



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Accreditation Report

for the New Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Climate Crisis, Risks and Disasters

Department: Geography
Institution: Harokopio University of Athens
Date: 07 December 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 New Postgraduate Study Programme of **Climate Crisis, Risks and Disasters** of the **Harokopio University of Athens** 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 new postgraduate study programme of **Climate Crisis, Risks and Disasters** of the **Harokopio University of Athens** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Prof. Emeritus Nikolaos Katopodes (Chair)**
University of Michigan, United States of America
- 2. Assoc. Prof. Seraphim Alvanides**
University of Bamberg, Germany
- 3. Assoc. Prof. Emeritus Stavros Constantinou**
Ohio State University, United States of America
- 4. Prof. Athanasios Vafeidis**
Christian-Albrechts Universität zu Kiel, Germany
- 5. Ms. Zygouri Evangelia**
PhD Candidate, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In preparation for the review and assessment of the PSP Climate Crisis, Risks and Disasters of the National Harokopio University of Athens (HUA), the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) reviewed a multitude of materials provided by the Hellenic Authority of Higher Education (HAHE). These included background information and guidance on the review and accreditation process, and detailed data related to the programme under evaluation, such as the programme accreditation proposal and associated appendices.

The programme review was conducted via teleconference, which was organized and coordinated by HAHE and the Harokopio University of Athens (HUA). The schedule and agenda of the review were as follows:

Monday, 2/12/2024:

Preliminary private teleconference meeting of the EEAP. Discussion of the programme under review. Assignment of writing parts of the accreditation report to the members of the EEAP.

Tuesday, 3/12/2024:

1. Welcome teleconference meeting and a short overview of the PSP with the Vice- Rector of Academic Affairs, Internationalisation and Quality Assurance and President of Quality Assurance Committee, Prof. Chryssa Sofianopoulou; the Head of the Geography Department, Prof. Petros Katsafados; and Director of the PSP, Prof. Konstantia Aikaterini Lasaridi.
2. Meeting with the teaching staff members of the PSP including Prof. E. Karymbalis, Prof. G. Kritikos, Assist. Prof. E. Drakou, Assist. Prof. K. Tsanakas, Assist. Prof. A. Paidakaki, Emeritus Prof. K. Sapountzaki.
3. On-line tour: classrooms, lecture halls, libraries, laboratories, and other facilities related to the PSP. Discussion about the facilities presented in the video produced for this purpose with members of the teaching faculty, including Prof. Petros Katsafados and Assist. Prof. Evangelia Drakou. In the meeting, also participated the following administrative staff members:
 - a. Ms. Despoina Kaitatzi, Deputy Head Secretariat Geography Department
 - b. Mr. Polykarpos Papadopoulos, PSP Secretariat
 - c. Ms. Georgia Papadiotou, Head Directorate of Academic Affairs & Personnel
 - d. Ms. Mary Douroupis, Erasmus Office
 - e. Ms. Konstantia Barda, Career Office
4. Meeting with employers and social partners
 - a. Mr. K. Theofilopoulos, General Director of the Hellenic Firefighting Academy.
 - b. Dr. G. Xanthopoulos, Director of Research, Hellenic Agricultural Organization (ELGO-DIMITRA), Institute of Mediterranean Forest Ecosystems.
 - c. Ms. Kalousi, Senior Account Manager, Terra Spatium.

- d. Mr. A. Veizis. Director of InterSOS Hellas, NGO.
 - e. Ms. A. Balantinaki, Autonomous Civil Protection Department, Directorate of Civil Protection, Region of Attica.
 - f. Ms. A. Synani, PhD Candidate, Geography Department.
5. Debriefing meeting (EEAP members only).
 6. Closure meeting with Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs, Internationalisation and Quality Committee, Prof. Chryssa Sofianopoulou; the Director of the PSP, Prof. Aikaterini-Konstantia Lasaridi; the Head of the Geography Department, Prof. Petros Katsafados; and the Deputy Head, of the Quality Assurance Department, Ms. Christina Chazaki.

Wednesday, 4/12/2024 to Saturday 7/12/2024:

Draft report writing. EEAP virtual meetings. Review and finalization of draft report.

