



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Accreditation Report
for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:
Innovative Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems
Department of Agriculture
International Hellenic University

6 July 2024



Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση
της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



Πρόγραμμα
Ανθρώπινο Δυναμικό και
Κοινωνική Συνοχή



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Postgraduate Study Programme of **Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production** 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 **Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production** of the **International Hellenic University** comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Professor Emeritus Spyros G. Pavlostathis (Chair)**
Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA, USA

- 2. Professor Andreas Katsiotis**
Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol, Cyprus

- 3. Professor Emeritus Ioannis Vlahos**
Hellenic Mediterranean University, Heraklion, Greece

- 4. Mr. Ioannis Chatzieffraimidis**
PhD Candidate, University of Western Macedonia, Florina, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In preparation for the review and assessment of the PSP **Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production** of the **International Hellenic University**, the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEA Panel) reviewed a multitude of materials provided by the Hellenic Authority of Higher Education (HAHE), which included background information and guidance on the review and accreditation process, detailed material and data related to the programme under evaluation, such as the programme accreditation proposal and associated appendices.

The programme review was conducted via teleconference, organized and coordinated by HAHE and the International Hellenic University (IHU). The schedule and agenda of the review were as stated below.

Monday, 1/7/2024:

- a) Preliminary private meeting of the EEA Panel. Discussion of the programme under review; assignment of writing parts of the draft accreditation report to the members of the EEA Panel.
- b) Welcome meeting and short overview of the two PSPs with the Head of the Department of Agriculture, Prof. A. Pavlodi, the Director of the PSP Environmental Management and Environmental Education (PSP1) Prof. S. Aggelopoulos, the PSP1 Steering Committee member Prof. I. Mitsopoulos, the Director of the PSP Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production (PSP2) Prof. O. Notta, the PSP2 Steering Committee member Prof. M. Konstantinou, the University Quality Assurance Unit (QAU; MODIP) member Prof. P. Eleftheriou, the QAU staff Ms. M. Tsantouka, the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG; OMEA) members Profs. V. Bambidis, S. Koutsou, and S. Papadopoulou: Presentation of IHU quality assurance policy, current status and future developments, as well as presentations and discussion of PSP1 and PSP2 history, academic profile, current status and future developments, strengths and areas of concern, degree compliance to the quality standards for accreditation, internal procedures, course examinations, review of students' progress, course/instructor evaluations, etc.
- c) Meeting with PSP1 & PSP2 teaching staff and administrative staff members: Discussion of facilities and learning resources.
- d) Private debriefing meeting (EEA Panel members only).

Tuesday, 2/7/2024:

Teleconference meetings related to PSP1 Environmental Management and Environmental Education of the International Hellenic University.

Wednesday, 3/7/2024:

- a) Meeting and discussion with PSP2 Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production teaching staff members Profs. K. Kousenidis, S. Stefanou, A. Kontogeorgos, A. Giannakoula, I. Vasilakoglou, M. Tsiouni, D. Chatziplis, A. Lymperopoulos, and K. Xapsa.
- b) Meeting and discussion with seven (7) current PSP2 students.
- c) Meeting and discussion with eleven (11) PSP2 graduates.
- d) Meeting and discussion with employers and PSP2 social partners: Ms. Ch. Zisimou, OPEKEPE Stereas Ellados; Mr. Ch. Makridis, Regional Directorate of Rural Affairs; Ms. V. Kotsabasi, ELGO DIMITRA-Institute of Animal Production Science; Mr. E. Chatzigiannakis, ELGO DIMITRA-Institute of Soil Resources; Ms. E. Tsourgianni, Lidra Company; Ms. K. Chandrou, 3rd High School of Agiou Athanasiou; Ms. E. Makridou,

Regional Research Office; Ms. V. Grigoriou, Greek Feed Industry; and Ms. S. Kiritsi, Geotechnical Chamber of Thessaloniki.

- e) Private debriefing meeting (EEA Panel members only): Discussion of the outcomes and findings of the PSP2 virtual visit; preparation of oral report.
- f) Closure meeting with the Head of the Department of Agriculture, PSP2 Director and Steering Committee faculty, QAU member and staff, and IEG faculty members: Informal, oral presentation of the EEA Panel PSP2 key findings and clarifications.

Thursday 4/7/2024 to Saturday 6/7/2024:

Draft report writing. EEA Panel virtual meetings. Review and finalization of PSP2 accreditation draft report.

