



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Accreditation Report for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

**Archaeology of the Eastern Mediterranean: Greece, Egypt and Near
East**

Department: Mediterranean Studies

Institution: University of the Aegean

Date: 20 June 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 **Archaeology of the Eastern
Mediterranean: Greece, Egypt and Near East** of the **University of the Aegean**
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 **Archaeology of the Eastern Mediterranean: Greece, Egypt, and Near East** of the **University of the Aegean** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. JOSEPH JOSEPH (Chair)**
University of Cyprus
- 2. CHRISTIAS PANAGIOTIS**
University of Cyprus
- 3. CHRISTOPHILOPOULOU ANASTASIA**
The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge
- 4. PAPAKOSTAS APOSTOLIS**
Södertörn University
- 5. SYNODINOU POLYMNIA**
University of Crete

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In reviewing the Postgraduate Study Programme of “Archaeology of the Eastern Mediterranean: Greece, Egypt and Near East” of the University of the Aegean, the objectives of the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP, hereafter the “Panel”), as described in the “Guidelines for the Members of the EEAP”, are, among others:

- to establish whether the data provided from the various resources is consistent among one another and reflect the actual situation
- identify strengths and areas of weakness engage in a constructive dialogue with the Institution, leading to reflection and continuous enhancement of the study Programme.

Following a well-prepared schedule provided by HAHE, the Panel held several separate interactive online virtual meetings and visits using the Zoom platform.

On Monday, 03/06/2024, the following virtual meetings took place:

- with the Director of the Programme, the Head of the Department and MODIP members and staff.
- presentation and on-line tour of classrooms, lecture halls, libraries and other facilities related to the Programme. The on-line tour was followed by a discussion about the facilities in which teaching and administrative staff participated.

On Wednesday, 05/06/2024, the following virtual meetings took place:

- with teaching staff of the Programme
- with current students of the Programme
- with graduates who have successfully
- completed the Programme
- with employers and social partners of the
- private and the public sector
- with the Head of the Department and the
- Director of the Programme, members and staff of MODIP and OMEA.

During the above virtual meetings, the Panel had the opportunity to meet, talk, and interact with all the participants at all meetings. All the participants were encouraged to express their views and they did so. It is worth pointing out that the students were especially encouraged to talk freely about their overall learning experience. They welcomed the opportunity to talk to the Panel and to voice their views. The discussions were very constructive, informative and fruitful and were conducted in a cooperative manner and attitude. All the meetings included presentations, discussions, and question and answer sessions. During the last meeting, some clarifications were provided, and the Panel made an informal presentation of some initial key findings.

The Panel also had several private online Zoom meetings throughout the review period (03/06/2024 – 14/06/2024) for deliberations, drafting and approval of the Report. The Panel wishes to express its thanks to HAHE for its overall support, especially for providing documentation and creating and securing the possibility for 24-hour Zoom meetings.

The internal evaluation report and other extensive material were made available to the Panel electronically in advance through HAHE. More information and material were made available during the meetings. The Department worked diligently in preparing the internal evaluation report and other relevant materials, as well as in organizing and hosting the virtual meetings. It is the feeling of the Panel that the Department has performed an excellent job throughout the internal evaluation process and the objectives of the process have been fully met. The efficiency and eagerness of the Department to answer questions and provide additional information and clarifications during the meetings are worth noting. The Panel wishes to express its thanks and appreciation to the Department and the University administration for their co-operation and professionalism.

This Accreditation Report is based on information collected and views expressed during the virtual meetings as well as on information contained in the internal evaluation report and other documents submitted before and during the virtual meetings.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

This is a three-semester intensive Master's Programme taught in Greek. It is one of four postgraduate programmes offered by the Department of Mediterranean Studies of the University of the Aegean. The University of the Aegean was founded in 1984 and is a multi-campus institution with approximately 20,000 students. It has campuses on six islands: Rhodes, Chios, Samos, Mytilene, Syros and Lemnos. The Department of Mediterranean Studies is based in the City of Rhodes and has been operating for more than twenty years.