Throughout the review and evaluation process, the EEAP was in close communication with the Department and the PSP administration, which were very accommodating in providing additional information requested by the EEAP. The EEAP found that the Department and the PSP administration, as well as the faculty, staff, and stakeholders interviewed were eager and helpful in our discussions, providing valuable additional information.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The postgraduate study programme (PSP) Climate Crisis, Risks and Disasters is organized and offered by the Department of Geography of the Harokopio University of Athens (HUA). The PSP represents an evolution of a broader graduate programme, first established in the academic year 2005-2006. The new programme corresponds to one of the three specializations of the previous PSP, which operated successfully for twenty years at HUA.

The creation of postgraduate programmes is part of the long-term development plan of HUA, which follows the strategic plan (article 38, section B' 4983/09.08.2023) for each department and school. Besides a holistic redefinition of the goals and objectives of the new PSP, it offers the option of distant learning for up to 30% of its admitted students. This was approved in the Senate meeting No. 478/31-01-2024 according to the regulations of article 80, 4957/2022 (A' 141) of the Official Government Gazette. The new PSP will operate for the first time in the academic year 2025-2026 (HUA Senate approval 480/03/04/2024) under the regulations of the HUA for postgraduate and doctoral studies established by the University Senate (1432/20-01-2023).

The objective of the PSP is the training and specialization of scientists and managers in civil protection organizations, non-governmental and private organizations with the ultimate goal of creating specialists capable of preventing and mitigating disasters and crises. Furthermore, the PSP aims to establish guidelines for the choices and actions of society and legislature towards the challenges created by the climate crisis environmental change. Finally, the PSP aspires to equip graduates with advanced tools that will aid the in the pursuit of doctoral studies in Climate Crisis, Risks and Disasters, and thus strengthen the research efforts of the Department of Geography in that field.

Teaching in the PSP is provided by the ten (10) members of the faculty and one (1) emeritus professor of the Department of Geography. In addition, there exists the possibility for instructors from other departments of HUA, other universities, government agencies, research institutes, the private sector, and staff members of the Department of Geography to contribute to the educational process of the PSP.

The programme has set the maximum number of admitted students per academic year to thirty (30). It is the goal of the PSP to maintain a student to instructor ratio of three (3). The PSP requires a minimum of three (3) academic semesters study and allows a maximum of five (5) semesters for the completion of the study by full-time students. To graduate, a student must have successfully completed 90 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits (60 ECTS for coursework and 30 ECTS for the preparation and successful completion of a postgraduate thesis). There is a satisfactory number of elective courses offered after the first semester, which allows for an adequate flexibility in the study programme. Attendance in lectures is mandatory, and final examinations will be administered in class. There is an extensive

description of the measures taken to maintain the integrity of examinations by students in the distant learning version of the programme.

The EEAP did not interview any current students or recent graduates due the classification of the PSP as a “new” Programme by HAHE. However, two participants of the meeting with the stakeholders were alumni of the previous version of the PSP and provided some glowing remarks regarding the programme’s treatment of students. They mentioned a rigorous admission process, fair grading in all courses, strong support for completing their theses, and continuous encouragement for participation in field studies and visiting other academic institutions through the Erasmus+ programme. They were very happy with the personal help by the instructors, the research strength of the faculty, and the overall reputation of the Department.

The PSP prepares graduates trained in the management of Climate Crisis, Risks and Disasters, leading to careers in the public and private sector. In addition, a small fraction of graduates continues with doctoral studies. There are strong links to the needs of society, which is a key priority of the PSP in Climate Crisis, Risks and Disasters. Presently, the Department of Geography offers one (1) graduate programme with three specializations. Beginning with the academic year 2025-2026, the Department will offer two (2) graduate programmes, including the PSP under review, and plans to introduce a third programme in the following academic year. The department also maintains a very active programme in doctoral and postdoctoral studies.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Strategy, Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Goal Setting for the New Postgraduate Study Programmes

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD INCLUDE IN THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT THE DEVELOPMENT, ORGANISATION, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES (PSP) IN SPECIFIC SCIENTIFIC FIELDS AFTER INVESTIGATING THEIR FEASIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY.

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY FOR THE NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT.

THIS POLICY SHOULD EXPAND AND BE AIMED (WITH THE COLLABORATION OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS) AT THE PSP OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL INTERESTED PARTIES.

