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Accreditation Report

for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

**Education Sciences: Special Education for People with Oral and
Written Language Difficulties**

Department: School of Humanities
Institution: Hellenic Open University
Date: 25 November 2023



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



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Postgraduate Study Programme of **Education Sciences: Special Education for People with Oral and Written Language Difficulties** of the **Hellenic Open University** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the postgraduate study programme of **Education Sciences: Special Education for People with Oral and Written Language Difficulties** of the **Hellenic Open University** comprised 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**
University of Linköping, Sweden

- 3. Professor Leonidas Kyriakides**
University of Cyprus, Cyprus

- 4. Ms Dimitra Lizardou**
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In reviewing the Postgraduate Study Programme of “Education Sciences: Special Education for People with Oral and Written Language Difficulties” of Hellenic Open University (hereafter the “Programme”), the objectives of the Panel, as described in the Guidelines for the Members of EEAP, are:

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

Following a well-prepared schedule provided by HAHE, the Panel held several separate interactive virtual (by electronic means, ZOOM/Webex platforms) meetings and visits for two days as follows:

On Monday, 20/11/2023, the following virtual meetings took place:

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

On Wednesday, 22/11/2023, 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 Vice President/President of MODIP, the Dean of the School of Humanities, the Director of the Programme, members, and staff of MODIP, and members of Steering Committees/OMEA members.

During the above virtual meetings, the Panel had the opportunity to meet, talk, and interact with all the participants of all meetings. All the participants were encouraged to express their views and talk freely about their overall learning experience. They welcomed the opportunity to talk to the Panel and to voice their views. The discussions were very constructive 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 in preparing the internal evaluation report and other relevant materials and organizing and hosting the virtual meetings. It is the feeling of the Panel that the Department has performed an excellent job throughout the internal evaluation process and 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 thanks and appreciation to the Department and the University administration for their co-operation and professionalism.

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

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The Postgraduate Study Programme “Educational Sciences: Special Education and Training for People with Oral and Written Language Difficulties” has been offered since the academic year 2016-17. It has an interdisciplinary and inter-institutional nature, (the Programme is a Joint Inter-University Postgraduate Studies Programme between the HOU and the University of Thessaly) and its structure and courses offered are consistent with the University’s overall objectives.

The aim of the distance learning Program is to offer in-depth knowledge concerning issues pertaining to oral and written language difficulties, theoretical frameworks associated with speech problems, and educational strategies that can be developed and applied to address and/or alleviate those difficulties faced by monolingual and bilingual/multilingual individuals.

After completing the programme students are expected to:

- know the basic concepts of Special Education and be familiar with educational assessment issues
- know the theoretical and methodological issues related to language development in both monolinguals and bilinguals/multilinguals
- understand the relationship between language and cognition, the role of cognitive factors in the processing of language as well as the two primary mechanisms involved in language processing, namely production and comprehension
- have knowledge of the theoretical frameworks pertaining to the developmental kind of difficulties of oral and written language
- be familiar with the fundamental research designs and their utilization in the field of Special Education
- have acquired knowledge of the assessment and support services available for individuals experiencing difficulties in oral and written communication
- Can describe, design, and implement educational interventions for monolingual and bilingual/multilingual speakers with oral and written language difficulties.

Programme completion requires 120 ECTS, equally distributed over four semesters (30 ECTS per semester). The programme is structured in six thematic courses, (three of them 20 ECTS and three 10 ECTS each). The last semester is devoted to practice, including writing a practice report. All courses are compulsory for all students. Completion of a conventional master thesis is not an option in the programme.

All courses are given at a distance following the policies of the Hellenic Open University. The fee for the whole programme is 3 600 Euros. An impressive number of 500 student positions are offered annually, 250 in each semester.