The Programme offers courses which are consistent with its research-oriented nature and the Department's and the University's overall objectives. Basically, it aims to provide a thorough understanding of the theory, methodology, techniques, and analytical tools of historical and archaeological research with emphasis on the civilizations of the Eastern Mediterranean. Students have the opportunity to focus on their special interests and write an original thesis making use of the knowledge and research skills acquired in the courses. Graduates are expected to acquire critical and analytical skills and become competitive professionals in their field of expertise. The Programme maintains an international character by facilitating cross-border academic and scientific cooperation with other departments and institutions. A maximum of forty students are admitted each year. There are tuition fees, which were recently raised to €2800 (previously €2500). For the completion of the Programme 90 ECTS are required, which are equally distributed in three semesters (30 for each semester). There are compulsory and elective courses. During the third semester, students are required to write and submit a thesis which counts for 30 ECTS. The thesis can be written in Greek or English. The Programme is supported by the academic staff of the Department as well as academics from other Departments and other Institutions. All teaching staff are Ph.D. holders who are active scholars and researchers in their fields.

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

There is in place a Quality Assurance Policy which has been approved by the Department and the University and is posted on the website. The quality assurance procedures of the Programme are coordinated and carried out under the supervision of the Department's Internal Evaluation Team. This Team cooperates with the Steering Committee of the Programme, the Chair, faculty members and the University Quality Assurance Unit for the formulation and implementation of the

policy.

The Quality Assurance Policy of the Department aims to develop and improve the Programme in line with the overall Quality Policy of the Department and the University. In doing so, it ensures that high quality standards and widely accepted practices in teaching and research are followed. Such principles and practices include:

- academic freedom in the educational process and research, as well as the free expression and circulation of ideas,
- the methodologies and tools for the formation of scientific discourse,
- the promotion of quality and the implementation of quality procedures by means of annual internal evaluation,
- the promotion of excellence in research and education,
- academic ethics, the regulatory obligations and standards of the Single Higher Education Area,
- meritocracy, impartiality, transparency and accountability,
- dialogue as a means of building consensus and respect for freedom and democratic ideals,
- a student-centred pedagogical approach to teaching and learning,
- the promotion of graduates' acquired skills in the labour market.

The Panel, however, noticed some serious inconsistencies between the documents provided for evaluation (not updated) and what is actually done, as evidenced by the presentations and interviews conducted during the meetings.

II. Analysis

It is the impression of the Panel that the Programme provides a much-needed educational service in the Greek context and for that reason it is a highly needed programme. It is supported by Departmental and University infrastructure and services which are of good quality and adequate for graduate studies. The Panel, however, noticed some inconsistencies between the documents provided for evaluation and the current state of the Programme which deserve some attention by the internal quality control units and mechanisms.

III. Conclusions

Quality policy controls are institutionalized at all levels of the University (Department, OMEA, MODIP etc.). There is no doubt that this is a popular Programme, attracting excellent students with different academic backgrounds. The social partners and external stakeholders who participated in the meetings praised the Programme and the quality of its graduates. They were also very satisfied with the cooperation they have with the Department. The Panel, however, feels that there is room for improvement, especially concerning the material submitted in preparation and support of the external evaluation process (updating documents, statistics, figures etc.).

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	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Improve the quality of the preparation of the external evaluation process, especially updating documents, statistics, figures etc.

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 curriculum focuses on active participation of students, alignment with institutional strategies and European standards. Additionally, there is evidence on intertwining teaching and research, providing good development opportunities for the students, and continuous assessment of learning outcomes. The duration of the Programme is three semesters. Two semesters are devoted to courses and one semester for the thesis. The Programme allows flexibility for students and some free choice of courses. The duration of each semester is 13 weeks plus two weeks for the examination period. The workload is estimated to 150 hours per course (6 ECTS). Reading lists in the course syllabi are reasonable. The Panel noticed the absence of a distinct course on research methodology.

II. Analysis

Programme courses are offered in a hybrid form, face to face and online, mainly in Greek. The Panel was informed during the review (by students and teaching staff) that distance teaching (without physical presence) functions well, without problems. In general, course syllabi follow usual international blueprints when it comes to lists of readings. Given the duration of the semester (13 weeks) the workload equals to approximately over 50 hours per week, which is rather high compared to usual standards.