By decision/s of the Institutional Senate, the Institutions should adapt their strategy to allow for the provision of postgraduate study programmes, in addition to attending to the profile, vision, mission and strategic objectives of the Institution. In this strategy, the Institutions should anticipate the potential benefits, difficulties or risks from the implementation of new postgraduate study programmes and plan all the necessary actions to achieve their goals. The Institution's strategic choices should be documented through specific feasibility and sustainability studies, especially for new postgraduate study programmes.

In the case of PSP delivered by distance methods, the Institution prepares and applies an e-learning strategy. The Institution's e-learning strategy is integrated into its overall strategy and identifies educational goals while keeping up to the rapid technological changes and to the developments in pedagogical models. The Institution should include in its strategy the justification and feasibility as to why e-learning has been selected as the appropriate learning strategy for the particular programmes of study where it is applied.

In the context of e-learning, innovation strategies, the possibility of programme revision, the linking between learning and research (requiring knowledge of the latest innovations in order to select the most appropriate means to achieve the learning outcomes) should be taken into account.

The quality assurance policy of the academic unit for postgraduate study programmes should be in line with the Institution's strategy 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 postgraduate 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 continuous 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 and the availability 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 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 internal review and audit of the quality assurance system for the PSP through the cooperation of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU)*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

During a virtual meeting on December 4, 2024, the University Senate approved the establishment of a new Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) titled "Climate Crisis, Risks, and Disasters" at the Department of Geography, Harokopio University of Athens. According to the minutes, the new master's programme will commence in the 2025-2026 academic year. This programme is significant as it addresses the urgent need for advanced education and research in understanding and mitigating the impacts of climate change and will prepare graduates to tackle one of the most pressing global challenges of our time.

The new PSP programme is a continuation of the successful operation of the Postgraduate Programme with a related subject for 20 years (from the academic year 2005-2006 to the academic year 2023-2024) within the framework of the three-track Postgraduate Programme entitled "Applied Geography and Spatial Management." The Department decided that transforming the programme into an autonomous, independent Postgraduate Programme is appropriate for several reasons.

The goals of the PSP are to holistically train specialized scientists capable of meeting the labour market demands of both public and private sectors and social institutions. These scientists will be equipped to assess risks and natural disasters related to climate change. Additionally, they will be trained to predict and manage crises, draft Disaster Management Plans, and organize risk communication at various urban and regional scales.

The new master's degree offers both full-time and part-time study options. The programme spans three academic semesters, totalling 90 ECTS credits, with 30 credits per semester. The final semester is dedicated to writing a dissertation. The learning outcomes and acquired qualifications from this programme are fully compatible with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (level 7).

The achievement of quality within the PSP and the optimization of processes in all areas (educational, research, administrative, etc.) is monitored, assessed, and evaluated through defined quality indicators per applicable legislation and the European or National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education Level 7.

To implement this policy, the Department of Geography commits to the following processes and procedures for monitoring and continuous improvement of the quality of the PSP:

- a. Establishment of an appropriate structure and organization of the postgraduate studies programmes
- b. Pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications set by the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education level 7.
- c. Evaluation of the quality and effectiveness teaching in the PSP through the MODIP questionnaire.
- d. Selection of qualified teaching faculty with significant research records.
- e. Drafting, implementation, and review of specific annual quality objectives to achieve programme improvement.
- f. Produce qualified graduates who are competitive in the labour market and monitor their job placements.
- g. Maintain quality support services, such as administrative services, libraries, and student welfare services for the PSP.
- h. Ensure efficient management of the financial resources of the PSP to achieve a budget neutral programme.
- i. Conduct an annual internal evaluation and review of the quality assurance system for the PSP in collaboration with the OMEA and the MODIP of the Institution, following process 4, "Internal Evaluation" of the University's Internal Quality Assurance System.

II. Analysis

The proposed PSP has a well-thought-out structure and conforms to the regulations for establishing a new PSP, having received the approval of the University Senate of the Harokopio University of Athens. The programme's profile and learning outcomes meet the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education Level 7. The qualified teaching faculty of the PSP, who also have high-quality research records, fully support this statement.

The curriculum aims to educate competent and competitive graduates who will meet the growing demand in the labour market (private, public, and social institutions). The curriculum is comprehensive in scope and provides students with specialized knowledge in the interpretation and assessment of natural and anthropogenic processes that produce climatic deviations/threats/hazards. The curriculum equips students with the expertise needed to meet the demands of climate change, extreme natural phenomena, technological risks, industrial accidents, and environmental threats to humans. It also trains students to utilize geoinformatics applications.