Throughout the review and evaluation process, the EEA Panel was in close communication with the PSP2 Director, who was very accommodating in providing additional information requested by the EEA Panel. The EEA Panel found that the Department and the PSP2 administration, as well as the faculty, staff, current students, and graduates interviewed were eager and helpful in our discussions, providing valuable additional information.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The postgraduate study programme (PSP) Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production is organized and offered by the Department of Agriculture of the International Hellenic University (IHU), located in Sindos, Thessaloniki. The Department of Agriculture offers two (2) postgraduate study programmes and supports doctoral studies.

The programme was initially established and started with the academic year 2015-2016 (Official Gazette 1722/B/18-8-2015) and was re-organized in the academic year 2018-2019 (Official Gazette 2901/B/19-7-2018). The PSP offers three specialization tracks: a) Agricultural Entrepreneurship; b) Precision Systems in Animal Production; and c) Contemporary Systems in Plant Production and Management.

The objective of the PSP is to provide research and education at the postgraduate level in the fields of agricultural production, management, and entrepreneurship. Specifically, the PSP aims at developing graduates specialized in the basic subjects of agricultural science and its application in plant and animal production sectors, in agricultural and livestock holdings, as well as in commercial agricultural enterprises for both plant and animal production.

Teaching in the PSP is provided by faculty and teaching staff of the Department of Agriculture (IHU), external specialized scientists from other IHU departments, as well as from other academic and research Institutions. Specialized technical staff and administrative staff assist the PSP.

The programme has set at 40 the maximum number of admitted students per academic year. In the academic year 2022-2023, the number of admitted students was 37, the number of all registered postgraduate students was 26, while the number of finished graduates (i.e., those that completed all requirements and graduated) was 20. The total number of PSP graduates since its initial establishment in 2015-2016 is 148. Most of the current students and graduates the EEA Panel interviewed stated that the PSP Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production of the International Hellenic University was among their first choice based on the curriculum, methodologies used, response and organization of the PSP, as well as familiarity with the Department of Agriculture.

The PSP consists of a minimum of three (3) academic semesters study, resulting in level 7 Diploma of Postgraduate Studies. To graduate, the student must have successfully completed a total of 90 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits (60 ECTS for coursework and 30 ECTS for the mandatory postgraduate thesis). There is no practical training. There are elective courses offered within each of the three specialization tracks. Lectures are given 1/4 in-person on campus and 3/4 remotely and synchronously. Attendance in lectures is mandatory and final examinations are administered in-person on campus. The EEA Panel found that the number of courses offered cover advanced as well as new topics and technologies in the PSP focus on Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production.

The PSP prepares graduates for careers in both the private and public sector of the economy, such as forest services and industry, environmental services, consulting companies, as well as public bodies. A substantial number of PSP graduates have continued with doctoral studies. There are strong links to the society, which is key priority of the PSP Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production, the Department of Agriculture, and the Institution.

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 Institution has developed and implemented its Quality Assurance Policy as part of its broader strategy (<https://www.ihu.gr/politiki-poiotitas>). The Department of Agriculture, in collaboration with the University Quality Assurance Unit (QAU; MODIP) and the Department Internal Evaluation Group (IEG; OMEA), has harmonized the quality policy of the PSP

Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production with that of the University, accompanied by annual quality assurance targets for the continuous development and improvement of the PSP, as well as that of the academic unit and other educational programmes.

The Quality Assurance Policy of the PSP is publicly accessible from the Department website (<https://msc-issap.gr/>) and includes adequate reference to the PSP delivery, including commitments to satisfy requirements and strive for continuous improvement. In addition to IEG, a departmental Coordinating/Steering Committee further aids in the overall quality assurance of the PSP and the Department.

The processes and procedures used for the monitoring and continuous improvement of the quality of the PSP are as follows: a) The strict implementation of the PSP Policy for Quality Assurance; b) The optimal disposition and management of the PSP resources, including those resulting from tuition fees; c) The establishment of Quality Assurance objectives of the PSP on an annual basis; d) The periodic internal evaluation and monitoring of the PSP on an annual basis; e) The collection of Quality Data, quantitation, analysis and improvement of the PSP; f) The disclosure and publication of all information related to the PSP made publicly accessible; g) The periodic external evaluation and accreditation following established procedures by HAHE.

