



**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ**  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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# **Accreditation Report**

## **for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:**

**Sport Studies: Sociology, History, Anthropology**

**Department: Social sciences**

**Institution: Hellenic Open University**

**Date: 21 October 2023**



**Επιχειρησιακό Πρόγραμμα**  
**Ανάπτυξη Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού,**  
**Εκπαίδευση και Διά Βίου Μάθηση**  
Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Postgraduate Study Programme of **Sport Studies: Sociology, History, Anthropology** of the **Hellenic Open University** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Part A: Background and Context of the Review</b> .....	<b>4</b>
I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel.....	4
II. Review Procedure and Documentation .....	4
III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile.....	7
<b>Part B: Compliance with the Principles</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 1: QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND QUALITY GOAL SETTING FOR THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 3: STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 4: STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AND CERTIFICATION</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 5: TEACHING STAFF OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 6: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES</b> .....	<b>40</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 9: ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC INTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES</b> .....	<b>42</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 10: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES</b> .....	<b>44</b>
<b>Part C: Conclusions</b> .....	<b>46</b>
I. Features of Good Practice .....	46
II. Areas of Weakness .....	46
III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions .....	47
IV. Summary & Overall Assessment .....	50

## **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 **Sport Studies: Sociology, History, Anthropology** of the **Hellenic Open University** the following four (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Professor Apostolis Papakostas (Chair)**  
Södertörn University, Stockholm, Sweden
  
- 2. Professor Dimitris Michailakis**  
Linköping University, Sweden
  
- 3. Dr. George Panayiotou**  
European University Cyprus
  
- 4. Mr. Konstantinos Vagiatis, PhD Student**  
University of the Aegean, Mytilene, Greece

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In reviewing the Postgraduate Study Programme of “Sport Studies: Sociology, History, Anthropology” of Hellenic Open University (hereafter the “Programme”), the objectives of the Panel, as described in the Guidelines for the Members of HOU, are:

- to establish whether the data provided from the various resources is consistent among one another and reflects 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 virtual (by electronic means, ZOOM platform) meetings and visits for two days as follows:

On Monday, 16/10/2023, the following virtual meetings took place:

- with the Dean of the School of Social Sciences
- the Director of the Programme
- the Head of the Department, MODIP members and staff
- Steering Committees/OMEA members
- an online tour of virtual classrooms, online platforms, and other facilities related to the Programme. The online tour followed a discussion of the facilities and infrastructure in which teaching and administrative staff participated.

On Tuesday, 17/10/2023, the following virtual meetings took place:

- with teaching staff of the Programme
- with current students of the Programme
- with Programme graduates
- with employers and social partners of the private and public sector
- meeting with the Director of the Programme, the Head of the Department, members and staff of MODIP, and members of Steering Committees/OMEA members.

During the above virtual meetings, the Panel had the chance to meet, talk, and interact with ASK and HOU members. All the participants were successfully encouraged to express their views and suggestions and answer the Panel questions. It is worth pointing out that the students were especially encouraged to demonstrate their overall learning experience freely. They welcomed the opportunity to talk to the Panel and to voice their views. The discussions were very constructive 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 internal evaluation report and other extensive material were made available to the Panel electronically in advance through HAHE. More information and materials were made available during the meetings. The Department worked diligently to prepare the internal evaluation report and other relevant materials and organise and host the virtual meetings. It is the feeling of the Panel that the Department has performed an excellent job throughout the internal evaluation process and that 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 gratefulness 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 provided in the internal evaluation report and other documents submitted before and during the virtual meetings.

### **III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile**

The Postgraduate Study Programme “Sport Studies: Sociology, History, Anthropology” is interdisciplinary, and its structure and courses are consistent with the Department’s overall objectives. The Programme aims to provide specialized knowledge regarding social and cultural history, sociology, anthropology and cultural sport studies through the interconnection of theoretical knowledge and research practice.

More specifically, the Programme aims to train researchers in the field of Social and Humanistic Studies and Physical Education and Sport Science through the theoretical and empirical/research sociological, historical and anthropological approach to sport. Programme graduates will have acquired the theoretical and methodological background at the end of their studies. Alongside its research mission, the Programme aims to specialise in sports, sports journalism and educational management, bringing them in contact with new theoretical and methodological trends in social, historical and cultural sports studies. The aim is to disseminate a modern culture around sports' social and cultural dimensions. The above goal is pursued through critical connection with wider social and cultural structures and processes while overcoming dominant stereotypes and prejudices in public discourse and corresponding practices. ASK utilises its pedagogical approach as a means of socialisation, social integration and intercultural reflection.

Successful Programme completion requires 120 ECTS completion in total. Student workload, as depicted in ECTS, is equally distributed over four semesters (30 ECTS per semester). The programme is structured in nine thematic courses, all of them compulsory. During the last semester, a thesis will be completed. All courses are delivered at a distance following the policies of the Hellenic Open University. The Programme’s tuition fee is €3600. A total of 140 active students are currently active.

The Programme is supported by academic staff from other Departments of HOU and other national and international Universities. All teaching staff are Ph.D. holders, active scholars and researchers in diverse areas such as sociology, history, social anthropology, and other relevant disciplines.

## **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**

Based on the accreditation proposal, a defined Quality Assurance Policy and a Quality Targeting for the PSP are developed and sufficiently communicated to all parties involved.



The Quality Policy of the Post-Graduate Study Program (PSP) in Sports Studies Sociology, History, Anthropology (ASK), as this is described in the accreditation proposal and Institutional/ Program websites, appears to be in line with the Quality Policy of the Institution and seeks to adapt to current conditions and requirements.

To implement this policy, the Institution, among other things, is committed to adopting procedures that will demonstrate:

- the adequacy and quality of the Program's resources
- the appropriateness of the structure and organization of the PSP
- the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching at the PSP,
- the drafting, implementation, and review of specific annual quality goals for the improvement of the PSP
- the strengthening of links with PSP's alumni
- the promotion of the quality and quantity of the research work of the teaching staff

However, beyond the demonstrated quality commitments, the successful implementation and delivery of the Quality Policy requires a significant revision and supplementation of the quality objectives and their respective KPIs. Still, whether these goals are duly monitored and updated based on the progress completed is unclear. In particular, the quality objectives do not appear to fully cover the Quality Policy both quantitatively and qualitatively, with a significant potential for the failure to implement the PSP's and Institution's policy in a smooth and timely manner. In particular, the PSP's general Quality Policy describes various quality processes that are not fully supported by the quality objectives or require extensive revision. It is worth noting that some objectives have solely a quantitative rather than a quantitative/qualitative dimension.

Concerning learning outcomes, it is noted these are not fully aligned or entirely relevant for level 7, according to the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education.

## **II. Analysis**

Based on the content of the Quality Policy, it is clear that the policy:

- is appropriate for the PSP
- includes a commitment of the academic unit to its implementation
- consists of a commitment towards continuous improvement
- commits to the efficient use of the financial resources that may come from the tuition fees

However, several points and aspects have been identified that need to be improved, as follows:

*Quality Objective 1. "Upgrading the Curricula and Quality Control of the Program of Study."*

The quality objectives that have been set do not seem to fully satisfy the above strategic objective as they are limited only to the expectation of a quantitative rise in the rate of students' participation in the assessment processes of the PSP, the quantitative development of more modules and the updating and provision of additional supporting material.