III. Conclusions

The popularity of the Programme is undeniable as it has successfully managed to attract excellent students, but only Greek students. It is an ambitious and resource-demanding Programme including courses in all major subfields, but not a distinct course on methodology. Given that the students come from different backgrounds, where training in scientific thought, research logic and methods are limited, the Panel feels that the Programme needs to be enriched with a compulsory course on the logic of research and methodology. Also, the Panel feels that given the international character of the field of studies, teaching mainly in Greek limits the international reach of the Programme.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Consider enriching the Programme with a course on the logic and methodology of research or at least make teaching methodology more visible in the description of the Programme.
- Check the stated amount of expected workload in different courses.
- Consider taking steps in transforming the Programme into an international programme in order to enhance its international reach and also attract students from other countries.

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 Programme has been designed taking into account the mission of the Department as described in the founding Decree and in view of the needs of the Greek and contemporary international reality. The Programme provides for annual review and possible updates/adjustments considering relevant developments in the field and feedback from the participants, including the students. Some of the main

pillars of its student-centred teaching and learning approach are the flexible curriculum and educational pathways, innovation in teaching and learning, well-defined learning objectives and outcomes, and student feedback into curriculum design. Student-centred teaching and learning is applied to all courses and takes into account the diversity of students, including persons with disabilities and specific learning difficulties. Overall, innovation and flexibility are characteristics of the various pedagogical means and approaches used. Part of its student-centred philosophy is also the promotion of mutual respect in the student-teacher relationship. The appointment of academic advisors is also an important component of the student-centred approach, while counselling and guidance, especially for the preparation of the thesis, are strong elements of the Programme.

II. Analysis

The delivery methods meet the requirements of a high-quality Programme and are in line with international practices in the field of Archaeology. They combine traditional and modern methods, with the use of electronic media and digital material and emphasize student autonomy, with the professor in a guiding and advisory role. Students are invited to actively participate in courses, expressing questions, opinions and thoughts on the issues discussed. Course outlines (syllabi) are posted on the website of the Programme and are easily accessible. The teaching staff select and combine teaching and learning methods, considering the background, particular interests and experience of the students. The lectures follow international standards and principles of student-centred learning while choosing appropriate methods of examination and assessment. The course objectives and methods of assessment and grading are described in course outlines. Students are also informed by the professors about the objectives, requirements and assessment methods at the beginning of the semester. In this context, emphasis is placed on transparency and making assessment criteria public. Students are given the opportunity to provide feedback, through course evaluation based on an anonymous questionnaire and thus contribute to the improvement of the courses and the Programme. The information obtained relates to the degree of success of the course, including learning objectives, content, lectures, teaching material, workload, etc. It is worth noting that students have the opportunity to submit – signed or anonymously – complaints and recommendations for the improvement of the Programme and the educational environment in general.

III. Conclusions

The Panel is of the opinion that this is a successful Programme that meets all the criteria of this Principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

PRINCIPLE 4: STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AND CERTIFICATION.

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

All the issues from the beginning to the end of studies should be governed by the internal regulations of the academic units. Indicatively:

- *the student admission procedures and the required supporting documents*
- *student rights and obligations, and monitoring of student progression*
- *internship issues, if applicable, and granting of scholarships*
- *the procedures and terms for the drafting of assignments and the thesis*
- *the procedure of award and recognition of degrees, the duration of studies, the conditions for progression and for the assurance of the progress of students in their studies*
- *the terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility*

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

Documentation

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the Postgraduate Study Programme*
- *Research Ethics Regulation*
- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility, and student assignments*
- *Degree certificate template*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The websites of the Department and the Programme offer detailed information and instructions on the selection and admission process, the required supporting documents, student rights and obligations, etc. The students are encouraged to take advantage of the available services and fully utilize the opportunities provided, especially online. Student progress is monitored through various methods, including course exams, quizzes and presentations. The European credit transfer system (ECTS) is used by the Department and the Programme. ECTS credits are assigned to courses and the thesis. Credits can be transferred to equivalent programmes nationally and across Europe. Writing a thesis is a requirement of the Programme. Requirements also include a 10-day internship at a university excavation site or a 20-day internship at another institution. Given that the Programme is hybrid, and most students have full-time jobs, this creates some difficulties. Therefore, beginning with the next academic year (2024-2025), it was decided not to include this requirement in the new curriculum. Some scholarships are awarded for partial coverage of tuition fees. Student mobility (for example Erasmus) remains low, apparently because the majority of students have full-time jobs. The diploma supplement is provided to all graduates, in Greek and English, as an accompaniment to the degree, and includes information about their studies.

