



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Accreditation Report

for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Data Science

Institution: International Hellenic University

Date: November 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 **Data Science** 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 **Data Science** 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 Angelos Stefanidis (Chair)**
Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, China

- 2. Prof Panagiota Morfouli**
Grenoble INP-UGA, France

- 3. Prof Michael Komodromos**
Frederick University, Cyprus

- 4. Prof Yani Skarlatos**
Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey

- 5. PhD Candidate, Rizos-Theodoros Chadoulis**
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) attended a series of online meetings with the leadership of the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP), the Internal Evaluation Committee (OMEA) for the Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) of Data Science at the School of Science and Technology of the International Hellenic University (IHU).

The meetings took place between Monday, October 30th and Wednesday, November 1, 2023, as a part of the remote External Evaluation Panel Review for the academic accreditation of the said PSP.

The EEAP was warmly welcomed by the Dean of the School and Programme Director, Professor Christos Tjortjis, who also serves as the Director of the Cybersecurity PSP and the PSP in Data Science. MODIP member Prof Phaedra Eleftheriou, together with staff member Ms Chrysi Savvidou, as well as Steering Committee and OMEA members Profs Panayiotis Bozanis, Dimitrios Tzertzis, and Spiridon Papakostas were also present. At the end of the first day, the EEAP requested several supporting documents and information, which MODIP made available the next day. The EEAP expresses its heartfelt thanks to the MODIP representatives for the speedy response to its request.

During the second day of the event (October 31), the panel convened with a range of stakeholders from the PSP in Cybersecurity. These included faculty members, as well as current and former students, employers, and social partners of the PSP. On the following day (November 1), the panel engaged in fruitful discussions with counterparts from the PSP in Data Science.

During the discussions, students shared their unique insights regarding their academic journey. They offered their perspectives on the PSP's framework, the obstacles they have encountered, and their overall experiences at the University. The graduate students who partook in the programme were questioned on their integration into their respective industries and the opportunities available for further education. All graduate participants have secured remarkable opportunities, including pursuing PhD studies or holding esteemed positions in the government or industry.

Additionally, employers and social partners praised their employees from both programs and discussed their professional relationships with the programs. At the end of the meeting cycle, during the third day of the remote visit, the EEAP met with the programme director and the Steering Committee/OMEA members and offered a summary of the preliminary findings.

The report hereafter presents the collective findings of the EEAP based on the two-day meetings, shared documentation provided by the PSP, the private discussions between sessions, and email communications with MODIP.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The PSP in Data Science was established in 2015, and after several revisions, it is firmly established within the School of Science and Technology (ΦΕΚ Β-1059/10-03-2022). The programme aims to train students to be employed as data scientists, business intelligence analysts, data engineers or architects, and other technology-specialised roles. It offers a three-semester MSc degree (five in case of part-time attendance) that corresponds to 90 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits. Sixty of those ECTS credits come from courses (10 courses of 6 Credit Units each), and the remaining 30 are from completing a thesis. Eight of the ten courses (i.e., 48 out of the 60 Credit Units) must be from the core courses. The remaining 12 Credit Units (2 courses) can be chosen from the full range of courses offered by the MSc programme.

The dissertation thesis takes place during the 3rd semester (fall semester of the 2nd year) and carries thirty (30) credits (ECTS). The medium of instruction is English, and candidates for the programme must demonstrate adequate language proficiency in addition to the prescribed entry-level qualification criteria.

In 2021, there were 19 students enrolled in the programme, supported by a faculty of nine full- and part-time academic staff. Eight students had graduated in that year.

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

A Quality Assurance Policy has been established to support the PSP of MSc in Data Science (Doc A2) and ensure the programme's quality. This document reflects the broader quality policy of the IHU by affirming the commitment of the academic unit to establishing,

maintaining, monitoring, and improving the relevant quality assurance mechanisms employed for the PSP. It also defines the implementation of these mechanisms through the setting of goals for continuous improvement with monitoring and evaluation on an annual basis, collection and analysis of data relevant to quality assurance, as well as the management of financial resources.