*Quality Objective 2. "Broadening the recognition of the PSP."*

The qualitative objectives that have been set solely focus on promotional actions on the internet and social media rather than actions related to international research partnerships, strategic alliances or actions of social responsibility and contribution to the content of the Programme and participation in internationalization actions through the Erasmus framework for students and faculty.

*Quality Objective 3. "Supporting Academic Development."*

Participation in staff training processes in distance education methods seems to be offered as an optional activity and not as a prerequisite prior to the participation of teaching staff in the PSP.

*Quality Objective 4. "Further collaboration with external bodies."*

Collaboration with external bodies and establishments is limited to strengthening links with the alumni network and not with state and social partners and with other institutions and research centres or distinguished experts in the context of Advisory Boards, which, although not foreseen by law, are not prohibited from being set up and operating at hoc.

*Quality Objective 5. "Strengthening PSP's Research Activity."*

The proposed measures are favourable; however, they limit the research activity to promoting the interdisciplinary nature of Theses in terms of innovation of methods and originality of research areas to be approached as well as the organization of a scientific meeting or production of scientific proceedings. However, no key measures are identified which would relate to KPIs on the number and impact of peer-reviewed publications by the Programme's teaching staff through individual initiated research activity, publication of supervised students' dissertations or tangible participation of teaching staff members in funded research projects and other related activities and the establishment of research collaboration groups.

It is also not clear how the research activity of the PSP could be strengthened while 100% of the teaching staff is employed on a six-monthly contract basis without a single individual being a full-time Faculty Member. It should be noted that the Program's teaching staff has full-time employment (100%) in other academic institutions, making it extremely difficult for them to contribute to any research development effort in the Programme.

**"Students' with Learning Difficulties Support"**

PSP has not considered any objective related to the support of students with learning difficulties. During the interview with teaching staff, it was found that the perception of teaching staff on students with learning difficulties is limited to accommodating disabled students concerning accessibility matters and smoothing their learning experience or providing additional examination time for people entitled to it. However, there is no provision

for students with learning difficulties needs assessment by a designated expert panel within the Programme/Institution and targeted case-by-case guidance for faculty members on personalised learning management.

On the other hand, there does not seem to be provision for the coverage of various other quality measures which are listed in the Quality Policy, such as:

- the appropriateness of the structure and organization of postgraduate programmes,
- the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications following the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education - level 7,
- the suitability of the qualifications of teaching staff for the PSP,
- the level of demand for graduates' qualifications in the labour market,
- the quality of support services, such as administrative services, libraries and the student support office for the PSP,
- the effective use of the financial resources of the PSP that can be drawn from tuition fees
- to conduct an annual review and audit of the quality assurance system of the PSP through the cooperation of the Internal Evaluation Team (IEG) with the Quality Assurance Unit (QA) of the Institution
- the ways of linking teaching and research,
- strengthening the extroversion of the MSP.

Furthermore, based on the Accreditation Proposal, the academic unit does not seem to have set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely objectives for the PSP, particularly concerning teaching methods effectiveness, student satisfaction, learning outcomes and research output.

Concerning the learning outcomes, although some modules are aligned with postgraduate level learning outcomes (e.g. ASK52, ASK63), it is noted that in the majority of the modules, the learning outcomes are not fully harmonized or aligned with level 7 according to the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (e.g. ASK51, ASK54, ASK55, ASK60, ASK61, ASK62). In particular, most learning outcomes are limited to knowledge involving recalling specific and universal elements, recall of methods and procedures, models, structures and frameworks. It is expected to be included in all modules and successfully monitor the acquisition of learning outcomes that will extend from factual knowledge to conceptual, procedural and metacognitive knowledge.

### **III. Conclusions**

A defined Quality Assurance Policy and a Quality Targeting for the PSP are developed and sufficiently communicated. The Quality Assurance Policy seems to be in line with the Quality Policy of the Institution and seeks to adapt to current conditions and requirements.

The Institution, among other engagements, is committed to adopting procedures that will demonstrate the adequacy and quality of the Program.

A significant review and matching of quality objectives with appropriate KPIs seem to be required. Even though part of the quality objectives is paired with the appropriate KPIs, it is unclear whether these goals are duly monitored and updated based on the progress completed.

Regarding learning outcomes, it is noted that minor subjects are not fully aligned or entirely relevant for level 7, according to the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education.

### Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

- It is proposed to revise and complete the quality objectives to fully satisfy the PSP's and Institutional Strategic Goals on Quality Assurance.
- Compulsory participation (with possible certification) of all teaching staff in structured training activities related to distance learning before assigning teaching duties is highly recommended to enhance the quality of teaching and student support.
- Consider developing KPIs relevant to international research partnerships and other strategic partnerships or actions of social responsibility. Erasmus's participation of staff and students should be set to broaden the recognition of the PSP.
- Consider developing KPIs related to the number and impact of publications by the Programme's teaching staff through personal research activity or students' dissertations, the measurable participation of teaching staff members in funded research projects and other related activities and the establishment of research collaboration groups.
- Consider establishing a Program Advisory Board as an ad hoc committee to discuss and exchange Quality Assurance ideas and good practices with experts from the broader spectrum of the state, local academia, industry, foreign academics, stakeholders, alumni, current students and others.
- Develop strategic goals, outcomes and KPIs to successfully meet the Quality Assurance quality measures that have not been included in the Quality Targeting of the PSP (see pertinent list in "Analysis" above).
- Revise the learning outcomes of the courses to make them appropriate for level 7, according to the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. To this end, it would be useful to use Bloom's Taxonomy. Extension of learning outcomes from factual knowledge to conceptual, procedural and metacognitive knowledge should be established.
- Recruitment of full-time academic staff is necessary. Ideally, full-time academic staff should comprise most of the teaching staff.

## **PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES**

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

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

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

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

*In addition, the design of PSP must consider:*

- *the Institutional strategy*
- *the active involvement of students*
- *the experience of external stakeholders from the labour market*
- *the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) for level 7*
- *the option of providing work experience to students*
- *the linking of teaching and research*
- *the relevant regulatory framework and the official procedure for the approval of the PSP by the Institution*

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

### **Documentation**

- *Senate decision for the establishment of the PSP*
- *PSP curriculum structure: courses, course categories, ECTS awarded, expected learning outcomes according to the EQF, internship, mobility opportunities*
- *Labour market data regarding the employment of graduates, international experience in a relevant scientific field*
- *PSP Student Guide*
- *Course and thesis outlines*
- *Teaching staff (name list including of areas of specialisation, its relation to the courses taught, employment relationship, and teaching assignment in hours as well as other teaching commitments in hours)*

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings**

The PSP was founded in 2016 (Government Gazette 2405/B/04-08-2016) and was re-established in 2018 under the title "Sports Studies: Sociology, History, Anthropology" based on the provision of article 32 of Law No. 4485/2017 (A'114) at the meeting of the Steering Committee of the Hellenic Open University (number 377/23.04.2018).