II. Analysis

The application and electronic copies of supporting documents are submitted to the "Nautilus" electronic system of the University (<https://nautilus.aegean.gr/>). The platform "Nautilus" is very functional. The Panel confirms the full use, capabilities and efficiency of this electronic platform. Students were positive and enthusiastic about the timely updates from professors regarding all assignments, bibliography, thesis progress etc. Communication of the students with both the professors and the administration is excellent. Regarding the employability of the graduates of the Programme, it was noted that most of them are already employed, and graduates confirmed that attending the Programme was very helpful for their professional advancement. Many of them are employed in different sectors of the Archaeological Service (Ephorates of Antiquities) and museums, as the Programme. The students utilize documents and materials either excavated by them or existing in the archives of the Ephorates, which is a positive aspect for the Programme. Given this, many students take advantage of their work experience to write their thesis. Participation in the Erasmus mobility programme is very low, apparently because the vast majority of the students have full-time jobs.

III. Conclusions

Overall, this is a successful Programme meeting the requirements of this Principle, offering possibilities especially to active archaeologists to enhance their skills and prospects for professional advancement.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Increasing mobility rates could facilitate interaction with other programmes and institutions and benefit students.

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 Department of Mediterranean Studies, in which the Programme is offered, recognising the importance of teaching and research, follows a clear, transparent, and fair process for the recruitment of qualified staff. Their expertise, international background, high qualifications, and enthusiasm enhance the quality of classroom teaching and research output. All of them are Ph.D. holders, active researchers, productive scholars, and dedicated teachers. Visiting professors and guest speakers from other countries and institutions, deliver lectures and participate in teaching and other academic activities of the Programme and the Department. New technologies were widely used for teaching in the classroom (when courses were offered with physical presence) as well as now that the Programme is offered online. Electronic means including teaching platforms, websites, email and social media are also used when interacting with students. The staff-student ratio is very good.

II. Analysis

The teaching staff follow innovative and widely used pedagogical practices and instructional methods that meet international standards. There is enthusiasm and skills in utilizing new technologies, for teaching, communication and interaction among faculty, students and University Services. The Panel had the opportunity to talk and listen to students and received the impression that they think very highly of their teachers. Current students as well as graduates, who have successfully completed the Programme, talked with respect, gratitude and admiration about their professors, the Departmental and Programme culture, and the learning environment. They confirmed that their teachers are committed, accessible, understanding, and ready to provide support and guidance. Overall, the teaching, encouragement and advising provided by faculty members are evident and highly appreciated by the students.

III. Conclusions

The Department and the University provide encouragement and adequate opportunities for the professional development of the faculty, although there is room for improvement. All teaching staff should be commended for their firm commitment, concentrated effort, and enthusiasm in maintaining high-quality teaching and research despite the obstacles and difficulties created by limited resources and other external factors for which the Department and the University cannot be blamed. It is pointed out that there is a collaborative climate in the Department and the Programme built on, and reflecting, mutual respect and collegial spirit, not only among faculty members, but also between students and teaching staff.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Department and the University could seek ways and means to provide further support to faculty members to enhance research and intensify their efforts for attracting external funding, especially through international and European projects. This is in line with the broader need and duty of the State to address the general systemic problem of an inadequately funded public university system.

- Faculty members could intensify further their efforts and enhance their high-quality research output, especially by publishing in international peer-reviewed journals and publishing houses.
- The excellent collegial atmosphere in the Department and the Programme, and accessibility of faculty by the students should be maintained and further enhanced, as it is instrumental in sharing experiences and getting feedback.