The financial resources drawn from tuition and other funding sources are fully utilised for the financial support of students and the procurement of goods and services intended to improve the quality of the educational provision and student experience.

Provisions have been made to investigate the graduates' nature and level of attractiveness by the corresponding job market.

II. Analysis

MODIP is monitoring and enforcing quality assurance. The coordination committee of the PSP and the department administration are managing the whole process. Annual internal audits are foreseen. The last evaluation took place in January 2023. The quality data that had been collected were analysed. Strong and weak points were noted, and improvements/corrective actions were proposed. No intended completion date was set. (Docs. A8, A3, A18). The quality policy of the unit has been published on its website, and the adopted goals have been listed.

Academic staff maintain a positive attitude towards quality assurance evaluation. EEAP's discussion with students indicates a high degree of satisfaction with quality assurance. The students confirmed their views on the quality, relevance, responsiveness, and appropriateness of the educational provision offered by the academic unit.

An academic advisor to help students with any difficulties they may encounter during their studies is appointed to every student upon enrolment. (Doc. 11)

The faculty encourages students to participate in projects and conduct high-quality research, resulting in journal publications and conference presentations. Students and graduates speak favourably of their experience and express satisfaction with the support they received for transitioning to their professional careers.

The university instituted a service for hearing student complaints in 2020, and professors have been designated to act as advocates for students. (Doc. A10)

A set of measurable goals in connection with teaching methods, student satisfaction, and learning outcomes have been codified in Doc. A3. They are commensurate with Key Performance Indicators and appropriate for Level 7 of the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher education. The degree of attainment of the goals is audited. (Docs. 3, 8)

Ostensibly, occasional reviews of the programme are being performed as part of the preparation for MODIP's annual internal evaluation. However, relevant documentation seems to be scarce.

Moreover, student feedback through course evaluations seems to be relatively small regarding the number of respondents. Faculty members report trying to extract oral feedback during their teaching throughout the academic year.

There is little evidence of using the information gathered from course evaluations, however scarce, to make improvements. Neither is there evidence of attempts to track down graduate career data in a systematic way, as stated in the Quality Assurance Policy statement.

III. Conclusions

The PSP has an established a 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

- Make an effort to systematise and document the information collected about the market demand for professional qualifications expected from the programme's graduates.
- Make an effort to track and document the professional careers of the programme's graduates.
- Ensure that the corrective measures decided during the programme's internal evaluation have materialised.
- Although the annual audit performed in conjunction with MODIP is well documented, periodic internal reviews carried out by the programme administration should be more formalised and better documented.

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

The PSP in Data Science is designed to equip students with the necessary skills to succeed in the broad data science industry, both nationally and internationally. The curriculum is developed in line with the institution's policies and European recommendations and is regularly reviewed and updated in the study guide. The programme is committed to providing high-quality education and research in accordance with the National Administration of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ADIP). The institution's quality assurance unit (MODIP) oversees the programme's internal and external evaluations to ensure continuous improvement.

II. Analysis

The Data Science programme at this institution closely resembles similar programmes at universities in the US and Europe. Its design is based on the needs of both national and international data science markets and meets the standards outlined in Level 7 of the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (Docs. A5, A6, A7).

The programme comprises core courses that establish a common foundation for students from diverse informatics, computer science, electrical engineering, and mathematics/science backgrounds. These courses are followed by specialised courses that prepare students for research and provide in-depth knowledge in relevant subjects. The programme concludes with a thesis based on research in a specialised area.

All necessary documentation, including the senate decision establishing the programme, curriculum, list of teaching staff, study guide, course and thesis descriptions, and success criteria, have been provided (Docs. A04, A05, A06, A07, A14). Annual internal audits of programme operations are conducted in collaboration with MODIP, and data from various sources are analysed to evaluate and improve the educational process.

Periodic revisions of the curriculum, in consultation with internal and external experts, students, graduates, and other stakeholders, are stipulated in the rules of procedures of the PSP approved by the University Senate (Doc. A14). However, the evaluation committee did not find relevant documentation regarding this process.