The Programme is unique in Greece, and its structure and organisation are adequate. According to the analysis of the accreditation proposal and the interviews conducted by the evaluation panel, there is no evidence of involvement or consultation from stakeholders, external experts, students and graduates during the PSP establishment and re-establishment. Based on the above, whether the PSP effectively meets current state, corporate, social, educational and other needs is unclear. As far as the qualitative structure of the PSP is concerned, there seems to be room for upgrading the content of the PSP in order to improve graduates' acquisition of valuable for their subsequent professional career competencies.

Students are admitted to the PSP with no examinations based on defined criteria, the most important of which is a bachelor's degree in a relevant discipline. Graduation requires the completion of 120 ECTS load, which are evenly distributed in 10 thematic modules within two years of minimum attendance. As regards the learning outcomes, both for the PSP and for the specific modules, it appears that they need to be revised to better correspond to level 7 according to the UNESCO ISCED-2011 code. At the same time, the coupling of the learning outcomes with the learning and examination activities of the PSP is not particularly evident, so emphasis should be placed on finding ways to ensure this aspect.

As regards the Study Guide and the course outlines, they are of a satisfactory standard. However, there is a need to create and implement defined and detailed rubrics to evaluate the PSP's assessed activities, and these should be made available to students at the commencement of each module.

Full-time personnel do not staff the PSP, making achieving all the program's strategic objectives challenging.

Finally, the PSP does not implement internships, which would contribute positively to an adequate achievement of the learning objectives of the PSP, and the active participation of students and teaching staff in Erasmus activities does not seem to be popular.

### **II. Analysis**

#### **Purpose and nature of the PSP**

The Master's Degree Distance Learning Program in "Sport Studies: Sociology, History, Anthropology" (ASK) aims at developing scientists and researchers in the fields of Social and Humanities Studies and Physical Education and Sports Science through the theoretical and empirical/research sociological, historical and anthropological approach to sports. The

program is offered entirely in Greek, and at the end of their studies, graduates are considered to have acquired the theoretical and methodological background and the necessary skills for the interdisciplinary social and cultural exploration of sport.

In parallel to its research mission, the PSP aims to specialise in sports, sports journalism and educational personnel, bringing them into contact with current theoretical and methodological trends in social, historical and cultural sports studies. The aim is to promote a new culture around sports' social and cultural dimensions. Through the critical connection with the broader social and cultural structures and processes, the PSP also aims to overcome dominant stereotypes and prejudices about sport in public discourse and practices and to the pedagogical use as a means of socialisation, social integration and intercultural reflection.

According to the UNESCO ISCED-2013 code, the PSP is classified in the educational fields: 0388 - Inter-disciplinary programmes and qualifications involving social sciences, journalism and information/ 0388. It is also considered an interdisciplinary programme in the following fields: 0314 Sociology and cultural studies, 0312 Political sciences and civics, 0222 History and archaeology, 0114 Teacher training with subject specialisation.

#### **Admission of students:**

Students' admission is conducted without entry examinations, following application by the candidates to the HOU, within the deadlines set by the Senate for each academic year.

The Senate allocates and determines the percentage of the places offered and further specifies the requirements for application to the programmes of study of the HOU. If the number of candidates per Programme of study exceeds the number of determined places, the following applies for selecting candidates:

- a) A draw shall be made between them if their number exceeds the number of places offered
- b) If places remain after the preceding order of preference has been observed, the remaining candidates shall be selected by a new drawing of lots.

The total number of places offered for undergraduate and postgraduate students may be fixed per academic year by a decision of the Steering Committee published in the Official Gazette. Based on the above provision, the number of places offered for the fall and spring semesters has been fixed at 150 per semester. There is a special provision for the admission of people with severe illnesses - at a rate of 5 % in addition to the places allocated for the bachelor's degree programmes. However, it is not clear whether the same provision applies to postgraduate programmes.

#### **Admission requirements**

According to the PSP's Guide, the program is open to applicants with a degree or diploma of higher education in a relevant discipline and proficiency in the Greek language. Knowledge of a foreign language and familiarisation with the use of computers, e-mail and the Internet are required for smooth Programme participation.



### **Successful completion of the Programme**

To successfully complete the Programme, the student must have completed all the modules and presented the Master's Thesis. The total number of ECTS required for the Postgraduate Diploma of Specialisation award is 120.

### **Design of the Programme**

The PSP is the only university-level Postgraduate Programme in Greece, one of the few worldwide, dealing with the History, Anthropology and Sociology of Sport. It is stated that it was designed based on the most up-to-date international standards and combines academic knowledge and practical experience (without implementing practical training) from the disciplines of History, Anthropology and Sociology.

The structure of the PSP through its thematic modules seems to be at least quantitatively adequate. The courses of the postgraduate Programme (Thematic Units) are divided into semesters of study in which the first three semesters include three Thematic Units of 10 ECTS each, while in the fourth semester, the Dissertation is carried out according to specific requirements listed in the study guide and on the University's website.

It would benefit the PSP Steering Committee to consider incorporating thematic modules into the PSP of thematic modules whose nature more adequately addresses the contemporary employment demands of PSP graduates and simultaneously ensures that there is no overlapping of subject content as has been reported by students and graduates alike. Some examples of such stand-alone modules could be the following:

- Emergence and Development of Modern Sport
- Issues in Contemporary Sport and Exercise
- Research Methods in the Sociology of Sport and Exercise
- Theories of Sport and Exercise
- Sociology of Leisure
- Sociology of Physical Education
- Sociology of Sport Policy and Development
- Sociology of Sport, Health and Exercise
- Sociology of Sports Journalism and Mass Media
- Sustainable Practice in Sport and Physical Culture
- Sport, Character and Ethical Action
- Sport and Integrity

It would also be worth exploring the possibility of incorporating a multi-dimensional module on Sports Science and Physical Education (e.g. Special Topics on Sports Performance, Health and Wellness) related to Coaching, Exercise Physiology, Sports Biomechanics, Sports Psychology, Health and Wellness so that students who lack the respective knowledge can better understand and familiarise themselves with the demands of sport and exercise.

At least a partial revision of the Programme in the framework of the following periodical internal review should be performed. Such a revision should consider a labour market needs assessment process and consultation with state, social, educational and corporate partners, other experts and students, which has not been conducted previously. Such an approach is necessary for the PSP to fully meet its strategic objective 3, "Connecting with society". Notably, during the interviews with both students and graduates, the articulation of the occupational needs served by the PSP was not evident. According to students' and graduates' views, the primary participation purposes to the PSP are satisfying lifelong learning goals and creating career development opportunities for existing professionals.

### **Expected learning outcomes according to the EQF**

The Study Guide describes 17 learning outcomes (14 are listed in the accreditation proposal) of the PSP that students are expected to acquire on completion of the Programme through the achievement of the Thematic Modules learning outcomes. The majority of Learning Outcomes (>50%) refer to skills mainly related to comprehension and description, which are classified at the lower levels of the Bloom & Krathwohl (1956) taxonomy. It is worth noting that the learning outcomes of most of the modules need to be revised to justify their classification at level 7 according to the UNESCO ISCED-2011 code. In addition to the above, it is not entirely clear how the learning outcomes of each thematic module are linked to the PSP learning outcomes for the panel to assess their attainment level.

Furthermore, based on the indicative feedback provided by instructors on assessed Thematic Modules activities, the link between these activities and the learning outcomes they state to address is not fully evident.