PRINICPLE 6: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER THE TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS OF THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMME. THEY SHOULD –ON THE ONE HAND- PROVIDE SATISFACTORY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR LEARING AND STUDENT SUPPORT, AND – ON THE OTHER HAND- FACILITATE DIRECT ACCESS TO THEM BY ESTABLISHING INTERNAL RULES TO THIS END (E.G. LECTURE ROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, NETWORKS, 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 Programme fully utilizes the facilities of the University which are appropriate and adequate. It is noted that there are labs supporting the Programme including:

- Laboratory of Archaeometry
- Laboratory of Southeast Mediterranean Linguistics
- Laboratory of Mediterranean Politics
- Laboratory of Environmental Archaeology & Preventive Conservation Laboratory for the Ancient World of the Eastern Mediterranean
- Laboratory of Informatics.
- The Centre for Archaeological Research of Kymissala, Monolithos, Rhodes.

The buildings of the University Unit in Rhodes have been recently reconstructed

and renovated according to modern specifications. In general, the equipment is modern, suitable, and of high quality. The classrooms in the "7th March" building provide support for persons with disabilities, while partial support is provided in the other buildings.

Students have access to all the support and advisory services provided by the Department and the Institution. According to current regulations of the Programme, teaching can be conducted using distance learning methods up to one hundred percent but beginning with the next academic year (2024-2025), the Programme will be offered only online using modern distance learning educational methods, techniques and equipment. Teaching will be conducted using synchronous distance education methods including the Open eClass distance learning platform, the BigBlueButton platform and the Moodle Platform.

II. Analysis

In general, when considering the use of infrastructure and facilities, the needs of the students, the majority of whom are working full-time and have families, are taken into account. This creates additional demands and time management challenges. Distance learning creates additional needs for equipment, while many students also utilize laboratories and facilities outside Rhodes to complete their thesis. For example, in some cases courses on new technologies use laboratories at other institutions such as the National Technical University of Athens. Students are well informed of the many resources available, including the University Library, databases, museums, the Library of the Ephorate of Antiquities etc.

III. Conclusions

The shift to online format leads to a different perspective on the use of infrastructure, which can present new challenges and opportunities for how it can be utilized.

Additionally, the wide age range of the students indicates varying needs from their side. These aspects and prospects were extensively discussed during the review and the Panel was informed about the availability and efficiency of the available equipment, electronic platforms etc. It is also worth noting that the Programme and the teaching staff provide valuable opportunities for the students to use labs at other institutions outside Rhodes, participate in conferences and publish their work.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Programme, the Department and the University employ a concise system of gathering, storing and managing information related to the main operational aspects of the Programme. The system in place applies and covers the needs of all involved, including Faculty members, students, administrative staff, support units and services associated with the Programme. In brief the following systems operate in support of data management:

- Applications enabling the student body to access course work, communicate with Faculty, teaching staff and the graduate community.
- Electronic enrolment, admissions and grading management systems.
- Electronic administrative support through the Department.
- Electronic support for student requests such as issuing copies of certificates, grading, and transcripts.
- Electronic access to library resources, including VPN and other means, for open access to periodicals, journals and online publications.

Applications enabling the enrolment of students to fieldwork projects and internships and monitoring their outcome.

Systems and procedures in place relevant to data management are overseen by the relevant University quality assurance policy bodies and the Departmental internal evaluation teams. These supervisory and evaluating bodies are in regular contact with the Programme Steering Committee, Faculty and the Department's leadership, ensuring policies are being observed.

II. Analysis

The tools and procedures designed for the collection and management of data in support of the academic and administrative operation of the Programme are robust and well-functioning. A high level of sophistication characterizes the electronic procedures monitoring admissions, enrolment, attendance and student welfare matters. There is sufficient security in place in terms of protection of student data, intellectual rights and ownership of student generated work. There is also in place a straightforward system of registering and resolving issues, complaints and technical malfunctions. During presentations and discussions with faculty, students, graduates and administrative staff, it became very clear that they all have very positive experiences of data management. The Panel has the impression that the procedures and mechanisms of data collection and management are accessible and well-performing. It is also noted that the Department and the Programme are open to suggestions for improvement when and where needed.

III. Conclusions

The operations enabling and safeguarding efficient data collection and management in relation to all aspects of the Programme are in compliance with the University quality standards and the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. The procedures in use are also compliant with the national and European standards of accessibility and management of electronic information as well as, most importantly, with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and procedures applicable throughout Europe. Moreover, the high degree of student satisfaction and the positive accounts of faculty, teaching staff and other associated Programme stakeholders, testify to the successful implementation of data management practices and principles.