III. Conclusions

The program has been designed and approved.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The programme is relatively new and has undergone only internal quality assessment so far, while the first external evaluation is currently in progress. Although the design and approval of the programme seem fine on paper, there are surely corrections and/or additions that will have to be made as the programme evolves. In fact, consideration has already been given to the recommendation of the internal assessment report, which mentions eleven points for preventive/corrective action to be taken. (Doc. 08) However, no target date for implementing the recommendations has been set. The unit should be alert and respond to the recommendations of the present report in order to alleviate any problems related to the programme's design.
- The programme should consider measures to increase interaction with students, even though many hold jobs concurrently and are therefore forced to minimise the time of their physical presence in the Department. The objective should be to increase the amount of feedback from students and avoid misunderstandings caused by a feeling of alienation for some of them.
- Although graduates of the programme are satisfied with their employment status and employers appear to be satisfied with their employees, further efforts should be made towards increased cooperation with external partners, who will come up with ideas for the continuous development of the goals and the curriculum of the programme.

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 student-centred orientation of the MSc Programme is mirrored in Paragraph 2 of the first Article of the Internal Regulation.

- Different modes of course delivery (e.g., group and individual exercises, case study analysis, video presentations, learning games, discussions, critical analyses of scientific published studies, lectures using PowerPoint, etc.) are employed where appropriate.
- The MSc Programme provides students with a series of foundation courses and lectures during the first semester. These courses and lectures are tailored to the specific needs and difficulties students may face.
- The course material and the examination methods employed allow for assessing the degree of achievement of the expected learning outcomes. The extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved is also evaluated in the context of the evaluation of the MSc Programme by the students.
- According to Paragraph 7 of Article 12 of the Internal Regulation of the MSc Programme, an academic advisor is assigned to each student right after their enrollment in the MSc Programme. During the meeting of this evaluation committee with a group of students, it became evident that the institution of the academic advisor functions quite well and that students do not hesitate to resort to their academic advisor for advice and guidance.
- During this evaluation committee meeting with a group of students of the MSc Program, it became clear that the students are satisfied with the counselling and guidance they are provided within the context of their thesis.
- The MSc Programme has established and made available a set of regulations and mechanisms for addressing student complaints. Students are entitled to submit an appeal to an Appeal Committee, appointed by the Governing Board, with respect to any decision concerning their status at the University. A student submitting an appeal is invited to exercise his/her right to be heard, according to Article 6 of the Greek Administrative Procedure Code. The Appeal Committee examines any appeals against decisions of the Governing Board and/or the General Assembly of the School according to Article 24 of the Greek Administrative Code of Procedure.

II. Analysis

The findings reported highlighting a commendable commitment to a student-centred approach within the MSc Program. The MSc Program provides all the necessary conditions to encourage students to take an active role in the learning process, and the assessment methods employed in the context of the curriculum reflect that.

III. Conclusions

The MSc program provides all the necessary conditions to encourage students' active involvement in the learning process. Thus, in terms of Principle 3, it is considered to be Fully Compliant.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The MSc Programme could establish an alumni association and organise regular alumni networking events. These events could bring together alumni, current students and faculty, providing opportunities for knowledge exchange, mentorship and professional development.
- The MSc Programme could introduce collaborative software development approaches (e.g., pair coding) in the curriculum, which could further reinforce the learning experience of the students.

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

- All regulatory documents can be accessed on the official MSc Programme web page (<https://st.ihu.gr/studies/postgraduate/datascience/>).
- The student admission procedures and the required supporting documents are described in the Internal Regulations for the operation of the MSc Program.
- The Internal regulation explicitly outlines students' rights and obligations.
- There is no internship according to the curriculum of the programme.
- The procedures and the terms for the drafting and submission of the thesis are described in Article 4 of the Internal Regulations.
- Article 9 of the Internal Regulations for the operation of the MSc Programme addresses the duration of studies. The duration of the full-time study programme in order to obtain the Master's degree is three (3) academic semesters. Students can also attend the programme on a part-time basis. In this case, the duration of the programme will be six (6) academic semesters.
- The MSc Data Science is a postgraduate programme operating within the Department of Science and Technology of the International Hellenic University. According to the university's Internal Regulations, a committee appointed by the university's senate is in charge of coordinating student mobility.
- During the meeting of this evaluation committee with a group of students of the MSc Programme, it became evident that students prioritise finding a job over possible mobility opportunities.