The quality and effectiveness of teaching at the PSP is closely monitored through the course/instructor evaluation by the students at the end of each semester, the collection of data by the IEG and transfer to QAU on an annual basis. Training and support of the PSP teaching staff is accomplished with the help of the IHU Center for Teaching & Learning (<https://ctl.ihu.gr/>) which is currently under re-organization. The findings are supported by the documents provided to the EEA Panel by the PSP, the interviews with the teaching, support staff, postgraduate students, and alumni of the programme.

II. Analysis

The structure and organization of the PSP is well thought out and in line with the overall goal of the programme. The advanced material covered along with the study of new technologies in the area of Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production result in learning outcomes and qualifications of the postgraduate students consistent with Level 7 of the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. Teaching methods, learning outcomes, and student satisfaction are all explained in the PSP Study Guide.

The Quality Assurance Policy is sufficiently communicated to all parties involved. The PSP has set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely goals regarding the postgraduate programme (five strategic targets). However, the following targets are not set and thus are not monitored: grade point average of postgraduate theses; research impact by the faculty such as h-indices; participation of postgraduate students in research such as number of projects in which postgraduate students participated, number of publications with postgraduate students as co-authors, number of conferences in which postgraduate students participated, percentage of postgraduate students who continued for doctoral studies, etc. According to 2023 Quality Targets report, the degree of achieving set targets varies from 0 to 97%; some target set values should be increased. Based on the data provided to the EEA Panel, the targets are also paired with suitable key performance indicators (KPIs). Goals are monitored, updated, and communicated, according to the Quality Assurance Policy implemented by the Institution and the PSP. The quality assurance system is reviewed on an annual basis by the IEG and results communicated to the University QAU, which issues an annual report.

III. Conclusions

Overall, this is a well-organized PSP focusing on the quality of the offered knowledge and skills. The Department has established a Quality Assurance Policy that is appropriate for the PSP. It includes a commitment for its implementation and continuous improvement. The metrics established by the PSP and the Institution are adequate in tracking and documenting the quality of the programme. However, some more specific targets should be set and monitored by the PSP and the target set values should be increased.

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

R1-1 Major improvements made as a result of course/instructor evaluations should be documented, communicated to all involved, and published on the PSP website.

R1-2 Add more specific targets (KPIs) to the Quality Targets Report and increase the target set values.

R1-3 Interactions with alumni upon their graduation should be exploited as a potential means of informing the decision-making process regarding future directions of the programme.

R1-4 Establishment of a formal external Advisory Board should be considered, which will guide the continuous review, revision, and further development of the programme curriculum.

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 Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production was first founded in 2015, up-dated twice in 2018 and 2019, and it operates under its current form since 2022. It is one of the two postgraduate programmes offered by the Department of Agriculture. The programme evolved during the last nine years, taking into account the pandemic period, where all courses were offered through teleconference. Nowadays, the programme is offered in a hybrid mode, having three weeks of teleconferences and one week in-person classes, within a month. The PSP is in accordance with the overall developmental strategy of the IHU. The main objectives of the PSP are to develop high level postgraduate education in the scientific fields of Plant and Animal Production, as well as Agricultural Economics, with an emphasis on entrepreneurship, innovation and modern trends and methods in agricultural production. There are three specialization tracks offered: a) Agricultural Entrepreneurship, b) Precision Systems in Animal Production, and c) Modern Production and Management Systems in Plant Production. In the first semester there are three common courses (totaling 15 ECTS) for all three specialization tracks. Another two compulsory courses in each track (totaling 15 ECTS) are also offered in the first semester. During the second semester, depending in the specialization track, there are either only compulsory courses (Precision Systems in Animal Production), or only elective courses (Modern Production and Management Systems in Plant Production), or both types of courses (Agricultural Entrepreneurship). A diploma thesis is part of the obligations to graduate from the PSP. In the Student Guide all necessary information, regarding the PSP, are included. Overall, the PSP graduates gain specialized knowledge and experience relevant to its subject matter.

II. Analysis

The programme is in accordance with appropriate standards, relevant legislation and University regulations. The curriculum is balanced and covers the subjects mentioned in the title of the Programme. The offered specialization tracks in animal and plant sciences, and agricultural economics provide in-depth knowledge in innovative agricultural systems. Among the first semester compulsory courses 'Research Methodology' is included, a very helpful introduction for students to select their thesis and understand their research objectives. Since most of the students are already working, it is not possible to take advantage of mobility opportunities. During the interview with the graduates and stakeholders, it was mentioned that they will be willing to participate and contribute with suggestions in any future restructuring of the programme. Administrative support was adequate, although the courses are offered on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning.