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 Department operates a sufficient system for providing and disseminating information on the Programme. The system consists primarily of the creation, operation and maintenance of dedicated space and links within the websites of the University, the Department and the Programme. All websites serving the Programme and its promotion are in English and Greek and there is good correspondence between the content of webpages across both languages. The content, description of available resources and learning targets of the Programme are characterized by clarity, objectivity and a high degree of readability and accessibility also for potential students with neurodiverse or other special accessibility requirements. The procedures for maintenance and renewal/updating of the websites are in place and clear. The design of the websites and other means of disseminating information is clear, accessible and welcoming. A specialized "information and communication service" exists and is responsible for the design and dissemination of information relevant to the Programme and the degree offered.

II. Analysis

The means and procedures used to create, collect, store and disseminate information on the nature, learning content, academic merits and value of the Programme are robust and regularly reviewed at Departmental and University level. The academic contacts and networks of Faculty members engaged in teaching and research are also essential in disseminating the value of the Programme. It is also noted that past students (alumni) are advocating a very positive experience of the Programme and are a substantial driving force for the promotion of the Programme. A recommendation would be to increase marketing efforts relevant with the crucial connection between the learning outcomes of the Programme and prospective mature students who are already employed in the national archaeological service and the wider heritage sector. It would also be profitable for the Programme to be advertised and promoted at

an international level, in order to attract more international students. The University of the Aegean is placed in a unique geopolitical position to attract prospective students from the entire Mediterranean as well as countries of the Middle East. Moreover, the core ambitions of the Programme, and its emphasis on Mediterranean cultural identities, would make it very attractive to students from Italy, Cyprus, Turkey, Israel, Syria and other countries. For this to be achieved, a certain enhancement of its supra-national ambition and teaching objectives should be made clear in its publicity and dissemination campaigns.

III. Conclusions

As the Programme continues to attract primarily mature students who are employed full-time, it would be advisable to increase efforts to internationalize the Programme and promote it outside Greece. The University is placed in a unique geopolitical position to attract prospective students from the entire Mediterranean as well as countries of the Middle East. Moreover, the core ambitions of the Programme, and its emphasis on Archaeology of the Eastern Mediterranean would make it very attractive especially for prospective students from Italy, Cyprus, Egypt, Turkey, Israel, Syria and other countries. For this to be achieved, supra-national ambitions and teaching objectives should be made clear in promotional campaigns.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Intensify efforts to internationalize the Programme and attract more international students.

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 Department and the University have in place internal self-assessment procedures and mechanisms, which are part of an efficient quality assurance system, providing for regular monitoring, review and revision of the Programme. The internal quality assurance system aims at maintaining high Programme standards and an appropriate level of education while creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students. MODIP, OMEA and the Departmental Study Programme Committee play a central role throughout the various stages of internal self-assessment. The outcomes of self-assessment are properly recorded, analysed, shared and utilized, especially in formulating and communicating recommendations and action plans.

II. Analysis

Constant efforts are made to review and revise the Programme to ensure that it is up-to-date and in line with the latest research and pedagogical approaches.

Revisions are also aimed at harmonizing its objectives and content with students' needs and expectations, maintaining international standards and following best practices. They also take into consideration the changing needs of society and the expectations of students who provide evaluations of courses and faculty, as well as the overall learning environment.

III. Conclusions

The Panel is convinced that the commitment of the Department and the on-going internal monitoring and evaluation ensure that high quality teaching and research are firm and clear objectives embedded in the Programme. The internal review and monitoring of the Programme reflect an academically rigorous and open departmental and internal university quality assurance process. All actions taken are communicated to all parties and stakeholders concerned. Overall, the internal quality assurance system in place works efficiently in monitoring, updating and promoting the continuous improvement of the Programme.

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

None

PRINCIPLE 10: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY PANELS OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HAHE, AIMING AT ACCREDITATION. THE TERM OF VALIDITY OF THE ACCREDITATION IS DETERMINED BY HAHE.

HAHE is responsible for administrating the PSP accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by panels of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, based on the Reports delivered by the panels of external experts, with a specific term of validity, following to which, revision is required. The quality accreditation of the PSP acts as a means for the determination of the degree of compliance of the programme to the Standards, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees. Both academic units and Institutions must consistently consider the conclusions and the recommendations submitted by the panels of experts for the continuous improvement of the programme.