II. Analysis

In general, the admission, progression, thesis drafting, recognition, and certification of the studies are covered in detail, and the corresponding procedures and responsibilities are clearly outlined.

III. Conclusions

In summary, the Internal Regulations offer a thorough framework that encompasses admission, academic progress, thesis preparation, study recognition, certification processes, and clear delineations of the related procedures and responsibilities.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

On the official website of the MSc Programme, one can only find a synopsis of the Internal Regulations. Maybe it would also be useful to provide the posting of the Government Gazette where the Internal Regulations of the MSc Programme were originally published.

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

The selection of the teaching staff of the Department follows the well-established procedures mandated by Greek law and observed by all universities in Greece (N. 4009/2011, article 19, as it was modified by v. 4386/2016, v.4405/2016, v.4485/2017 και v.4521/2018) without any deviations and with absolute transparency (system APELLA - ΑΠΕΛΛΑ)). These rather complex rules are common to all Greek universities.

The Data Science programme is blessed with a group of high-quality, committed faculty members and specialist teaching staff. It is composed of 4 full-time permanent academic members (ΔΕΠ), 1 teaching staff (ΕΔΙΠ), 3 academic fellows, 5 cooperating lecturers, and 2 administrative staff. The number of academic staff is judged to be insufficient, but there are few options available to the Department given that the legal framework for academic staff recruitment is set by the State. But even so, the Department tries to attract new members, making use of the mechanism of transfers, as well as inviting visiting professors.

The Department has very limited means for assuring professional development opportunities and mobility for its faculty members. Consequently, the existing efforts are rather limited and inadequate to ensure the participation of all faculty members in a more frequent manner. This is by no means the exclusive responsibility of the Department.

The academic staff of the program can rely on and benefit from the research policy of the Department, which aims to promote both quality and excellence in the research work produced in the data science area of the Department. The main objectives of the research policy are:

- To address large-scale interdisciplinary research issues and fulfil the objective of publishing high-quality scientific papers.
- The strengthening of internal interdisciplinary research collaboration.
- The creation of the necessary environment and expertise to attract funding and international research collaborations.

Research is supported and enhanced through European and national research programmes, as well as through internally funded research and development projects. In addition, faculty members are granted educational permits to conduct scientific research through collaborations with Universities and Research Centres in Greece and abroad. Unfortunately, even if the department has a strategic plan regarding the mobility of members of the academic community aiming to strengthen and enhance the program's reputation internationally and to establish partnerships with other educational institutions for educational and research purposes, the academic staff mobility has been low or non-existent over the past 5 years.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- It should be emphasised that even if the use of modern technologies to carry out courses, including those offered "online", are widely available, an effort needs to be made to go a little further than "PowerPoint" presentations, which do not do much to motivate students. For example, methods such as flipped classes, project-based learning and serious games appear to contribute more effectively to learning.
- The evaluation of the teaching staff of the Department is an area of concern. There are established processes of evaluating the teaching staff at the end of each course by asking the students to fill out electronic questionnaires/surveys, but the turnout is extremely low, making the results of the process mostly unusable and the teaching evaluation impractical. Perhaps the solution would be to go back to more conventional methods and ask students to take part in the assessment during the last class in the presence of the professor.
- The department must establish a seed funding mechanism to the extent possible to support internally the research and professional development and mobility of its members, especially the newer ones.
- The Department must continue to evaluate its staff recruitment strategy despite any obvious recruitment constraints. It is suggested that recruitment priorities consider future directions in relation to research, the introduction of new technologies, and future curriculum improvement.