III. Conclusions

Overall, the PSP has a well-designed structure and provides to its graduates useful knowledge and experience in innovative agricultural systems for plants, animals and agricultural economics. The involvement of the stakeholders and former graduates would benefit any future restructuring of the programme.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R2-1 Any future curriculum revision procedure should involve consultation with stakeholders, external experts, students and graduates.

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 PSP Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production follows a student-centered learning path, primarily offering courses remotely via teleconference with occasional on-site sessions. According to the Study Regulation, each course includes eight (8) lectures conducted

via distance learning and five (5) held in person. However, the actual proportion of distance learning is higher, reaching 85%, as stated on the PSP website. On campus attendance is mandatory for specific courses, semester assignments, and end of semester examinations.

Lectures typically take place on Fridays from 14:15 to 20:45 and on Saturdays from 09:00 to 13:45. The rights and privileges of students, including awards for outstanding academic performance, are outlined in the PSP Study Guide. The lecture halls are well-equipped, and student complaints are managed online.

The program offers several elective courses for two out of its three specialization tracks, which must be selected by the majority of students for the courses to be offered. Course/instructor evaluations are carried out at the end of each semester, with adequate student participation.

Each student is supported by an Academic Advisor who provides personal, academic, and career guidance. For any issues, students contact the PSP secretariat.

II. Analysis

Courses are conducted on Fridays and Saturdays to accommodate working students, who constitute the majority according to the data collected by the EEA panel.

Each course includes mandatory assignments, and a peer-review evaluation system is followed to enhance understanding of the subject matter. The personalized teaching approach is achieved through course selection, the full functionality of the distance learning platforms and tools, and the adoption of alternative teaching methods by the staff.

All specialization tracks have three common core courses in the first semester. In each specialization track, there are mandatory and elective courses offered in the first and second semester. However, for the specialization track "Precision Systems in Animal Production," there are no elective courses.

The availability and role of the Academic Advisor are described in in the PSP Study Guide and each student is assigned an advisor during the first week of their studies. For each postgraduate student, the Coordinating Committee appoints a faculty member as an advisor and another as a supervisor. The advisor is responsible for monitoring and overseeing the general progress of the student's studies. The supervisor has scientific responsibility for the completion of the thesis and is appointed by the Coordinating Committee upon the student's request, which includes the proposed thesis title, the proposed supervisor, and a summary of the proposed thesis.

Students are generally very satisfied with the PSP, and some have pursued doctoral studies after graduation. All students interviewed by the EEA Panel reported that they developed better skills upon completing the PSP.

III. Conclusions

The EEA Panel finds that, in general, the PSP functions effectively in terms of student-centered learning, teaching, and assessment. The programme's careful design, particularly tailored for working students, allows them significant flexibility in choosing the skills they will acquire, thereby facilitating the achievement of individualized learning outcomes. All interviewed students and graduates expressed full satisfaction with the PSP and the teaching staff.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R3-1 Create an alumni association to foster a sense of community among graduates and to facilitate ongoing professional networking.

R3-2 The PSP should establish an orientation event for students at the beginning of their studies to facilitate the selection of their thesis topic.

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

Every year, a call for applications is announced for the admission of students to the PSP. The PSP Steering Committee selects students based on various criteria, including their average grade in their first degree, the relevance of their diploma thesis, mandatory knowledge of the English language (with points awarded based on proficiency level), professional and research experience, etc. The student selection process also includes interviews for candidates who meet the necessary criteria. The total points accumulated by the candidates are compiled into a table and submitted to the Department Assembly for approval. More specifically, the selection process is divided into three stages: Stage A – It involves the evaluation committee reviewing the formal qualifications of applicants who have submitted all required documents on time; Stage B – Applicants who passed the first phase participate in an interview process; and Stage C - The evaluation committee compiles a list with detailed scores of the successful and shortlisted candidates, which is then submitted to the assembly for approval. All necessary information is adequately described in the PSP Internal Operating Regulation.

The duration of the study is three semesters, clearly defined in the Study Regulation. This PSP includes two semesters of coursework (nine courses in total) and one semester dedicated to the postgraduate thesis. ECTS credits are distributed equally across the curriculum in the first two semesters, with 30 ECTS credits awarded for the postgraduate thesis. Postgraduate students have access to all on-campus and digital facilities of the department.

Teaching methods primarily include synchronous distance learning and a few on-site lectures. While student mobility is encouraged, no students have taken advantage of this option so far. However, there is mobility from foreign academics who visit and offer 1-2 lectures per semester.