Concerning the feedback provided on assignments, it is not evident that it focuses on qualitative characteristics of the achievement of learning outcomes. It is worth noting that no rubrics are available, at least for the course assignments, which account for 40% of the total grade in each module. In addition, there is no indication of the extent to which the learning outcomes of the individual modules are achieved through exams, which account for 60% of the total grade in each module.

### **Course and Thesis Outlines**

The PSP has extensive Thematic Modules and Thesis Course Outlines in the study guide. In particular, for the Thesis, the General Regulations for Postgraduate Theses in a Master's Degree Programme are available, while concerning the Specifications - Useful Material for writing Postgraduate Theses and the submission of the Thesis to the HOU Repository, information is available in the Digital Education Space <http://courses.eap.gr> and especially in the section Programme of Studies. The teaching material is entirely digital and is provided through the HOU's Electronic Learning Spaces (courses platform).

### **Students' Evaluation.**

The student evaluation consists of two (2) Short Assignments with a weighting factor of 10% of the final grade, one (1) Semester Assignment with a weighting factor of 20% of the final grade and a final or a resit exam with a weighting factor of 60% of the final grade. It is worth noting that during the student interviews, it was mentioned that the examinations were conducted orally beyond the pandemic period (COVID-19) and in some cases, the format of the questions is such that it encourages memorisation rather than analysis, synthesis, interpretation, evaluation, etc. In addition, no rubrics have been identified that assess the achievement of the learning outcomes of each thematic module through the assessment activities described above.

Concerning the Dissertation (thesis), the final grade of the Evaluation Committee is based on evaluating the written text submitted and the oral presentation. To this end, an indicative guide for grading rubrics has been developed and is posted on the Institution's website (along with a reference in the study guide), which, however, was not apparent during the interview with faculty that they were at least universally utilised.

### **Students workload**

Based on the course outlines and their detailed analysis of the students' workload in each learning and assessment activity, a matching of the workload in each subject area and the declared ECTS is evident (approximately 30 hours of workload per ECTS) in line with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) for level 7.

### ***Teaching staff***

The staff of the Programme, both quantitatively and qualitatively, is sufficient to cover all the Thematic Modules of the PSP. In particular, the total of the ten thematic modules of the Programme is covered by 14 teaching staff members whose subjects seem to be consistent with the thematic module allocations. Notably, among staff, not a single faculty member has a full-time employment status with the Institution, while all the faculty members are employed in a semester-long employment relationship. In addition, most instructors (if not all) hold full-time employment in other national and international academic institutions, which results in 100% service commitment. It is not evident whether a parallel academic service provision in other academic institutions, like HOU, also implies an equivalent time reduction from their home institution in order to ensure their uninterrupted qualitative and quantitative contribution to the achievement of the strategic objectives of the current PSP in terms of Education, Research, Linking with Society, Internationalisation, Consolidation of the University Environment and Quality Assurance.

The recruitment of PSP's teaching staff follows a transparent and predetermined procedure for their selection and ranking in the framework of a public call for applications every three years. In addition to scientific, research and teaching experience, the recruitment criteria consider the candidate's experience in distance education and his/her evaluation from previous years, provided he/she has previously been teaching at the HOU.

### **Internship**

An internship is not available within the framework of the PSP. As every academic Programme is designed and implemented in order to meet social needs and aspects of economic activity, it would be of valuable interest to investigate (through a feasibility study) the possibility of implementing an internship as part of the learning activities of the PSP without distorting the character of the PSP as a distance learning Programme. Such a possibility would most likely benefit the Programme, which would respond to the social and economic needs. At the same time, it would link the graduates and potential future employers and partners, even if most are already employed in the private and public sectors.

### **International Mobility**

Regarding the mobility of students and teaching staff, an Erasmus office operates at the University, promoting and supporting mobility. Based on the interviews conducted with teaching staff, students and graduates, it seems that this potential is not sufficiently exploited, which does not contribute to the diverse exposure and experience benefits by students and faculty to educational and research best practices from direct contact with various cultures and academic operations. The Erasmus Office must investigate all the possible obstacles to the mobility of staff and students to find ways and targeted measures to overcome them, considering students' work commitments.

## **III. Conclusions**

The PSP is considered adequate and the only one of its kind in Greece and one of the few internationally. The criteria and the admission process for students seem to be transparent, as well as the requirements for successful studies completion. During the design of the PSP, however, there is no evidence of the involvement of an Advisory Board or consultation from stakeholders, external experts, students and graduates during the PSP establishment and re-establishment, something which does not promote the extroversion of the PSP and the adequate fulfilment of social and entrepreneurial needs beyond lifelong learning demands. The student workload is deemed reasonable. Concerning the content of the PSP, it seems that thematic modules whose nature more adequately addresses the contemporary employment demands of PSP and society needs, as well as a multi-dimensional module in Sport and Exercise Science, are lacking. As far as the learning outcomes are concerned, a majority of learning outcomes (>50%) indicate skills mainly related to comprehension and description, which are classified at the lower levels of the Bloom & Krathwohl (1956) taxonomy (more suitable for undergraduate level). At the same time, no apparent connection between the Thematic Modules' learning outcomes is evident, and no rubrics support this aspect apart from the Dissertation (Thesis), where a rubric is available. Feedback on students' assignments is provided; however, there is room for improvement, emphasising qualitative feedback related to acquiring learning outcomes. Special care should be taken so that exams and other modes of student evaluation focus on attaining level 7 learning outcomes according to the UNESCO ISCED-2011 code and the Bloom & Krathwohl (1956) taxonomy. The PSP needs direct full-time

staff recruitment as it is unclear whether contract collaboration with teaching staff can effectively contribute to achieving its strategic objectives. Finally, the PSP should evaluate the possibility of introducing internships and creating conditions to motivate teaching staff and students to take advantage of the opportunities and benefits of international mobility through Erasmus.

### Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

- It is proposed to consider the possibility of revising the Programme at the next stage of internal evaluation and to introduce modern thematic modules that better serve the needs of modern society.
- Introducing a Special Topics subject in Sport and Exercise Science is believed to positively contribute to comprehending the multidimensional aspects of sport, especially for people who do not fully understand the field due to their basic studies content.
- It would be productive for the PSP to find ways, through the Study Programme Director, to ensure that content overlapping between thematic Modules is avoided.
- It is proposed to revise the learning outcomes to reflect a postgraduate Study Program, justifying their classification at level 7 according to the UNESCO ISCED-2011 code and the Bloom & Krathwohl (1956) taxonomy.
- It is proposed that a template matrix be created, which will contain in the first column the expected learning outcomes of each Thematic Module and in subsequent columns the learning and examination activities within the module through which each learning outcome is assessed and addressed.
- The matrix referred to above, and the assessment rubrics for each evaluation activity in each Thematic module must be communicated to students at the beginning of the semester as an integral part of assignments instruction for transparency and identification of the exact learning and assessment demands.
- As far as the dissertation rubric is concerned, formulation of grading criteria and a qualitative update of the rubric is recommended to make it more specific and detailed regarding the expected outcome at each grading level.
- Particular emphasis needs to be placed on feedback, which must necessarily focus beyond technical and structural aspects on the achievement of learning outcomes by students through assignments and examinations.
- Full-time staff recruitment is necessary to achieve the PSP's strategic objectives effectively.
- It is proposed to explore the introduction of an internship in the PSP, which is believed to contribute to a better interconnection of the learning process with contemporary corporate, social, state and educational needs and will create new professional opportunities for graduates.
- It is necessary to find ways to effectively promote the international mobility of both teaching staff and students to benefit from good international practices in their field and promote intercultural experience and interaction.