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 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

As the programme evaluation was carried out remotely, the assessment of learning resources supporting both the teaching and research was carried out using feedback offered by the students, the meeting with the academic team, and the various aspects of the documentary evidence provided. Overall, the evaluation panel concluded that the general provision of facilities is broadly satisfactory. The students were very positive about the quality of the teaching facilities even if they followed them remotely (for example, labs are offered remotely, but no difference exists compared to the presential procedure). Also, the students made positive comments expressing their appreciation for the easy access to administrative services and staff.

A crucial point that demonstrates the programme's quality and makes it easier for students with professional engagements to follow it, is that classes are held in the evening or on

Saturday and Sunday. Also, attendance can be either full-time or part-time. Moreover, scholarships are provided in the form of partial or full tuition waivers and scholarships for excellence to those who graduated in the top 5% of their graduation year. Homogenisation classes are held in the first week of the semester with considerable effectiveness, and students are instructed to do personal study before the start of the course.

The programme has a policy of supporting the most vulnerable students. Academics are available daily to support the most vulnerable students. The study guide outlines the support for those who do not finish their studies on time. In many cases, the possibility of extending the study period is given after a hearing in Committees appointed by the department. The programme faculty members and the academic fellows act as mentors for the students. There are scheduled meetings, and the topics of discussion may be academic, but also other topics related to the programme services.

The faculty members of the programme, along with academic fellows, serve as mentors for students. Regularly scheduled meetings cover various topics, encompassing academic subjects and other areas relevant to programme services.

Despite the professional commitments of students, the programme endeavours to provide opportunities for student exchange programmes (e.g., ERASMUS+), fostering mobility, networking, and the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

Comprehensive support is available for all members of the academic community in utilising Information and Communication Technologies. This includes the use of electronic platforms such as Zoom, Skype, and e-learning tools, in addition to email, VPN services, and IT support. The technical equipment shared among the programme's stakeholders is deemed satisfactory. Ongoing integration of new technologies is a standard practice among administrative services, students, and academic staff. While classrooms and laboratories boast full internet connectivity and audiovisual resources, there exists a shortage of computers available for academics to use. Students are well-informed about the array of support services available and express confidence in their accessibility.

Given that English serves as the official language of the programme, the library provides resources exclusively in English. The library maintains its own website (<https://lib.ihu.edu.gr/index.php>), offering users access to an array of resources necessary for paper preparation during the postgraduate programme.

Specifically, the library is fully automated and provides access to the Open Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) system (<https://opac.seab.gr/search~S5>) for locating printed book titles. Additionally, the library is a member of HEAL-LINK (Association of Greek Academic Libraries - <https://www.heal-link.gr/en/home-2/?lang=en>), allowing access to titles of scientific electronic journals, books, and an extensive collection of e-books (<https://lib.ihu.edu.gr/index.php/collection/e-books#technology>). Remote access to these resources is facilitated through a Virtual Private Network (VPN).

Furthermore, the building infrastructure of the library is commendable, benefiting from a spacious area that accommodates a substantial number of workstations.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The programme, working closely with the department, should maintain the good levels of infrastructure available and ensure the continuous upkeep of the facilities, which are very much enjoyed by all the students and staff.
- The programme should prioritise expanding opportunities for student mobility, including exchanges with other national universities or international institutions whenever feasible.
- It is highly recommended to initiate a process for monitoring the career paths of master's graduates and fostering ongoing connections between alumni and current students.

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

Both faculty and students express a strong sense of pride regarding the quality of the available IT infrastructure and the seamless accessibility of relevant information. Institutionally, the university provides extensive IT infrastructure that supports data collection pivotal to the regular publication of reports, including annual ones, many of which are publicly accessible on the institution's website.

II. Analysis

The Department allocates significant resources to analysing various facets of information, enabling the assessment of progress against both departmental and institutional targets. Several instances demonstrate meticulous data analysis revealing trends in student performance. Similarly, considerable efforts are directed towards modelling the underlying factors influencing overall student achievement alongside potential mitigating circumstances.

III. Conclusions

There is high compliance in this category.