There are tuition fees for the PSP, set at 2250 euros, payable in three equal installments. At the end of the two semesters, the PSP awards three scholarships based on student academic performance, one for each specialization track, with the amount not exceeding 200 euros per student. Academic criteria for these scholarships include performance during the first and second semester. Students receiving scholarships from other sources are not eligible for these academic performance-based scholarships.

The total ECTS credits required to obtain the Postgraduate Diploma amount to ninety (90) ECTS. Preparation of a postgraduate thesis is mandatory. Along with the Postgraduate Diploma, a Diploma Supplement is provided in Greek, and in English upon request. No practical training is included in the program.

II. Analysis

The majority of postgraduate students choose a research-focused thesis. Alongside semester assignments and exams, these are compulsory components of the program. The course assessment methodology allocates 40% of the grade to assignments and 60% to final examinations. Adequate knowledge of English is a prerequisite for participation in the PSP.

All matters concerning the completion of the required postgraduate thesis are defined in the Study Guide. However, the information provided regarding theses completed remotely is insufficiently detailed and should be expanded.

Although students' mobility is encouraged, the majority cannot take advantage of this opportunity due to their work commitments. Additionally, the program for visiting academics has not always been well-structured, making it difficult for students to benefit fully from these visits.

Until recently, the Diploma Supplement was issued only in Greek, and students had to request it in English. Only 2023 graduates have received the Diploma Supplement in both Greek and English. Practical training is not required.

III. Conclusions

The EEA Panel concludes that the PSP Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production functions effectively in terms of student admission, progression, recognition of postgraduate studies, and certification. However, the EEA Panel believes that enhancing student mobility and establishing practical training opportunities could significantly add value to the existing PSP.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R4-1 Develop a comprehensive thesis handbook specifically for remotely completed postgraduate theses, including detailed requirements, procedures, and expectations.

R4-2 Issue the diploma supplement in English to all graduates.

R4-3 Introduce optional practical training opportunities.

R4-4 Enhance student mobility through Erasmus programs or participation in conferences and visits to European Institutions relevant to the field of study.

R4-5 Implement tangible measures to support academic excellence, such as tuition waivers for top-performing 1-2 students and benefits like financial compensation or involvement in research projects.

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 selection and hiring procedures of the teaching staff is done according to the rules set by the Department of Agriculture and relevant State laws. All teaching staff hold a PhD, most are from the Department of Agriculture and also from other Departments, Institutions or Research Centers in related subject areas, with proven records of research and publications. The categories of teaching staff include full, associate, and assistant professors and special teaching laboratory staff (EDIP) and post PhD candidates. In case specialized subjects are covered, experts in the field are invited for lectures based on proposals by the programme coordinator.

The basic needs for the operation of the PSP are covered by the infrastructure of the Department of Agriculture. The buildings, classrooms, laboratories, library and the experimental farm are all available for use, when necessary, by the students of the programme for their training and thesis work. The website of the Department provides all information for the PSP.

The PSP Steering Committee proposes to the Assembly of the Department for approval the selected teaching staff each academic year. The committee assigns the courses to be taught

by the selected staff either independently or in cooperation with others. Therefore, some courses may be taught by two or three teaching staff. Efforts are made in order to attract and hire lecturers, professors and researchers of high quality standards in teaching and research. For this purpose, the Department website, social media and personal contacts and collaborations with other departments are utilized.

The average workload of teaching staff in the program, excluding the 10 h teaching load in the undergraduate programme, is usually 4 hours per week, ranging from 2 to 6 hours. It is understood however, that the workload of many teaching staff members is even higher considering the hours devoted to the supervision and counseling of students.

At the end of each semester the PSP urges the students to evaluate the course and the instructors by filling electronically and anonymously in the questionnaire provided by the University QAU. The participation of students was found to be quite satisfactory. The IEG makes the results known to the evaluated staff, results are discussed and actions for improvements are taken, such as revision of the curriculum and/or hiring of new staff if necessary.

Regarding the mobility of staff, several of the lecturers had taken part in staff mobility of the Erasmus program through collaborations of the Department of Agriculture with other EU institutions. Incoming mobility (mobility at home) has also taken place by inviting lecturers from abroad to give lectures remotely on specialized subjects.

Most of the staff exhibit a satisfactory number of scientific publications in International journals and take part in national and international conferences. The University has provisions for awarding distinctions for quality teaching and research as well as financial support for staff participating in conferences and symposia abroad.