### **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**

After reviewing the submitted documents and conducting interviews with faculty members and students, it became evident that the PSP effectively fulfils the requisite conditions pertaining to the relevant principle.

The distance learning approach employed across all the academic programs the Open University provides, including the one under consideration, underscores a paramount focus on student-centred learning. Within this framework, students are empowered to organize their coursework based on their unique requirements and capabilities. They leverage available technology to accommodate their schedules, engaging in asynchronous distance learning while actively participating in group discussions and assignments. The distinctive facets characterizing the student-centred learning model of this program encompass regularly scheduled group advisory meetings, facilitating discourse and guidance for students. Additionally, there is frequent and consistent communication with students to address inquiries and provide systematic support throughout their academic journey. Students are further assisted in assignment preparation and supported throughout their study plans, with their assignments marked and individualized feedback offered. However, it is noteworthy that students have expressed a desire for increased face-to-face interactions with instructors, which they believe would enhance peer cohesion and foster a stronger sense of belonging within the academic community.

As a result of implementing the distance education approach, the teaching staff assumes the role of Academic Advisor. The Academic Advisors maintain regular communication with students throughout the semester, with the primary objective of gaining insights into each student's unique educational needs and expectations. This understanding enables them to tailor their teaching methods, encouraging and actively engaging students in learning. Additionally, they foster communication among students and recommend supplementary academic resources. Students have attested to the seamless and direct nature of their interactions with the faculty. For instance, they highlighted the faculty's prompt responses to emails and their availability outside of scheduled office hours. Furthermore, students noted the development of personal relationships with the faculty.

Assessment techniques and evaluations exhibit variability, encompassing both formal approaches conducted after each semester, involving written or oral examinations for students with specific educational requirements and ongoing assignments distributed throughout the semester. Consequently, there is a deliberate effort to ensure that students' overall performance is not solely contingent on their final exam scores but also influenced by interim evaluation assignments applied throughout the academic year. The constituents of grades and the evaluation methodologies are made available in advance and are accessible within the course syllabi. During interviews with students, a notable emphasis was placed on the continuous monitoring and feedback they receive, significantly contributing to their capacity to enhance their academic performance.

The educational process is subject to evaluation by students through completing questionnaires after each academic semester. This assessment method ensures anonymity, as the system exclusively generates aggregated statistics for each question, precluding the identification of individual students. A culture of encouraging and supporting students to actively participate in teaching and assessment has been cultivated.



Finally, a formal complaint mechanism is in place for instances where students wish to voice their concerns. An institutional-level Student Advocate has been established per the pertinent laws currently in effect (law 4009/2011). Furthermore, for addressing educational grievances raised by students, a process for managing and monitoring such complaints is set to be piloted through an electronic form.

## **II. Analysis**

The PSP adheres to student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment tenets. The findings underscore the vital importance of student-centred learning, wherein students assume an active role in their education rather than being passive recipients of knowledge. This active involvement empowers students to construct understanding, pose inquiries, engage in meaningful dialogues, and collaborate with their peers. The academic staff's role as advisors is crucial in facilitating this entire process. Furthermore, the PSP acknowledges the significance of assessment methods that align with the student-centred approach. It recognizes that conventional assessment techniques may fall short in measuring the depth of comprehension and critical thinking associated with active learning. The assessment strategies go beyond merely evaluating students' factual knowledge; they also assess their capacity to analyse, synthesize, and apply concepts within intricate and practical contexts in harmony with the comprehensive educational objectives of a student-centred approach. The student feedback survey is consistent with the principles of student-centred learning, valuing students' perspectives and actively involving them in shaping their educational experiences. Finally, as regulations stipulate, the PSP has established a well-defined process for handling student appeals.

## **III. Conclusions**

The HOU determined that the PSP strongly emphasises advancing the crucial concept of student-centred learning and teaching. This emphasis serves to bolster students' active involvement, not only in the course evaluation process but also in every facet of their educational voyage. Furthermore, it fosters and encourages the development of mutual respect between students and the faculty and staff.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

The HOU encourages the PSP to create opportunities for enhancing belonging and cohesion within the academic community.

## **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 Institution provides excellent administrative support to students, centrally managed and substantially assisted through the role of the "Instructor-Advisor" to the extent that this can be performed considering the absence of full-time teaching staff at the PSP. The admission of students is conducted without examinations, whereas their progression is managed automatically and through the support of the "Instructor - Advisor" within the framework of statutory duties and responsibilities. Distinguished students are awarded scholarships based on specific performance criteria.

There is provision and support for the mobility of staff and students, mainly in the context of Erasmus, but this is not being successfully exploited. It should also be noted that the PSP has not institutionalised internships as part of the PSP.

The PSP implements a credit transfer system (ECTS) where the Coordinators of the Thematic Modules collaborate with the Dean's Offices of the Faculties for the corresponding courses.

A complete and comprehensive Code of Research Ethics is available, as well as a Student Guide, which includes, among others, the provisions for elaborating a Thesis, supplemented by General Regulations. Finally, all graduates are awarded a Diploma Supplement in Greek and English.

## **II. Analysis**

### **Availability of Services to Students**

The administrative students' support is centralised. Through this system, the curricula management is carried out in parallel. Students are informed of the support services within the second week of the beginning of their studies. As part of the panel interviews with students and alumni, their satisfaction with the efficiency and willingness of HOU administrative staff in terms of service was expressed.

### **Students' Admission and Progression**

The admission of students is conducted without entry examinations, following application by the candidates to the HOU, within the deadlines set by the Senate for each academic year. The number of places offered for the fall and spring semesters has been fixed at 150 per semester.

Progress is quantitatively recorded by the courses' learning platform through which instructors can monitor progress. The qualitative assessment of progress is carried out during sessions with the instructors, particularly the "Instructor-Advisors". During the panel interviews with students and graduates, some dissatisfaction was expressed regarding the fact that some instructors are not readily available to them. It is noted that faculty members are required to allocate three hours per week as part of their communication responsibilities with students. The difficulty in the availability of instructors is understandable due to the absence of full-time faculty at PSP whose time would be 100% dedicated to PSP's educational, research and administrative activities.

### **Faculty and Students' Mobility**

It is carried out on two axes, the first of which concerns personal collaborations and participation in conferences, oral presentations, scientific committees, and electoral bodies, as well as research collaboration and teaching in departments of other university institutions. The second axis concerns mobility through Erasmus. Encouragement of students is part of the responsibilities of the "Instructor - Advisor". The Erasmus Office, the Erasmus Coordinators of the HOU Schools, and the online resources have an essential role to fulfil. However, the response has been insufficient.

### **ECTS Implementation**

A complete credit transfer system is applied. Specifically, for one semester of study transfers, 1 ECTS module is assigned; for one full year of study transfers, 2-3 ECTS modules are assigned. Course allocations are made in cooperation with the Course Coordinators and pre-approved by the Deans of the Schools.

### **Student Guide**

The PSP has a complete, comprehensive and coherent Student Guide in which solid information is provided on all aspects of academic study and support for students during their studies.