The Geography Department presented a detailed Quality Assurance Policy and set achievable, measurable goals to provide the basis for the programme's success and future improvement.

III. Conclusions

The programme is fully compliant with the Principle.

Panel Judgement

Principle 1: Strategy, Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Goal Setting for the New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Form an External Review Board as a consultative body to the PSP. Such a board will comprise members of the private and public sectors, graduates, and other programme stakeholders. The EEAP meeting with employers and social partners demonstrated the eagerness of all participants to work with the Department of Geography to improve the new PSP.
- Strengthen and promote ties with foreign universities to enhance faculty and student mobility. Such activities will be most helpful in future evaluations of the programme and help with the employment of programme graduates.
- Direct additional resources to the new PSP's experiential learning component (field trips).
- Enhance collaborations with other universities by actively utilizing opportunities provided by the Erasmus+ programme. The Department should promote these opportunities more prominently among students. Additionally, consider inviting distinguished professors from abroad and implementing other initiatives to increase the visibility of the new PSP programme.

Principle 2: Design and Approval of New 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 NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES. THE OBJECTIVES, THE SPECIFIC SCIENTIFIC SUBJECT AND THE STREAMS OR SPECIALISATIONS, THE EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND THE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS ARE SET OUT IN THE PROGRAMME DESIGN. DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW 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, the specialisations, the expected learning outcomes, the structure, the courses, the teaching and assessment modes, the teaching staff and the necessary resources 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. In particular, for each expected 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 for the 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).

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The EEAP is satisfied with the proposed PSP on Climate Crisis, Risks and Disasters by the Harokopio University of Athens. The programme is offered as full-time (1.5 years) or part-time (3 years) taking into consideration the needs of students that may be full-time employed or have other responsibilities. The PSP is very well designed, covering a good range of topics from the broader fields related to Natural and Environmental Risks, Emergency Planning, Recovery and Reconstruction following Disasters, Mitigation and Adaptation for Climate Change, as well as economic, social and political aspects related to the climate crisis, risks and disasters. In addition to the six (6) core/compulsory courses, there are eight (8) elective courses addressing the broader academic and professional interests of students, regardless of their academic/professional background. The department has significant past experience in developing and delivering courses in this field at the postgraduate level, as the proposed PSP is the successor of the stream Management of Natural and Human Induced Disasters of the PSP Applied Geography and Spatial Planning that is to be discontinued. As a result, there is some evidence of student and stakeholder participation in the curriculum development of the proposed PSP.

II. Analysis

The EEAP is fully satisfied by the structure and content of the proposed programme. As mentioned above, it covers a wide range of topics directly related to the climate crisis, natural risks and environmental disasters. The PSP has been designed in order to admit students from a wide range of backgrounds, also offering options related to the socio-economic implications resulting from these phenomena, which is a research strength of this department. In terms of research methods and technical skills, there is a dedicated elective course on Geoinformation Applications in Disaster Management, and some of the core/compulsory courses include statistical analysis of empirical evidence. However, there is no course addressing explicitly research methodologies, the assumption being that students enrolling in the proposed PSP will have completed a first degree with a compulsory Dissertation and a range of methodological skills.

It is also important to mention here that the various stakeholders interviewed by the EEA Panel expressed a very positive opinion for Harokopio University, the Department and the proposed programme, on the basis of past experience with the predecessor PSP that is to be discontinued. These stakeholders have employed graduates from the predecessor PSP or have graduated from the predecessor PSP themselves. On this basis, the EEAP also discussed the possibility for the formal development of an External Advisory Board and suggested including in its membership senior government/industry officials, alongside experts from academia to provide input on the strategic development of this programme, potential curriculum enhancements, technological and socioeconomic needs from the industry, and from societal organisations, etc.