II. Analysis

The procedure for the selection and hiring of the teaching staff is done according to the rules of the Department, the regulations of the PSP, and the relevant laws. There is no open call for the hiring of staff and recruitment is based on the efforts of the program coordinators to invite and attract qualified lecturers with high standards in the fields of specialization suitable for the programme.

The teaching staff of the PSP were found to be well qualified and suitable to provide the students with the required knowledge in the area of sustainable agricultural practices. Many of the staff are involved in research and activities related to innovative methods of agriculture thus they incorporate research results in their teaching.

The Erasmus mobility is practiced occasionally by some of the staff which is a good practice but is not considered satisfactory for the majority of staff. However, the mobility at home by inviting lecturers from abroad should be further encouraged, thus enhancing the quality of the programme by introducing new research information and knowledge.

The evaluation of courses and lecturers as administered by the University QAU was found quite satisfactory. However, the instructor evaluations do not really correspond to the evaluation of the staff in cases where courses are taught jointly by more than one lecturer. Therefore, the evaluation mostly refers to the course and not to the instructor, unless the course is taught by a single person. Perhaps, the University QAU with the approval of HAHE could modify the questionnaires used for the postgraduate programmes.

Students, alumni and stakeholders interviewed expressed their satisfaction with the competence of the teaching staff and the spirit of cooperation and good contact during and

after their graduation. It was also stated that staff members were always available for advice and communication with the students during the study period of three semesters, serving as thesis supervisors and/or student advisors.

III. Conclusions

The PSP Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production is supported by qualified staff who meet the requirements in the three specialization tracks of the programme. The publication record of teaching staff is considered satisfactory; however, there should be more efforts to increase publications in International journals.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R5-1 Teaching staff should be encouraged to publish in peer-reviewed International journals and increase their h-index.

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

The PSP Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production is supported by the premises and infrastructure of the Department of Agriculture on the campus of the former Alexander TEI of Thessaloniki. The Department is comprised of 26 lecture rooms, 37 work and research laboratories, of whom 5 are certified, 2 rooms for PCs and Multimedia and a large farm of 120 hectares with a variety of crops in open fields and in greenhouses. There are also many buildings for the raising of animals (cows, sheep, poultry, etc.) serving the fields of animal production.

Upon the start of the academic year students are informed about the structure and requirements of the program, as well as the existing infrastructure and services that are provided and are available to all students of the graduate program. They are assigned one member of staff who will act as their academic counselor and are informed about the secretarial services, the library facilities and all other privileges that students of the program

are entitled to. However, the interviewed students stated that they rarely use in person any of the facilities or the library as the program is delivered exclusively remotely and any information they need is available online through the HEAL _link and VPN provided to them. The Moodle platform is also used for drawing information relating to their courses. Students may use occasionally the multimedia room and other rooms when there is a need or for the final examinations.

There are 61 teaching staff for this PSP of which 24 are permanent Department staff, and the rest are emeritus professors, laboratory teaching staff, and lecturers from other departments of the University, as well as external partners specialists in the field.

The remotely held lectures are delivered two days a week, on Friday and Saturday, which is most suitable for the majority of students especially for those that are working during week days. The students expressed their satisfaction with the secretarial and technical support which is made available to them whenever they need it any day of the week (Uniportal app).

The PSP is self-financed by the tuition fees of 2,250 euros but other sources such as donations, state funding and research programs contribute to the function of the program. Special Account for Research Grants (ELKE) receives an obligatory 30% of the fees and the 70% of the tuition is used for the reimbursement of staff, consumables, administrative support and publicity.

II. Analysis

During the interviews with students, graduates and external partners the EEA Panel had the opportunity to listen to their remarks, their experiences and suggestions for improving the program as well as to discuss and analyze their opinions and views regarding the programme. Before the COVID pandemic, the courses were delivered in the premises of the Department; the present mode of remote lecturing is found more suitable for the students who all are working. Students and graduates mentioned that the programme should include more on-campus visits and excursions to sites and agricultural enterprises of related interests. Furthermore, they expressed the need for more laboratory practical experience.

It was made evident that all students expressed their satisfaction with the programme, the teaching staff and the services provided to them. They praised the excellent level of communication with the staff and the secretarial support. Most of the graduates interviewed were enthusiastic about the program, some of them had graduated from the first programme in 2015 and their careers and employment prospects were greatly supported by the postgraduate degree and education. They expressed however the need for a revision of the curriculum that will include courses on new agricultural plant products and cultivations and the possibility of optional courses in animal production.