### **PSP Thesis Requirements**

The Institution has established and implements General Regulations for the Transparent Commissioning and Conduct of Postgraduate Theses. The Thesis corresponds to a specific Thematic Module of semester-long duration. There are indicative evaluation criteria to ensure uniform evaluation of Theses, while the Assessment Committee awards the final grade based on the evaluation of the written text submitted and the oral presentation. For this purpose, special rubrics have been developed and made available to assist in transparency and documentation of the grading process.

### **Practical Training and Scholarships granting.**

The PSP does not provide an established internship. This particular need should be evaluated based on a feasibility study by the PSP to determine whether such an internship would benefit the students by possibly acquiring supplementary skills. The fact that students are already employed in the private or public sector should not be considered a substitution for any structured and monitored internship. Supervised and guided internship of a purposeful and reflective nature based on acquiring specific learning outcomes and skills is not safeguarded.

According to HOU's scholarship regulations, institutional scholarships in all PSPs are awarded to students of Postgraduate Study Programmes based on specific transparent provisions.

### **Code of Research Ethics**

The HOU operates an Ethics Committee whose responsibilities include compliance with the institutional code of ethics, which covers educational work, research and intellectual property rights. The Ethics Committee has five members and consists of three (3) members of the Senate and two (2) Deans, with an equal number of substitute members.

The Senate shall appoint the Chair, the core and substitute members of the Ethics Committee. The term of office of the Ethics Committee shall be two years, and its functioning shall be based on established principles described in detail in the Code of Ethics.

### **Diploma Supplement**

The Department of Student Registry (DRM) of the HOU grants a Diploma Supplement to all graduates, which indicates the courses of the PSP in which they were examined during their studies, as well as the credit points (ECTS) awarded for each module. The Diploma Supplement is available in both Greek and English.

## **III. Conclusions**

The administrative services smoothly and efficiently manage student admission, progression, recognition of postgraduate studies, and certification, the teaching staff and the "Instructors-Advisors". Particular care is needed in the availability of teaching staff to support students. It is necessary to recruit full-time staff to assist effectively in administrative, educational and research tasks. Finally, a feasibility study on introducing an internship at PSP is necessary.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

- A feasibility study is proposed to be carried out to examine the possibility of implementing an internship.
- Ways of better and systematic accessibility of students to instructors for academic support purposes need to be sought.
- It is necessary to promote procedures for recruiting full-time teaching/research staff in the PSP to meet permanent needs.

## **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 HOU lacks the necessary factual data in order to pronounce itself on whether recruitment is transparent and impartial. Another set of input and inquiry would have been necessary as to examine this specific feature. However, for the recruitment of the teaching staff, the University announces – every three years – vacancies for one-year employment with the possibility of renewal for three consecutive years. The announcement invites prospective members to provide detailed information about teaching and research experience, as well as other information specified in the announcement. The selection, the HOU was told, is merit-based and transparent. For the renewal of the contract, the evaluation results by students conducted after each module and the evaluation of the Programme Coordinators are considered.

Both the Hellenic Open University and the Programme of “Sport Studies. Sociology, History, Anthropology” organize or participate in scientific conferences, presentations and other

research activities. Career prospects are provided through collaborations with various Universities in Greece and abroad. Moreover, the existence of the Hellenic Open University in the Greek academic life has been an attraction in itself, as it provides the opportunity for additional funding for faculty members of other universities, as well as the opportunity/challenge for a professor to work in a distance education model, different from the traditional educational model.

The workload of the teaching staff is deemed appropriate, although instructors unfamiliar with distance learning must spend some time familiarizing themselves with new techniques. Regular discussions with students and providing detailed feedback on various assignments and other coursework are time-consuming. Instructors are also obliged to prepare assignments, update the digital learning platform, support students in delivering assignments throughout their study schedule (14 weeks), proofread assignments and provide individualized feedback to each student. It should be noted that the number of students in a class also affects the workload. This also substantiates the salary variation among instructors (depending on the number of students). Thus, the workload is certainly more than in conventional universities. It must also be noted that each thematic module corresponds to four written assignments or three assignments/activities per semester. Regular meetings are scheduled for students' support. Instructors participate in online Group Counselling Meetings - five meetings per year, and there are intermediate meetings when necessary. The duration of a regular meeting is four hours.

## **II. Analysis**

The HOU's impression is that there is an atmosphere of collegiality among instructors. For instance, the Panel was told that instructors consult each other in the program's planning. In the annual review for each faculty member in which his/her performance is evaluated only in exceptional cases, the university has not approved an instructor's contract. Looking at the faculty members' CVs as they appear on the department's webpage, there is evidence of considerable scholarly work. Several students expressed admiration for the expertise of their instructors.

## **III. Conclusions**

- The students were pleased with the curriculum organisation and the competence, assistance, and support they received from the instructors.
- Students and postgraduates underline that the meticulous feedback they received from instructors had improved their texts, reflected in the high rates they received at the exams.



## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

- There is a need for at least one faculty member to be recruited with competence in Sports Science and Physical Education.
- The HOU underlines the importance of substantial financial support by the State to ensure and enhance research outcomes.
- Solid research structures must be established since the research conducted is occasional, depending on collaborating instructors recruited at the time.

## **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 LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORT, AND – ON THE OTHER HAND- FACILITATE DIRECT ACCESS TO THEM BY ESTABLISHING INTERNAL RULES TO THIS END (E.G. LECTURE ROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, NETWORKS, NETWORKS, CAREER AND SOCIAL POLICY SERVICES ETC.).**

*Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient resources and means, on a planned and long-term basis, to support learning and academic activity in general, so as to offer PSP students the best possible level of studies. The above means include facilities such as the necessary general and more specialised libraries and possibilities for access to electronic databases, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, IT and communication services, support and counselling services.*

*When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed students, students with disabilities), in addition to the shift towards student-centred learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the institutional context. However, the internal quality assurance proves -on the one hand- the quantity and quality of the available facilities and services, and -on the other hand- that students are aware of all available services.*

*In delivering support services, the role of support and administration staff is crucial and therefore this segment of staff needs to be qualified and have opportunities to develop its competences.*

### **Documentation**

- *Detailed description of the infrastructure and services made available by the Institution to the academic unit for the PSP, to support learning and academic activity (human resources, infrastructure, services, etc.) and the corresponding firm commitment of the Institution to financially cover these infrastructure-services from state or other resources*
- *Administrative support staff of the PSP (job descriptions, qualifications and responsibilities)*
- *Informative / promotional material given to students with reference to the available services*
- *Tuition utilisation plan (if applicable)*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **I. Findings**

The PSP effectively meets the educational needs of its students by offering a wide range of infrastructure and services that are institution-wide. This is evident from examining the submitted documents and interviews with faculty members and students.

The Postgraduate Studies Programme has established an Online Library and Information Centre overseen by the Library Committee to address students' academic requirements comprehensively. This initiative takes a two-pronged approach, giving equal importance to electronic and printed resources ensuring quick access to essential information. The focus on electronic resources aligns with the contemporary need for rapid data retrieval. Furthermore, the PSP utilizes a course platform that enables students to engage in various activities, from studying course materials to submitting assignments and checking their assessment results.