Panel Judgement

Principle 7: Information management	
Fully compliant	X
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 programme website is well-organised, easily readable and accessible, and the material is presented in English. It provides a general description of the programme, its educational objectives and a summary of the skills and knowledge expected to be acquired at the completion of the programme. It provides a detailed list of courses of the curriculum with the content of each course and information about the teaching and administrative staff of the Department. It includes a section on employment prospects and a link to the Liaison Office. Furthermore, it provides information about tuition fees, duration of study, rules and instructions for admission application submission, programme regulations, handling objections and complaints, quality policy, and contact information. The content appears updated. However, the pass rates and the graduate employment information are not available on the programme website.

II. Analysis

In general, the website includes valuable information for someone who desires to learn more about the programme. It also contains adequate information for current students concerning the services of the university, the services of the programme, and how they can be accessed.

III. Conclusions

EEAP considers that the programme is fully compliant with the principle of public information.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The pass rates and the graduate employment information should be made widely available to the students on the Departmental website.
- The PDF version of the Study Guide is comprehensive, but it is preferable that its contents become available as a 'hypertext' to facilitate selective access.

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

The evaluation of courses and teachers is done in accordance with the applicable standards of IHU under the guidance of the Quality Assurance Unit (ΜΟΔΙΠ) and the Internal Evaluation Team (ΟΜΕΑ) of the Department. For the evaluation of courses and course instructors, students complete relevant questionnaires. However, it is observed that there is limited interest by the students in this activity, which, in turn, makes this tool less useful in the process of courses' data assessment and evaluation. The evaluation results of these questionnaires become available to the teaching staff for consideration and improvement. The faculty mentioned that a better, more efficient process and possibly a central system are required to alleviate the existing laborious process of gathering the necessary assessment data to be used for courses and programme evaluation. The programme has shown little convincing evidence that there is a strong link between changes in the programme as part of the programme's continuous improvement and evaluation of the assessed data and other results from the

internal evaluation processes. The assessment and evaluation processes result in a report repeated annually.

II. Analysis

In general, the various mechanisms and tools for ongoing monitoring and periodic internal review of the programme are well-developed. The faculty and other stakeholders demonstrated that they understand the importance of monitoring and introducing improvements. However, for several reasons, the completion of a successful continuous improvement cycle requires more effort to be effective and beneficial to the programme.

III. Conclusions

The programme endeavours to engage in continuous monitoring and periodic internal evaluations. This commitment is aimed at enhancing the programme's quality, thereby enabling students to derive greater benefits by utilising the available mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and completing the continuous improvement cycle more effectively.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Additional efforts are necessary to effectively employ assessment and evaluation processes for ensuring quality assurance.
- The faculty should explore methods to enhance student engagement in course and programme evaluation surveys, which hold significance and contribute to the ongoing efforts towards programme improvement.

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

The PSP/Department has undergone its second external accreditation review although it's the comprehensiveness of the first review is unclear. All stakeholders of the programme, encompassing academic, administrative, and support staff, along with undergraduate and graduate students and alumni, actively participated in the current review process.

II. Analysis

Following the multiple online meetings and the analysis of the information submitted, it is evident that the faculty and other key stakeholders acknowledge the significance of the external review process and its role in fostering improvement. While all essential stakeholders of the programme participated actively in the external review, it is worth noting that certain categories, such as pertinent external or social partners, were quite adequately represented.

III. Conclusions

It is anticipated that all stakeholders will engage actively and appropriately in the subsequent actions following their implementation, aligning with the Department's commitment in this regard.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

Numerous facets of the Department and its operations exemplify commendable practices. Within the framework of the Department's affiliation with the International Hellenic University, a steadfast dedication to both the ethos and protocols of Quality Assurance is evident. Continuously striving to enhance its processes, the Department consistently endeavours to elevate the standard of its pedagogy and research despite significant external pressures and constraints. The faculty members exhibit a profound ardour for their vocation, wholeheartedly supporting their students with unwavering zeal.

Staff and external stakeholders demonstrate dynamism and innovation, fostering an admirable team ethos that was perceptible during the online accreditation event. Their unwavering commitment to their students and the fundamental tenets of student-centered learning is unmistakable. In turn, the students, past and present, express profound contentment with their educational journey within the Department, extolling the dedication and encouragement offered by their professors.