The current programme offers courses totaling 90 ECTS distributed in three semesters. The allocation of the ECTS units in the 3 semesters is found to be in accordance with the directions set by the Bologna process that requires a workload of 30 ECTS in each semester.

The social partners the EEA Panel had the opportunity to interview and discuss with came from various municipal, regional and other government organizations dealing with agribusiness and agricultural research centers. All had direct contact with the Department and were well aware of the nature of the graduate programme and expressed their satisfaction and positive opinion about the programme and the competence of its graduates. There were several remarks and suggestions regarding the inclusion of courses in the curriculum relating to Legislation and

Agricultural Extension Counseling issues. Their contact with the Department and the programme was on a personal basis with the staff of the PSP.

III. Conclusions

The PSP Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production offers a well-structured programme that provides its graduates with the principles of sustainable agricultural production systems with up to date knowledge supported by a group of qualified teaching staff. However, in an upcoming revision of the programme recommendations from the present accreditation should be taken into consideration.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R6-1 Include courses focusing on new agricultural plant products and cultivations, as well as optional courses in animal production.

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

The academic unit has developed a comprehensive system for gathering information. The different tools used to collect information and data in order to extract useful conclusions about the program include the digital archives of the programme secretariat, the QAU evaluation questionnaire, the students' course/instructor evaluation questionnaires, the graduates' satisfaction questionnaire. Access to the information is restricted to authorized personnel (by providing their personal usernames and passwords). Furthermore, the students have access through Unitron to personal information recorded by the secretariat, including their student number, their performance, their contact information; through Uniportal they have access to their courses scores and the ability to register for the semesters' courses. Students can connect remotely and gain access to the library resources through VPN. The digital educational platform Moodle is also used by teaching staff and students. From the interviews with current students and graduates, it seems that there is good participation in course evaluations. Additionally, data are provided by QAU for students' satisfaction for the last four years (2020-

2024). The PSP provides analyses of the students' course/instructor evaluations to the academic staff.

II. Analysis

The Department maintains an integrated information system in collaboration with QAU, for the collection and analysis of data. The PSP annually collects data related to the research activity of faculty, available funds, and academic records. The information obtained from the course/instructor evaluations by the students is considered adequate, and this reflects the teaching staffs' efforts to awaken students' participation.

III. Conclusions

The PSP evaluates the data collected and presents some of the results in a quantifiable form in terms of the programme. The data should assist in the preparation of internal evaluation reports and related improvement proposals (comment and recommendations are written at the end of the report). In the PSP webpage there is satisfaction questionnaire for the graduates of the programme (a very good initiative). The PSP secretariat maintains contact details of graduates; however, there is no formal alumni body.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R7-1 An alumni association of the graduates should be developed in a formal constructed way.

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

Public information about the PSP Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production is primarily accessible through its dedicated website, <https://msc-issap.gr/>. The website content is currently available in both Greek and English. Additionally, the Department's website at <https://agro.ihu.gr/> includes a comprehensive section on Postgraduate Studies, offering detailed information about the PSP in both Greek and English. While the Department's website provides sufficient information about the PSP, it is recommended to update certain sections, particularly those referring to the former Technological Educational Institute.

The PSP website offers extensive information about the programme's curriculum, ECTS credits (90), Study Guide, including details about postgraduate thesis, and the academic unit's Policy for Quality Assurance. Entry requirements include holding a first degree from an accredited University and possessing basic knowledge of the English language. Overall, these features ensure transparency, accessibility, and up-to-date information for individuals interested in the PSP, facilitating informed decision-making and encouraging engagement with the program.

II. Analysis

The PSP Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production provides thorough and up-to-date information on its dedicated webpage. This includes comprehensive details about learning outcomes, courses, curriculum specifics, and profiles of teaching staff. The website content is meticulously curated, ensuring easy access and a user-friendly experience for visitors seeking information about the programme. Additionally, the Department's website offers extensive information about the PSP, further enhancing accessibility to essential programme details.

III. Conclusions

The Department's website provides essential information for users regarding the PSP. Currently, the PSP website offers details about teaching and departmental activities in both Greek and English. To further enhance its usefulness, the PSP website should include additional

information about alumni and job placements. This would broaden the scope of information available to visitors, providing insights into the career paths of graduates and enhancing the overall user experience.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R8-1 Consider adding an Alumni and Job Findings Section in the PSP website.