III. Conclusions

The PSP on Climate Crisis, Risks and Disasters is the successor of one of the three streams of the very successful PSP Applied Geography and Spatial Planning, which will be discontinued. This makes perfect sense, as the predecessor PSP was rather broad in scope, and the graduates of the proposed PSP will engage in specialised learning. The EEAP is confident that the proposed PSP complies fully with the HAHE requirements of Principle 2. However, it could be further enhanced to secure its success by establishing an External Advisory Board that would provide critical input on issues related to curriculum evolution (e.g. with case studies and fieldwork) so that the PSP remains relevant to the needs of the stakeholders and society overall.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2: Design and Approval of New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Establish a formal process for students' active participation in the programme's curriculum development.
- Actively engage and publicize an External Advisory Board consisting of senior government/industry officials to consult with the programme administrators regarding this PSP's strategic development and enhancement.

Principle 3: Regulations for 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).

The Institution should develop and publish the internal regulations prescribed by law which, among other things, should regulate all issues of postgraduate studies from the beginning to the end of the studies.

Indicatively:

- *The students' 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*

In case that the PSP is offered through distance learning methods, the Institution should have in place a regulation for e-learning, including in particular the following issues:

- *Services of the Institution to support e-learning*
- *Methodology for the development and implementation of courses*
- *Ways of providing teaching and variety of teaching and assessment modes*
- *General standard of course structure*
- *Student support system*
- *Support of faculty/teachers with mandatory e-learning training for new staff members*
- *Technological infrastructures made available by the Institution*
- *Student identity confirmation system (student identity check, assignment and exam writing process, security and certification issues).*
- ❖ *The Institution should establish rules for the provision of appropriate access and for the assurance of the participation of students affected by disability, illness, and other special circumstances.*
- ❖ *Ethical issues, such as those concerning data protection, intellectual property rights and rules for protection against fraud are governed by the e-learning regulation.*

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The new PSP embraces the principles of student-centred teaching and active learning. Additionally, it implements systematic evaluation methods, ensuring students are informed about the assessment criteria and methods used.

At the beginning of the academic year, the programme director organizes an information session for first-year students to introduce them to various aspects of the Master of Science (MSc) programme. The secretary distributes the Study Guide electronically, providing information about available services. The programme ensures that information and course delivery areas are accessible to students with special needs.

The PSP has identified the following admission criteria:

- The overall undergraduate degree grade.
- The grade of related undergraduate courses and thesis, if any.
- The (professional) experience after obtaining the degree relevant to the PSP and a CV including scientific publications and presentations in areas relevant to the PSP).
- Good knowledge of foreign languages (knowledge of English at least at Level B2 is a requirement) with more points awarded to knowledge of English at Level C2, as well as knowledge of a second language.
- Special knowledge, where necessary.
- The oral interview and the text of research intentions.
- Letters of recommendation.

The PSP spans one and a half years, or three semesters, during which students earn 90 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits. The coursework is completed in the first two semesters (30 ECTS each), while the third semester is dedicated to the MSc dissertation, also worth 30 ECTS credits. Students are required to attend lectures and workshops, participate in field trips, conduct lab work, and undergo evaluations at the end of each semester.

The PSP diploma qualifies graduates for employment in both the private and public sectors and social institutions. Graduates can also pursue Ph.D. studies and academic careers. A doctoral student in the employers and social partners group that met with the EEAP praised her experiences with the Ph.D. programme.

The new PSP provides detailed and comprehensive information that students will find very useful. The student handbook thoroughly describes the procedures for preparing a successful master's dissertation. It also includes information about public or private sector internships, student mobility, ethics rules, plagiarism, and distance learning.

II. Analysis

The proposed PSP in "Climate Crisis, Risks, and Disasters" aims to educate scientists in the areas of analysis, assessment, mapping, communication, management, and governance of risks, crises (with an emphasis on climate), and disasters from the perspective of Geographical Science and its applications.

Graduates of the new PSP will be equipped to inform and advise the public and the state on issues related to extreme natural phenomena and disaster risks. They will be prepared to develop action plans for risk mitigation, preparedness, operational response to crises (including climate deviations), rehabilitation, and reconstruction after disasters. They will also develop action plans to ensure security and civil protection.

These new scientists will meet the staffing needs of public, social, private, and local government bodies with relevant missions and responsibilities. The PSP also aims to update the knowledge and skills of those already employed in these fields, including executives in central administration, local government, educational institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and the armed forces.

The EEAP's meeting with employers and social partners highlighted the need for the proposed PSP, emphasizing the demand for qualified graduates that the programme aims to produce. Employers and social partners expressed strong support for the new programme and the Department of Geography faculty members who will implement it. Employers with long-standing relationships with the Department of Geography faculty members appreciated this ongoing collaboration.