The Student Service Centre manages all student affairs and communicates with students. In conjunction with the Chatbot service, it offers immediate assistance when the institution's administrative services are unavailable. Other student services include the Career Office, which offers comprehensive career and lifelong learning guidance, and the Erasmus+ Office, which manages student and teaching staff mobility. The institution also houses the Centre for Counselling and Psychological Support and the office of the "Student Advocate." Feedback from teaching staff and alumni indicates that these services are generally user-friendly. Administrative staff provide extensive guidance and assist with technical matters through email or telephone. Video tutorials offering step-by-step instructions for the PSP's online platforms are readily available.

All services and infrastructure are funded by various financial resources, which are generally deemed adequate for achieving the PSP's objectives. Finally, a tuition utilization plan outlines the distribution of fees.

## **II. Analysis**

After a thorough analysis, the HOU scrutinized these observations and highlighted the PSP's strong framework for delivering crucial support services to its students. The library's focus on electronic resources aligns with modern educational demands, facilitating quick access to vital information necessary for academic achievement. The extensive array of support services exemplifies the University's dedication to fostering comprehensive student growth. Students and alumni were well-informed about the support initiatives and resources offered by the Department and the program, and they expressed contentment with the administrative, technological, and academic support they received throughout their academic journeys.

## **III. Conclusions**

In summary, the PSP displays a robust dedication to providing its students with an array of services and resources. The emphasis on electronic resources within the library system aligns with the changing requirements of contemporary learners. The extensive array of support services, overseen by dedicated administrative units, markedly enriches the overall student experience. Essentially, the PSP has achieved praiseworthy advancements in its support for students, and with an ongoing commitment to enhancement, it can further elevate the quality and effectiveness of its support services.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 6: Learning resources and student support</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
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 Hellenic Open University established a set of information systems through which the data of students, teaching staff, the structure and organization of courses, and the provision of services to students and the academic community are managed and monitored. The nature of the educational mode used – distance learning – made it imperative that such mechanisms are well-functioning. The information-gathering procedures start from student registration (done electronically) to graduation. The university maintains all the necessary information to support the educational process.

For these purposes, the university has at its disposal several software tools used both for collecting information and for processing it in order to draw conclusions. The IT system provides a special questionnaire for evaluating teaching and instructors by students, but also special forms for evaluation are used by the program coordinators. The data of the above evaluation actions are processed by specific software which incorporates appropriate analysis mechanisms and semi-automatic generation of evaluation reports.

The university provides information and support to incoming students by sending informative emails by means of information letters through the educational platform (course.eap.gr/study.eap.gr) with announcements and posts by the Directors, Coordinators and instructors and through discussion and question resolution during the advisory meeting held at the beginning of the semester.

In addition, student data such as demographic data, examination performance, and attendance of subjects are automatically collected by the Internal Evaluation Unit (MEA) and processed to create reports for the information of the institution's administrative and academic bodies. The main units handling such data are the Facilities Department, the Internal Evaluation Unit, the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), the Student Registry, and the Personnel Department. The Internal Evaluation Unit provides a special questionnaire for the evaluation of the instructors by the students. The data of this evaluation are processed by special software of the Internal Evaluation Unit. In addition, student data such as demographics, exam performance, and attendance in the program are automatically collected by the Internal Evaluation Unit and processed to generate reports for the information for the program's administrative and academic bodies. The results of the student evaluation of instructors are forwarded first to the instructors themselves and then to the Coordinators of the program, to the Dean and the Steering Committee. Initially, the responsible Coordinators investigate specific cases of evaluation that need attention, and if there is a considerable cooperation issue with an instructor, they take the matter to a higher level.

## **II. Analysis**

The program has established procedures for collecting data regarding the student body, teaching methods, and student progression. Student evaluations are the primary tool in measuring the pedagogical performance of faculty. These are based on standardized questionnaires, collecting information about the teaching methods, the teaching competence, the syllabus, the adequacy of the administrative and support infrastructure, etc. The response ratio is about 45-50%, which is deemed satisfactory. This information provides feedback for individual courses and the curriculum when adequately utilised.

Many students and postgraduates witness that cooperative relationships are developed with instructors beyond the boundaries of the subject area. Instructors strive to create a direct, meaningful, personalized relationship with students.

## **III. Conclusions**

Student evaluation is a well-established practice. However, there is no evidence that the collected data from the student evaluations are factored in changes in modular provisions' learning and teaching standards in the following year.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 7: Information management</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
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 Institution has set up a thorough mechanism for public information, and it primarily disseminates it through its website ([www.eap.gr](http://www.eap.gr)) to all interested parties (current and future students, researchers, alumni, etc.). The website's main page provides comprehensive and accurate information about the institution, faculties and studies, including contact details. All scientific events, collaborations and activities are announced on the website. Moreover, most of the Institution's units or services, such as the Library, Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance, Centre for Counselling and Psychological Support, and Erasmus office, publish detailed information on a particular site as a subdomain of the main website. The website has a dedicated segment containing detailed information about the PSP (<https://www.eap.gr/education/postgraduate/biannual/sportsstudies-sociology-history-anthropology>). In particular, the PSP section contains descriptive information about its structure, course outlines, learning outcomes, degree awarded, tuition fees, study regulations and admission procedures. All information is provided both in Greek and English language.

Apart from the website, the members of the academic community of the PSP are further informed about its activities through the training platform ([courses.eap.gr](http://courses.eap.gr)) and e-mails sent to their personal e-mail addresses. Additionally, on the official social media of the Institution, on the Institution's web radio and digital newspaper, a selection of activities carried out under the auspices of the PSP are disseminated.

Finally, various actions take place regarding advertising, participation or organization of workshops, conferences and other events about PSP. In this context, digital and printed information material has been created.



## II. Analysis

The HOU engaged in discussions with staff, students, and stakeholders, reviewed pertinent documents, and conducted an extensive examination of the PSP's public information system. Key figures within the PSP, such as the Department of Education, the Director, the Assistant Director, and course coordinators, play a central role in overseeing and ensuring the quality, accuracy, and timeliness of public information related to the PSP. The PSP stands out by maintaining up-to-date, clear, and unbiased information accessible to various interested parties, as elaborated earlier. Additionally, it actively promotes transparency, accountability, and relevance by providing comprehensive details regarding quality standards, regulations, and admission procedures. In summary, the analysis revealed that the PSP had dedicated significant efforts to effectively present itself to both its student body and the wider public.

## III. Conclusions

In summary, the Panel believes that the PSP offers an extensive and valuable range of information for individuals interested in their programs. This commitment aligns with the expectations placed on educational institutions to furnish precise and up-to-date information about their postgraduate offerings. Such efforts benefit both the institutions and the individuals, fostering informed decision-making, accountability, and an elevated standard of higher education.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

None.

## **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 curriculum undergoes an annual internal evaluation. The Offices in charge that cooperate and carry out actions for the operation are: The Internal Evaluation Unit, the Strategic Planning and Development Office, and the Quality Assurance Unit. There is an established practice of reassessing, revising, and updating the syllabus. The Internal Evaluation Unit must improve the operation of the university's internal control system to: a) enhance its effectiveness and efficiency, b) improve its reliability, and c) support the institution in achieving its strategic objectives through reasonable assurance as to the efficiency and effectiveness of its governance, risk management and control systems and processes.