Documentation

Progress report of the PSP in question, on the results from the utilisation of possible recommendations included in the External Evaluation Report of the Institution, and in the IQAS Accreditation Report, with relation to the postgraduate study programmes

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

This Programme has not been externally evaluated before. During the current external review, all stakeholders were actively engaged. The Programme, the Department and the University worked diligently in preparing materials, presentations, as well as in organizing and hosting the online virtual meetings with the Panel. All the meetings included presentations, discussions, and question and answer sessions. The Panel had the opportunity to meet, talk, and interact with all the participants at all meetings. The discussions were very constructive, informative and fruitful and were conducted in a cooperative manner and attitude. The efficiency and eagerness of the Department and the staff supporting the Programme to answer questions and provide additional information and clarifications during the meetings are worth noting.

II. Analysis

Based on the materials submitted and the information gathered during the online presentations and discussions, it appears that all members of staff (teaching and administrative), as well as students, alumni and other stakeholders are aware of the importance of external review, its usefulness and the contribution it can make in improving the Programme. Throughout the current external evaluation process, it was convincingly demonstrated that the Department and the Programme are committed to the letter, spirit and process of quality assurance and external review. There is already in place a step-by-step action plan for utilizing the findings and recommendations of the external evaluation. As they pointed out during the meetings, it will help them become better by enabling them to identify any problematic areas and find suitable solutions.

III. Conclusions

It is the impression of the Panel that the Programme, the Department and the University are committed to external evaluation as a key component of a quality assurance system. They worked diligently to facilitate the current review and meet its objectives. Overall, their positive approach toward quality assurance and external review is expected to have a positive impact on the Programme and contribute to its continuous improvement. However, more tangible results and a more meaningful assessment regarding this Principle will be possible when a second external evaluation is carried out.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Maintain and further enhance the existing positive attitude toward the external review process, its findings and recommendations.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- Meritocracy, impartiality, transparency and accountability.
- Student-centred pedagogical approach to teaching and learning.
- Excellent collegial atmosphere in the Department.
- High quality of faculty.
- Accessibility of faculty by the students which is instrumental in sharing experiences and getting feedback.
- Departmental strategy encouraging and ensuring that students complete the Programme on time.
- Positive attitude toward the internal and external review process.

II. Areas of Weakness

- Limited sources to support research, a weakness which is in line with the broader need to address the general systemic problem of an inadequately funded public university system.
- Some sources of information about the Programme (documents, statistics, figures, websites etc.) are not updated regularly or when needed (for example in preparation of the external review).

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Seek ways and means to improve response rates in course evaluations by students.
- Explore options for improving, modernizing, and updating the sources of information about the Programme including websites.
- Intensify efforts to attract external funding, especially through international and European projects.
- Consider enriching the Programme with a course on research logic and methodology.
- Consider offering some courses in English and thus enhance the international reach of the Programme.
- Improve the quality of the preparation of the external evaluation process, especially by updating documents, statistics, figures etc.
- Keep upgrading or renewing existing facilities, including electronic equipment and platforms, to continue providing a functional, attractive, and high-quality learning environment for students.
- It would be advisable to increase efforts for the Programme “Archaeology of the Eastern Mediterranean: Greece, Egypt and Near East” to be advertised and promoted outside this realm and also outside Greece, in order to attract more international students. The University of the Aegean is placed in a unique geopolitical position to attract interested students from the entire Mediterranean as well as countries of the Middle East. Moreover, the core

ambitions of the Programme and its emphasis on Mediterranean cultural identities, would make it very attractive to students from Italy, Cyprus, Turkey, Israel, Syria and other countries. For this to be achieved, a certain enhancement of its supra-national ambition and teaching objectives should be made clear in its publicity and dissemination campaigns.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

1 and 2.

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

None.

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:

None.

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname	Signature
1. JOSEPH JOSEPH (Chair) University of Cyprus	
2. CHRISTIAS PANAGIOTIS University of Cyprus	
3. CHRISTOPHILOPOULOU ANASTASIA The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge	
4. PAPAKOSTAS APOSTOLIS Södertörn University	
5. SYNODINOU POLYMNIA University of Crete	