III. Conclusions

The programme is fully compliant with the Principle.

Panel Judgement

Principle 3: Regulations for Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Postgraduate Studies, and certification	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- The Study Guide should describe in detail all PSP courses, including their goals and expected learning outcomes. These details must be part of the syllabi and available on the Departmental website.
- Establish introductory courses and other procedures to support students without the appropriate background in following the programme. Additionally, provide access to support resources such as tutoring, academic advising, and study groups to help students succeed.

Principle 4: Teaching Staff of New 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 and scientific competence of the teaching staff at the PSP, the appropriate staff-student ratio, the proper staff categories, the appropriate subject areas, the fair and objective recruitment process, the high research performance, the training, 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.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The criteria and recruitment procedures for faculty members and Collaborating Teaching Staff (CTS) are outlined in the Greek State laws. Harokopio University of Athens, as a public university, must adhere to strict regulations, akin to all Greek public universities.

The EEAP found that the teaching staff of the PSP on Climate Crisis, Risks and Disasters has significant experience on the topics of the PSP and overall excellent qualifications to teach the syllabus of the programme. The CTS are primarily members of the department, with some guest lectures from other public Universities or the non-academic sector.

The workload of CTS consists of two courses per semester (in the order of 6 teaching hours per week), which is deemed as manageable by the members of the staff. Further, members of the staff often share courses between them while external partners offer specialized guest lectures, which ease total teaching responsibilities and the overall teaching effort, thus leaving time for research. In this context, research activities and publication in international journals is satisfactory. The total number of international publications of the departmental teaching staff involved in the PSP amounts to approximately 500 and all CTS have an active profile in Scopus.

II. Analysis

The Department considers mobility of high importance to the staff and students of the PSP. Mobility is promoted through internal funding for participation in conferences; regular sabbaticals (financially supported); work placements through national and international collaborations; participation in externally funded projects; and Erasmus+ exchanges.

Teaching is linked to research directly via the inclusion of research results and outputs in teaching material; conducting dissertations in the context of research projects; through carrying out coursework that is explicitly based on teamwork and thorough research design; introducing new topics based on recent research trends (e.g. migration); and organizing scientific conferences or events. In addition, the department is expecting substantial investment in instrumentation and equipment for the next year, which will increase the capacity to conduct research and link it to teaching.

The PSP adopts a holistic approach to the thematic area of Climate Crisis, Risks and Disasters, emphasizing the value of interdisciplinary thinking. This seems to be one of the main strengths of the PSP, as reported by external partners and employment organisations. Consequently, there is no particular emphasis on specific scientific areas, besides the individual research foci of the CTS.

III. Conclusions

Faculty members are highly capable to teach the topics they are assigned to. The organization and thematic orientation of the PSP perfectly matches the profiles of the teaching staff. Many opportunities for staff mobility exist, and teaching load is well managed. The PSP adopts a holistic approach to the topic and promotes interdisciplinary thinking, which is greatly appreciated by the employment sector.

Panel Judgement

Principle 4: Teaching Staff of New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Continuous and stable administrative support is essential for maintaining the high-level standards of the PSP.

- Potential inclusion of specialized methodological courses (e.g. modelling, programming) could provide significant added value to the students of the PSP

Principle 5: Learning Resources and Student Support

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER THE TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS OF THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES. 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, 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 and foreign students, students with disabilities), in addition to the shift towards student-centered 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.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

Harokopio University makes available a number of facilities to cover teaching and learning needs for the duration of the PSP, as follows:

1. The library and information centre of the University.
2. The welfare, counselling and equality centre for teaching staff and students.
3. The student service centre which includes health coverage issues, the career office and the internships office.
4. The foreign language centre where students can enrol in free classes for English, French and German.
5. The student restaurant.
6. The student counsellor and the counsellor for students with special learning needs.

The Department of Geography includes various teaching rooms, as well as seminar rooms and laboratories. A 30-person teaching room equipped with 15 computers is dedicated solely to the students of master's courses. These computers, as well as the computers in the laboratories, are equipped with a number of specific pieces of software (such as GIS, programming, statistical analysis, and remote sensing). Most of the software is also available

via the students' personal computers using their university credentials. The university also provides a range of IT services via the Information and Networks Centre and the corresponding student portal, as well as an asynchronous learning platform and access to cloud storage. All students have access to all available rooms and laboratory equipment for their dissertation and other projects related to the PSP.