A well-designed and informative website is offered. Information regarding the study program, courses, teaching, research staff, and internal regulations is available online (in Greek and English). Announcements are available on the homepage. The information is up-to-date, transparent, and accessible.

## II. Analysis

The Department is constantly monitoring through its network of cooperation with the local stakeholders and societal partners the changing needs of society. However, there is a need to strengthen the relations with social partners as they are sporadic and occasional.

## III. Conclusions

The self-assessment, the external evaluation, the MODIP indicators, the questionnaires of students and graduates, and the consultation of the committees of the Department are key sources that contribute to the ongoing monitoring and periodic review of the Postgraduate Program. Each teaching staff member is responsible for updating the content, the bibliography, and the pedagogical methods of his course and reviewing the program's content in light of the latest bibliography, thus ensuring that the program is up-to-date.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

- Provide clear information on how the self-assessments result in specific measures.
- The website must be enriched with links that direct students to additional information on similar programs in other EU universities.

## **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 Department and the University worked diligently in preparing materials, presentations, organizing and hosting the 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 of all meetings. The discussions were very constructive and fruitful and were conducted in a cooperative manner and attitude. The efficiency and eagerness of the Department 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 staff members (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. The current external evaluation process showed that the University and the PSP are committed to the letter, spirit and process of quality assurance and external review. There is already a step-by-step action plan in place for utilizing the findings and recommendations of the external evaluation. As they pointed out during the meetings, it will help them improve by enabling them to identify problematic areas and find suitable solutions.

### III. Conclusions

The panel's impression is that the PSP 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 positively impact 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

<b>Principle 10: Regular external evaluation of postgraduate study programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
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**

- The PSP is the only university-level Postgraduate Programme in Greece, one of the few worldwide, dealing with the History, Anthropology and Sociology of Sport. It is stated that it was designed based on the most up-to-date international standards and combines academic knowledge and practical experience (though without implementing practical training) from the disciplines of History, Anthropology and Sociology.
- An outstanding innovation of the Programme is that it seeks to be implemented through the cooperation of academic specialists from several universities and disciplines. All teaching staff should be praised for their firm commitment, concentrated effort, and enthusiasm to reach this point despite the obstacles and difficulties created by limited resources and other external factors. It is pointed out that the academic environment of the Programme has a cooperative atmosphere, mutual respect and collegial spirit that has made this possible.
- The teaching staff has the appropriate qualifications, which are continuously cultivated by development activities in their home institutions. The curriculum is organized according to the latest trends in the scientific field. The Programme was praised by the social partners, students and alumni, and it is supported by the leadership of the University.
- The Programme delivers a student-centred distance education that cultivates diverse perspectives and independence and prepares students for important roles in the field of sports. It prioritizes transparent student selection and a full-time attendance model. The Regulation of Studies document provides comprehensive guidance.
- The Programme actively encourages and values continuous student course evaluations to drive continuous improvement.

### **II. Areas of Weakness**

- The research environment that supports the Programme is not structured in terms of an institutionalized research profile in Sport Studies: Sociology, History, Anthropology at the Hellenic Open University.
- Relying on external competence as regards the core themes of the Programme may be counter-productive in the long term.
- Concerning the content of the PSP, it seems that thematic modules whose nature more adequately addresses the contemporary employment demands of PSP and society needs, as well as a multi-dimensional module in Sport and Exercise Science, are lacking.
- Relations and interactions with stakeholders are sporadic and ad hoc.

- The sense of community among students and instructors is rather weak due to the geographic distances of students' residences and the teaching staff's institutional affiliation disparity.
- Some unresolved issues of Quality Policy and Implementation are evident (in more detail under the section Principles 1 and 2 of the report).

### **III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions**

General recommendations:

- Solid research structures must be established since the research conducted is occasional, depending on those working at the time.
- Full-time staff recruitment is necessary to achieve the PSP's strategic objectives effectively.
- It is proposed to consider revising the programme at the next stage of internal evaluation and to introduce contemporary thematic modules that better serve the needs of the current society.
- Introducing a "Special Topics" subject in Sports and Exercise Science is considered to contribute positively to comprehending the multidimensional aspects of the sport, especially for people who, due to their basic studies content, lack basic knowledge of the field.
- Consider establishing a Program Advisory Board as an ad hoc committee to discuss and exchange Quality Assurance ideas and good practices with experts from the broader spectrum of the state, local academia, industry, foreign academics, stakeholders, alumni, current students and others.
- The HOU should encourage the PSP to create opportunities for enhancing belonging and cohesion within the academic community.
- It is proposed to make minor adjustments to the quality objectives to fully satisfy the Program's and institutional Strategic Goals on Quality Assurance.

Specific recommendations

- Compulsory participation (with possible certification) of all teaching staff in structured training activities related to distance learning before assigning teaching duties is highly recommended to enhance the quality of teaching and student support.

- Consider developing KPIs relevant to international research partnerships and other strategic partnerships or actions of social responsibility. Erasmus staff and students' participation should be encouraged to broaden the recognition of the PSP.
- Consider developing KPIs related to the number and impact of publications by the Programme's teaching staff through personal research activity or students' dissertations, the tangible participation of teaching staff members in funded research projects and other related activities and the establishment of research collaboration groups.
- Develop strategic goals, outcomes and KPIs to successfully meet the Quality Assurance quality measures that have not been included in the Quality Targeting of the PSP as per the PSP's Quality Policy.
- It is proposed to revise the learning outcomes to reflect a postgraduate Study Program, justifying their classification at level 7 according to the UNESCO ISCED-2011 code and the Bloom & Krathwohl (1956) taxonomy. To this end, it would be essential to use Bloom's Taxonomy. Extension of learning outcomes from factual knowledge to conceptual, procedural and metacognitive knowledge should be established.
- It would be useful for the PSP to find ways of ensuring that content overlapping between thematic Modules is avoided.
- It is proposed that a template matrix be created to contain the expected learning outcomes of each Thematic Module and the corresponding learning and examination activities by which each learning outcome is addressed and assessed. The matrix and the assessment rubrics for each evaluation activity in each Thematic Module must be communicated to students at the beginning of the semester as an integral part of assignments' instructions for transparency and identification of the exact learning and assessment demands.
- As far as the dissertation rubric is concerned, formulation of defined grading criteria and a qualitative update of the rubric is recommended to make it more specific and detailed in terms of the expected outcome at each grading level.
- Particular emphasis needs to be placed on feedback, which must necessarily focus beyond technical and structural aspects on the achievement of learning outcomes by students through assignments and examinations.
- It is proposed to explore the introduction of an internship in the PSP, which is believed to contribute to a better interconnection of the learning process with contemporary corporate, social, state and educational needs and will create new professional opportunities for graduates.



- It is deemed necessary to find ways to effectively promote the international mobility of both teaching staff and students to benefit from good international practices in their field and promote intercultural experience and interaction.
- The website must be enriched with links that direct students to additional information on similar programs in other EU universities.
- Ways of better and systematic accessibility of students to instructors for academic support purposes need to be sought.

#### 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	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

- 1. Professor Apostolis Papakostas (Chair)**  
Södertörn University, Stockholm, Sweden
- 2. Professor Dimitris Michailakis**  
Linköping University, Sweden
- 3. Dr. George Panayiotou**  
European University Cyprus
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University of the Aegean, Mytilene, Greece