signing MOUs, which can further facilitate students' (and staff) mobility.

PRINCIPLE 5: TEACHING STAFF OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ASSURE THEMSELVES OF THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF THEIR TEACHING STAFF, AND APPLY FAIR AND TRANSPARENT PROCESSES FOR THEIR RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.

> *The Institution should attend to the adequacy of the teaching staff of the academic unit teaching at the PSP, the appropriate staff-student ratio, the appropriate staff categories, the appropriate subject areas, the fair and objective recruitment process, the high research performance, the training-development, the staff development policy (including participation in mobility schemes, conferences, and educational leaves-as mandated by law).*
>
> *More specifically, the academic unit should set up and follow clear, transparent and fair processes for the recruitment of properly qualified staff for the PSP and offer them conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching and research; offer opportunities and promote the professional development of the teaching staff; encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research; encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies; promote the increase of the volume and quality of the research output within the academic unit; follow quality assurance processes for all staff (with respect to attendance requirements, performance, self-assessment, training, etc.); develop policies to attract highly qualified academic staff.*

Documentation
- *Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment*
- *Employment regulations or contracts, and obligations of the teaching staff*
- *Policy for staff support and development*
- *Individual performance of the teaching staff in scientific-research and teaching work, based on internationally recognised systems of scientific evaluation (e.g. Google Scholar, Scopus, etc.)*
- *List of teaching staff including subject areas, employment relationship, Institution of origin, Department of origin*

Study Programme Compliance

I.   **Findings**

The instructors are mainly academics from Greece.

Their accomplishments in the field consist of both instructional and research endeavours.

The selection of the teaching staff of the PSP is transparent and with merit-based criteria, according to law 4957/2022 for the postgraduate programs of study and the PSP operational manual (A12). These merit-based criteria relate to the candidate's command of the topic to be taught, the quality and the number of publications, teaching and research experience, service to the department.

The Department supports the research activities of its faculty, which it also deems as conducive to better instructional capabilities down the road.

Sabbatical educational leaves in Greece or abroad are allowed (one semester every three years) within the legislative framework (a recent sabbatical was at the University of Chicago, one of the top research universities in the US in the field).

Staff mobility is also supported by allowing short-term visits to foreign universities abroad.

Gaps created by sabbaticals are covered by temporary visiting lecturers.

The average workload of the departmental DEP members in the undergraduate program of study is 4 courses without counting any lab work and grading, bringing the total teaching hours to the Greek standard of 156.

There is no specific linkage of teaching and research mentioned, but members of staff have mentioned they give students research papers along the standard textbooks, as reading material.

The instructor's evaluation by the students is accomplished via electronic surveys within a special MODIP platform. These electronic surveys are activated by the instructors and according to the directives of MODIP, during the last three weeks of the course, and the students can anonymously evaluate the instructor, and the course per se by filling the survey

in the specific website.

The survey includes 37 questions on a scale 1 to 5 and relate to:

1. The course (purpose, material organization, quality of teaching materials, difficulty level).

2. The tests, and term papers (topic, comments, and instructor guidance)

3. The instructor (organization and delivery of the lectures, responses to questions, professionalism, and availability to the students)

4. EDIP's contribution to the course

5. The labs (level of difficulty, notes, equipment)

6. The student (attendance and individual response to the academic obligations)

The average mark of the courses has been above 4 so there has not been a need to replace lecturers.

There is no merit system in place mentioned to measure the contribution of each faculty member in the areas of teaching, research, and service, other than the average evaluation score undertaken by the students. Such a system could reveal strengths and weaknesses of

the group and allow for better allocation of resources and a more efficient use of the human capital and research potential of the department.

Finally, regarding promotions are decided on the basis of publications and grants by ad hoc selection committees and positions are open to academics outside the department. There are no specific guidelines regarding publication quantity or quality.