Regarding the PSP teaching staff, it is comprised of 10 members, all of which are members of the Department of Geography. There are two administrative staff members, one of which covers the existing PSP programme of the Department. There is also additional teaching and technical staff from various research and development projects carried out by the Department's teaching staff.

In general, it is the Department's policy is that new PSP students receive both a folder and a USB stick containing information about all the available student services.

A tuition utilisation plan was submitted by the Department in the context of this report, namely document A19, based on revenues and costs for 30 students per year, with a 30% maximum tuition exemption positions.

II. Analysis

The University and the Department offer a variety of student services and resources for the successful implementation of this new PSP, all of which are functional and easily accessible. The teaching resources cover all of the courses' learning objectives. The administrative staff is sufficient and competent to ensure the smooth operation of the student support services, based on years of experience from the Department's previous PSP.

According to the submitted tuition utilisation plan (A19), operational costs that are not covered by the University, will be covered by the tuition fees, such as new equipment and software costs, transportation costs both for the teaching staff and the students, field trips, publication costs, external teaching staff fees and additional administrative and technical support and promotional measures. The only aspect not clearly detailed in the plan is the possible fieldwork costs and/or raw data acquisition costs regarding the master's thesis. The EEAP raised this matter during the meetings with the Department's representatives. They verified that the following resources are also available:

Transportation costs for the students covered by tuition fees, which are considered as flexible costs; Research project costs implemented by the teaching staff or those incurred in collaborations with private or public institutions and private companies.

III. Conclusions

The learning resources and student support are in line with the standards of the HAHE.

Panel Judgement

Principle 5: Learning Resources and Student Support	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- At the beginning of the second or the third semester at the latest, inform students about the available resources, existing research projects, public and private sector partnerships with the Department, and collaborations with other research and academic institutions. This will help the students make decisions when selecting their thesis project, depending on their research interests, as field work/laboratory costs during a master's thesis can vary significantly depending on the project.

Principle 6: Initial Internal and External Evaluation and Monitoring of New Postgraduate Study Programmes

INSTITUTIONS AND ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM, FOR THE AUDIT, INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE NEW POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES, THUS ENSURING COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE PRESENT STANDARDS. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

The internal evaluation of the new PSP includes the assessment of the accreditation proposal, as well as the documentation in accordance with the Principles of the present Standards and the quality procedures of the Institution's Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS). The internal evaluation of new postgraduate study programmes also aims at maintaining the level of educational provision and creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students. The Institution, through its Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) and the corresponding academic units, organise and support the external evaluation procedures of the new PSP, according to the specific guidelines and directions provided by HAHE.

The above comprise the assessment of:

- *the objectives, content, and structure of the curriculum, the knowledge offered and the level of science and technology in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the PSP is up to date, according to the relevant documentation listed in the decisions of the pertinent bodies*
- *the entailed students' workload for the progression and completion of postgraduate studies*
- *the satisfaction of the students' expectations and needs in relation to the programme*
- *the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the PSP in question*

Postgraduate study programmes are designed and established in accordance with the provisions of the Institution's internal regulations, involving students and other stakeholders.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The EEAP is fully satisfied that the proposed PSP on Climate Crisis, Risks and Disasters is following the principles of the current Standards and the quality procedures of the Institution's Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS). The EEAP has established that the self-assessment of the proposed PSP is based on procedures that support the learning environment for the students and the strategic goals of the Institution. The EEAP has taken into account the following factors for the assessment of the PSP:

- Objectives, content and structure of the proposed curriculum.
- Level of science/technology in the specific discipline and in relation to academic staff.
- Student workload (as stated in the proposed PSP materials) for the progression and completion of postgraduate studies.

In addition, the EEAP is satisfied that the proposed PSP has taken into consideration the scientific and technological developments in the field, alongside societal and market needs, as well as national, European, and international policies in relation to climate change, risks and disasters.

Regarding evaluation and monitoring of the proposed PSP, there are clear policies for internal and external assessment, through the collection of information from students, teaching staff and other stakeholders. The annual report will be submitted to MODIP for review, and recommendations will be shared with the general faculty assembly.