PRINCIPLE 9: ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC INTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

The above comprise the evaluation of:

- a) the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the PSP is up to date*
- b) the changing needs of society*
- c) the students' workload, progression and completion of the postgraduate studies*
- d) the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students*
- e) the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- f) the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the PSP in question*

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

Documentation

- *Procedure for the re-evaluation, redefinition and updating of the PSP curriculum*
- *Procedure for mitigating weaknesses and upgrading the structure of the PSP and the learning process*
- *Feedback processes concerning the strategy and quality goal setting of the PSP and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*
- *Results of the annual internal evaluation of the PSP by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), and the relevant minutes*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The self-assessment of the programme is performed on an annual basis, based on procedures set by the IHU QAU. In the internal self-assessment several aspects of the programme are recorded including students' satisfaction, academic staff performance and general aspects of the PSP concerning staff, students and infrastructure, to reveal any problems and propose any actions. Feedback and comments made by QAU are recorded and submitted back to the PSP describing the current situation, the strong points of the programme, matters of concern, possible actions to solve those matters, and recommendations. The findings of the report from QAU are communicated to the academic and administrative staff involved with the PSP (through the General Assembly of the Department), and the students. Implementation of the recommendations made by QAU are monitored by the IEG and the PSP Steering Committee.

II. Analysis

Through the process of the annual internal review there is a continuous improvement of the PSP. On-going research by academic staff is incorporated in the lectures offered, providing students up-to-date scientific knowledge. Students' evaluations are taken into consideration. The internal review suggests increase of the number of applications through advertising the PSP, although all students and graduates have indicated that they have recommended to colleagues this programme. The lack of students' mobility is partially compensated by invited speakers for lectures.

The PSP is reviewed and revised but without the direct involvement of students and other stakeholders; stakeholders expressed a positive opinion in participating in such a task.

III. Conclusions

An internal quality assurance system for the audit and annual internal review of the PSP is in place. The self-assessment procedure of the programme is on annual basis and correction measures are suggested. Actions suggested are communicated to academic and administrative staff. A systematic participation of the students and the external stakeholders in decision making of the programme should be considered.

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 Consider the contribution of stakeholders as they can provide valuable suggestions for the PSP.

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 Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production has not undergone an external evaluation before. The Department of Agriculture has undergone accreditation review by the HAHE in the period 12-17/12/2022, but at the time of the submitted proposal by the PSP, the final accreditation was not received.

The EEA Panel evaluated Principle 10 taking into account the internal QAU review report and the efforts by the Department IEG and the Faculty Assembly to comply with the recommendations and comments provided by University QAU.

II. Analysis

The PSP has taken into consideration relevant QAU recommendations and is willing to proceed with the implementation of recommendations that will be received upon the completion of the accreditation process by the HAHE.

III. Conclusions

The EEA Panel is confident that the programme coordinators and the Department will comply with Panel recommendations and fulfil the goals set for the improvement of the programme.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

There are no recommendations for Principle 10.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- The PSP has the necessary procedures for monitoring quality assurance and aligns with the strategic objectives of the Department and the University.
- The teaching staff are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and dedicated to their mission.
- Employment potential of the PSP graduates is high.
- Employers and Social partners praised the PSP and believe there is a clear need for such graduates.
- The topics of the postgraduate theses address real agricultural issues.
- The programme addresses issues of sustainable agriculture at a local and national level.

II. Areas of Weakness

- Lack of practical training.
- Lack of thesis handbook for remotely completed postgraduate theses.
- There is no formal connection between stakeholders and alumni with the PSP.
- Limited mobility of students.
- Lack of courses addressing new agricultural plant products and cultivations, as well as optional courses in animal production.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Increase the number and values of targets (KPIs) set by the PSP.
- Develop interactions with stakeholders and PSP alumni on a formal basis.
- Increase mobility of students as well as mobility at home.
- Revise the curriculum by introducing additional elective courses.
- Reconsider raising support of academic excellence of top performing students with a substantial financial support and exemption from tuition fees.
- Organize educational activities either on-campus and/or increase visits to agricultural enterprises and organizations.
- Consider establishing a formal external Advisory Board comprised of external faculty, graduates, and social partners to actively assist and guide the continuous review, revision, and further development of the PSP curriculum, enhance the entire programme, as well as attract external resources.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **4**

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. Spyros G. Pavlostathis

2. Andreas Katsiotis

3. Ioannis Vlahos

Ioannis Chatzieffraimidis