II. Analysis

The Postgraduate program (PSP) E-business & Digital marketing at DIPAE/IHU ensures a level of knowledge and skills of their teaching staff and applies transparent and merit-based processes for faculty recruitment, training, and further development.

Supporting the professional development of the faculty in order to improve their teaching capabilities leads to sustainability of the programme.

III.   Conclusions

We conclude that the Postgraduate program (PSP) E-business & Digital marketing at DIPAE/IHU is fully compliant with the requirements of Principle 5.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R5.1 A merit system should be in place to measure the contribution of each faculty member in the areas of teaching, research, and service. Such a system could reveal strengths and

weaknesses of the group and allow for better allocation of resources and a more efficient use of the human capital and research potential of the department.

R5.2 For hiring and promotions, the department could specify a set of guidelines.

This can include general rules regarding indices that will be used (do citations matter?) but also the ranking of the scientific journals in the field (could use general recursive impact factors, or more precise lists such as the ABS ranking).

PRINCIPLE 6: Learning Resources And Student Support

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER THE TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS OF THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMME. THEY SHOULD –ON THE ONE HAND- PROVIDE SATISFACTORY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR LEARING AND STUDENT SUPPORT, AND – ON THE OTHER HAND- FACILITATE DIRECT ACCESS TO THEM BY ESTABLISHING INTERNAL RULES TO THIS END (E.G. LECTURE ROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, NETWORKS, 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 Panel had a virtual tour at the Campus. The Panel also virtually observed an auditorium, a lecture room, (these are fitted with reasonably modern teaching equipment), as well as the University library. Most of the students informed us that they mostly make use of the online resources of the library. The Panel also virtually visited the offices of the student support services. Nevertheless, it should be noted that student needs are also served online. Additionally, students have the facility to request books located in the library of a different city, which can be delivered to them.

Apart from the virtual tour, we have also asked for the opinion of the students about the facilities and infrastructure, and they were, generally, very happy with them, apart from the

fact that there is not any restaurant/canteen available, so they requested to have at least a vending machine, as well as that the library is open until 4pm (outside their teaching hours).

During the Panel's virtual visit, it was noted that provisions have been taken to serve individuals with special mobility needs (e.g., existence of elevators and stair rails). Panel discussions revealed that students with other physical and/or learning disabilities (i.e., sight issues and dyslexia) have access to special examination provisions.

The Panel has been informed by students about other services offered by the University: for instance, student international mobility services (ERASMUS). Additionally, there are career events organized for the students. Moreover, the administrative team regularly informs students about job offerings, which are made by companies in Greece that are interested in students with the background of those who attend the MSc program.

II.   **Analysis**

Students receive the relevant material of the courses via an online platform (Moodle). The Panel also virtually observed one of the computer labs (with capacity of 30 students) in which the computers are fitted with reasonably good software. For example, students have access to XAMPP, WordPress, Virtual Studio Code, RStudio, PSPP, PowerBI etc.

Students become aware of the services and available facilities from the beginning of their studies and these services are functional and easily accessed by the students. In general, there was evidence of sufficient and competent administrative staff to ensure the smooth operation of the student support services.

III.   **Conclusions**

Overall, the Panel believes that the Department's students have access to satisfactory infrastructure and services for learning and student support.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations
- The Panel suggests that the department increases the opening hours of the library/admin support for the students of the programme after 4pm.

- To open a canteen or offer a vending machine to students.

PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

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

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

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

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

- *key performance indicators*

- *student population profile*

- *student progression, success, and drop-out rates*

- *student satisfaction with their programmes*

- *availability of learning resources and student support*

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

Documentation
- *Report from the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) at the level of the Institution, the department, and the PSP*

- *Operation of an information management system for the collection of administrative data for the implementation of the PSP (Students' Record)*

- *Other tools and procedures designed to collect data on the academic and administrative functions of the academic unit and the PSP*

Study Programme Compliance

> **I.   Findings**

The academic unit has put in place established procedures for the collection of data regarding its student body and teaching methods. Work is needed as to the monitoring of the employability and career paths of the PSP's graduates. Data should also be made more accessible, for example with the use of graphs.