II. Analysis

The process of annual internal review and continuous improvement for the proposed PSP will be based on questionnaires for the evaluation of teaching, programme curriculum of the graduates, and overall infrastructure/services offered by the PSP. These will be sent through the Quality Data Information System of MODIP, alongside data from the Erasmus Office, the Postgraduate Office, the Internship Office and the University Liaison Office. The Annual Internal Report, the discussions at Departmental Assembly level, and the results of the course/teaching evaluation questionnaires will inform the review and updates of the PSP syllabus. In addition, the teaching materials will be periodically updated, as informed by research progress in the respective fields of the academic staff, ensuring that the PSP overall is up to date. There is also evidence that any identified issues regarding the proposed PSP will be addressed when problems are identified in student evaluations.

III. Conclusions

The EEAP is satisfied that the self-assessment procedures of the proposed PSP are adequate but should also include a more active participation of current students, graduates/alumni, and external stakeholders.

Panel Judgement

Principle 6: Initial Internal and External Evaluation and Monitoring of New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Establish an External Advisory Board (EAB) to enhance further developments of the proposed PSP, thus securing a permanent link with the professional world.
- Make explicit and enhance further student participation and involvement of external stakeholders in PSP.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

The Harokopio University of Athens has implemented compliant and efficient mechanisms for monitoring and ensuring high-quality education and services relative to the PSP Climate Crisis, Risks, and Disasters. The existing quality assurance and continuous improvement policy and practices followed by the PSP align with the strategic objectives of the Department of Geography and the University.

- The new PSP carries over twenty years of teaching the same subject as a specialty in a previous PSP of the Department of Geography at HUA.
- Excellent research record and academic profile of the faculty.
- The teaching staff consists almost entirely of permanent faculty in the Department, which allows for accountability, continuity, and sustainability of the PSP.
- The PSP is unique in offering substantive, in-depth coverage of courses for managing Climate Crises, Risks, and Disasters, and offering opportunities for practical training to its students.
- The potential for employment of the postgraduate study programme graduates in public or private positions is high.
- Employers and social partners unanimously praised the PSP. They indicated a strong need for the Programme's graduates.

II. Areas of Weakness

- There is neither a formal External Advisory Board nor a streamlined input to the curriculum design by stakeholders or students.
- The course syllabi do not reflect a postgraduate level. There are no prerequisites to the courses, and there are no required remedial courses regardless of the background of incoming students.
- There is no formal, well-defined process for students, alumni, and external stakeholders to participate in the PSP evaluation and improvement.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Establish a formal External Advisory Board comprised of social partners, academics from foreign institutions, and other stakeholders to actively assist and guide the continuous review, revision, and further development of the PSP curriculum, and identify additional funding resources.
- Rephrase/reword the course syllabi and the student handbook to emphasize that course content is at the postgraduate level. Introduce prerequisites for all courses, especially those that are required. Identify remedial courses in the undergraduate programme that

must be taken for no credit by students whose background is not in Geography or similar fields.

- The Study Guide should describe in detail all PSP courses, including their goals and expected learning outcomes. These details must be part of the syllabi and available on the Departmental website.
- Make additional efforts and provide resources to enhance participation in Erasmus+, particularly in light of the ongoing efforts to internationalize higher education and attract students from abroad.
- Enhance the visibility and marketing of the PSP through its presence in the Web and social media. The EEAP believes that this excellent programme can gain higher recognition and social achievement if potential students, and the public in general, knew more about its accomplishments.
- Direct additional resources to the new PSP's experiential learning component (field trips).
- Enhance collaborations with other universities by actively utilizing opportunities provided by the Erasmus+ programme. The Department should promote these opportunities more prominently among students. Additionally, consider inviting distinguished professors from abroad and implementing other initiatives to increase the visibility of the new PSP programme.
- At the beginning of the second semester, inform students about the available resources, to help with decisions when selecting thesis project, in terms of its potential cost due to field or laboratory research.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

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

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **None**

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

1. Prof. Emeritus Nikolaos Katopodes (Chair)
2. Assoc. Prof. Seraphim Alvanides
3. Assoc. Prof. Emeritus Stavros Constantinou
4. Prof. Athanasios Vafeidis
5. Ms. Zygouri Evangelia