II. Areas of Weakness

N/A

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Make an effort to systematise and document the information collected about the market demand for professional qualifications expected from the programme's graduates.
- Make an effort to track and document the professional careers of the programme's graduates.
- Ensure that the corrective measures decided during the programme's internal evaluation have materialised.
- Although the annual audit performed in conjunction with MODIP is well documented, periodic internal reviews carried out by the programme administration should be more formalised and better documented.
- The programme is relatively new and has undergone only internal quality assessment so far, while the first external evaluation is currently in progress. Although the design and approval of the programme seem fine on paper, there are surely corrections

and/or additions that will have to be made as the programme evolves. In fact, consideration has already been given to the recommendation of the internal assessment report, which mentions eleven points for preventive/corrective action to be taken. (Doc. 08) However, no target date for implementing the recommendations has been set. The unit should be alert and respond to the recommendations of the present report in order to alleviate any problems related to the programme's design.

- The programme should consider measures to increase interaction with students, even though many hold jobs concurrently and are therefore forced to minimise the time of their physical presence in the Department. The objective should be to increase the amount of feedback from students and avoid misunderstandings caused by a feeling of alienation for some of them.
- Although graduates of the programme are satisfied with their employment status and employers appear to be satisfied with their employees, further efforts should be made towards increased cooperation with external partners, who will come up with ideas for the continuous development of the goals and the curriculum of the programme.
- The MSc Programme could establish an alumni association and organise regular alumni networking events. These events could bring together alumni, current students and faculty, providing opportunities for knowledge exchange, mentorship and professional development.
- The MSc Programme could introduce collaborative software development approaches (e.g., pair coding) in the curriculum, which could further reinforce the learning experience of the students.
- On the official website of the MSc Programme, one can only find a synopsis of the Internal Regulations. Maybe it would also be useful to provide the posting of the Government Gazette where the Internal Regulations of the MSc Programme were originally published.
- It should be emphasised that even if the use of modern technologies to carry out courses, including those offered "online", are widely available, an effort needs to be made to go a little further than "PowerPoint" presentations, which do not do much to motivate students. For example, methods such as flipped classes, project-based learning and serious games appear to contribute more effectively to learning.
- The evaluation of the teaching staff of the Department is an area of concern. There are established processes of evaluating the teaching staff at the end of each course by asking the students to fill out electronic questionnaires/surveys, but the turnout is extremely low, making the results of the process mostly unusable and the teaching evaluation impractical. Perhaps the solution would be to go back to more conventional methods and ask students to take part in the assessment during the last class in the presence of the professor.

- The department must establish a seed funding mechanism to the extent possible to support internally the research and professional development and mobility of its members, especially the newer ones.
- The Department must continue to evaluate its staff recruitment strategy despite any obvious recruitment constraints. It is suggested that recruitment priorities consider future directions in relation to research, the introduction of new technologies, and future curriculum improvement.
- The programme, working closely with the department, should maintain the good levels of infrastructure available and ensure the continuous upkeep of the facilities, which are very much enjoyed by all the students and staff.
- The programme should prioritise expanding opportunities for student mobility, including exchanges with other national universities or international institutions whenever feasible.
- It is highly recommended to initiate a process for monitoring the career paths of master's graduates and fostering ongoing connections between alumni and current students.
- The pass rates and the graduate employment information should be made widely available to the students on the Departmental website.
- The PDF version of the Study Guide is comprehensive, but it is preferable that its contents become available as a 'hypertext' to facilitate selective access.
- Additional efforts are necessary to effectively employ assessment and evaluation processes for ensuring quality assurance.
- The faculty should explore methods to enhance student engagement in course and programme evaluation surveys, which hold significance and contribute to the ongoing efforts towards programme improvement.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 10.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **5 and 9.**

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 Angelos Stefanidis (Chair)**
Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, China
- 2. Prof Panagiota Morfouli**
Grenoble INP-UGA, France
- 3. Prof Michael Komodromos**
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- 4. Prof Yani Skarlatos**
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- 5. PhD Candidate, Rizos-Theodoros Chadoulis**
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