> **II.   Analysis**

The Unit has in place established procedures for the collection of data regarding its student body and teaching methods. The PSP's staff and leadership also know their student body

and can use the available data as well as their empirical knowledge. Student satisfaction surveys are regularly conducted and a serious effort has been made with a view to soliciting student participation in evaluation processes. Additional work must be done with a view to collecting, organising and presenting data concerning the employability and career paths of the PSP's graduates. Additionally, the PSP would benefit from making data more intelligible and easier to use (for example, with the use of graphs demonstrating trends and drawing comparisons).

III. Conclusions

The Unit has demonstrated a good understanding of the PSP's actual operation and adequate ability in information management. However, more can and should be done, for example with a view to data collection/processing regarding the PSP's graduates.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Improve the internal processes for data collection and information management

- Improve data collection regarding to the employability and career paths of graduates

- Make use of graphs and other tools supporting the evaluation of relevant data

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 website is a necessary element for the publicity of the teachers and academic activities concerning the program in a direct and accessible way.

II. **Analysis**

The program has a specialised area on its bilingual website where clarity, completeness and objectivity provides the information that is necessary to inform the interested parties. At the same time the website is constantly updated and maintained so that students can be at any time aware of the events of the program.

III. **Conclusions**

As conclusions, we mention the need for continuous orientation of the students and the establishment of a communication link with the university, which can be achieved through the continually informed and highly accessible website.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

As technology evolves, there are possibilities for development for the program's website as well. The website could be made more interactive so that students can be informed with notifications on their mobile phone and communicate with the university's secretariat.

PRINCIPLE 9: ON-GOING **M**ONITORING **A**ND **P**ERIODIC **I**NTERNAL **E**VALUATION **O**F **P**OSTGRADUATE **S**TUDY **P**ROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS AND ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR THE AUDIT AND ANNUAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF THEIR POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES, SO AS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES SET FOR THEM, THROUGH MONITORING AND POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS, WITH A VIEW TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

The regular monitoring, review, and revision of postgraduate study programmes aim at maintaining the level of educational provision and creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

The above comprise the evaluation of:

a) *the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the PSP is up to date*

b) *the changing needs of society*

c) *the students' workload, progression and completion of the postgraduate studies*

d) *the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students*

e) *the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*

f) *the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the PSP in question*

Postgraduate study programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date.

Documentation
- *Procedure for the re-evaluation, redefinition and updating of the PSP curriculum*

- *Procedure for mitigating weaknesses and upgrading the structure of the PSP and the learning process*

- *Feedback processes concerning the strategy and quality goal setting of the PSP and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*

- *Results of the annual internal evaluation of the PSP by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), and the relevant minutes*

Study Programme Compliance

I.   **Findings**

The quality assurance policy of the PSP Department is in harmony with the policy of quality of MODIP (Μονάδα Διασφάλισης Ποιότητας/Quality Assurance Unit) of the University, which is the central coordinating body of quality assurance and evaluation procedures for all departments. It aims to support the people and assessment processes of the Department on the achievement of its general strategic objectives, and in particular: the cultivation of academic and professional

excellence of students, excellence in faculty research and distinction in education excellence.

The programme is evaluated, both internally (according to law 3374/2005) and externally (by HAHE as done presently).

II. Analysis

In the PSP Master, the process, and procedures of developing and assessing the internal quality assurance policy constitute a participatory process of all members of the PSP's teaching, administrative and technical staff.

The main means of improving Quality Assurance is the continuous monitoring, evaluation, development, and revision of the PSP Curriculum as the socio-political and economic trends evolve on a global scale. The design and constant redesign and implementation of a quality PSP Program is fundamental for its continuous improvement.

To this end, the Department is committed to the implementation of the Quality Assurance Policy, to strengthen its academic character and improve the quality of the education provided, on an ongoing basis. The implementation of the quality policy of the PSP Program includes the following control procedures which are continuously recorded, evaluated, and assessed: the Programme of Studies based on its strategic orientation; the Learning Outcomes in accordance with the European and National Higher Education Qualifications Framework; the quality and effectiveness of the teaching by the Faculty; the suitability of each Faculty's knowledge field; the quality and quantity of academic research; the linkage of teaching with research; the student qualifications in relation to the labour market; the quality of support services and finally, the quality of procedures which evaluate the educational and research results of every academic year.

III Conclusions

The EEAP found these internal monitoring, periodic assessment practices are continuously recorded, evaluated, and appraised and result in effective and productive outcomes, with beneficial results for the PSP program. The various findings are shared within the academic unit using distinct procedures and processes resulting in action plans which are implemented in a timely fashion. The EEAP has seen enough evidence to confirm that these instituted practices are well established, and it believes that the guiding standards of HQA's.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R9.1 Distinctly and transparently publicize internally the procedure for the internal

program review, as well as its relation and comparison with the forthcoming and past exter-nal

reviews.

R9.2 Distinctly and transparently publicize externally the results of internal program quality

reviews in the English version especially to external stakeholders (alumni,

employers of graduates).

R9.3 Establish a formal and structured external advisory board that would provide valuable

feedback for the sustainability of the PSP program.

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 programme since the reform in 2019. The programme had gone through an evaluation about 10 years ago, and at that time it had received a positive evaluation. Currently, there are proper internal procedures are in place, something that was evident to the EAAP members during the meetings.

The departments that were merged had also gone through an external evaluation prior to the reform. However, it was not clear to the EAAP members if any of the recommendations related to this programme, and if so, what changes were made.

II. **Analysis**

The external evaluation before the reform mentioned above has not been followed by a more recent evaluation of the program. However, it may be noted that it could help if the programme appeared in some national and international rankings.

III. **Conclusions**

This is the first external evaluation since the reform in 2019. The staff are aware of the necessity of the external evaluation and the challenges.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Consider efforts to place the programme to international and national ranking lists.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I.   Features of Good Practice

- This is a unique programme offering lectures in English that has the potential to attract international students. The English language also adds a comparative advantage for its graduates.
- The well-qualified faculty makes the PSP a strong attraction for prospective students.
- Faculty is easily accessible.

II.   Areas of Weakness

- Limited number of collaborations with foreign institutions.
- The programme lacks a closer attachment to the industry and in some courses, there is a need to bring in more case studies.
- The University seems to offer similar degree programmes (e.g., Digital Marketing in Kavala) that if they do not necessarily compete with each other, some synergies could be created.

- Erasmus+ and AIESEC exchanges are very limited.
- The research output and quality could be increased by using bibliometric indicators of research.

III.   Recommendations for follow-up Actions

- Develop an alumni strategy.
- Build an alumni community of graduates that can support the programme. The alumni can also help in decisions made for the programme and support link with the industry.

- Seek collaborations with foreign institutions.
- Erasmus+ and AISEC exchanges must be increased.
- Utilize bibliometrics for the research output and research quality.
- Develop strategies that will engage the industry with the programme. For example, establish an Advisory Board, invite guest lecturers from the industry, invite companies to propose topics for the final thesis or the consulting project.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, and 10.**

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

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

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname   **Signature**

1. **Prof. Nikias Sarafoglou (Chair)**
   George Mason University, Virginia, USA

2. **Prof. Dimitris Petmezas**
   University of Durham, Durham, UK

3. **Prof. Polymeros Chrysochou**
    Århus University, Denmark

4. **Prof. Sotiris Georganas**
   City University London, UK

5. **Mrs. Protonotariou Elisavet**
   Athens University of Economics and Business, Greece