The Programme is supported by academic staff from other Departments and other Universities, as the full-time academic staff is limited. All teaching staff are Ph.D. holders who are active scholars and researchers in diverse areas related to education.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 1: QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND QUALITY GOAL SETTING FOR THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT. THIS POLICY SHOULD EXPAND AND BE AIMED (WITH THE COLLABORATION OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS) AT THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

The quality assurance policy of the academic unit should be in line with the quality assurance policy of the Institution and must be formulated in the form of a public statement, which is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study programmes offered by the academic unit.

Indicatively, the quality policy statement of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement a quality policy that will promote the academic profile and orientation of the postgraduate study programme (PSP), its purpose and field of study; it will realise the programme's goals and it will determine the means and ways for attaining them; it will implement appropriate quality procedures, aiming at the programme's improvement.

In particular, in order to implement this policy, the academic unit commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate:

- a) the suitability of the structure and organisation of postgraduate study programmes*
- b) the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education - level 7*
- c) the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching at the PSP*
- d) the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff for the PSP*
- e) the drafting, implementation, and review of specific annual quality goals for the improvement of the PSP*
- f) the level of demand for the graduates' qualifications in the labour market*
- g) the quality of support services, such as the administrative services, the libraries and the student welfare office for the PSP*
- h) the efficient utilisation of the financial resources of the PSP that may be drawn from tuition fees*
- i) the conduct of an annual review and audit of the quality assurance system of the PSP through the cooperation of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU)*

Documentation

- *Quality Assurance Policy of the PSP*
- *Quality goal setting of the PSP*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Quality Assurance (QA) Policy of the Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) of Educational Sciences: Special Education for People with Oral and Written Language Difficulties (EAG) aligns with the quality policy and procedures of the School of Humanities of the Hellenic Open University (HOU). Specifically, the PSP is committed to maintaining and improving the quality,

while ensuring that it operates in accordance with the rules governing the School of Humanities at the HOU. The Quality Assurance Policy (Appendix A02) aims to enhance the academic profile and orientation of the programme and support its purpose to offer in-depth knowledge concerning issues pertaining to oral and written language difficulties, theoretical frameworks associated with speech problems, and educational strategies that can be developed and applied to address and/or alleviate those difficulties faced by monolingual and bilingual/multilingual individuals.

To implement this policy, the HOU commits to applying procedures for the adequacy and quality of the resources, the suitability of the PSP's structure and organization, the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff, and the quality of services offered to students with corresponding administrative personnel. The teaching and administration staff of the PSP and the School of Humanities collaboratively work to ensure that the quality processes are in place for: (a) pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, (b) promotion of quality and effectiveness of teaching, (c) the qualifications of the teaching staff, (d) setting, implementation, and review of specific annual quality goals for improvement, (e) alignment of graduate students' acquired qualifications with the labour market needs, (f) enhancing connections among graduates, (g) quality of support and administrative services, (h) efficient utilization of the financial resources, (i) annual review and internal assessment of the PSP, (j) promotion of the quality and quantity of the research activity, (k) enhancing relationships between teaching and research, and (l) ensuring an outward orientation of the PSP activity.

As presented in the Program's documents A02 & A03, the QA Policy for the PSP of EAG is focused on advancing its purpose and subject matter, as well as achieving its strategic goals through actions, with the ultimate aim of ensuring its continuous development and improvement. The PSP reflects and emphasizes the academic profile of the School of Humanities at HOU, which has the provision of knowledge and the development of skills in the field among its core objectives. Specifically, the QA Policy of the PSP of EAG ensures:

- The offer of thematic units related to the theoretical approaches for language difficulties and the practical implementation of educational interventions to address and/or alleviate these issues in monolingual and bilingual/multilingual speakers.
- The provision of specialized knowledge about special education and training for people with oral and written language difficulties.

The QA Policy and QA targets are published and available on the PSP's [website](#) but only in Greek. The QA Policy also ensures involvement of stakeholders in evaluation and redesign processes to continuously improve the programme. This is shown by the active participation of teaching staff, students, and administrative personnel.

The appendix A03 presents the 5 quality goals that the programme has set spanning four main strategic areas. These areas are aligned with the strategic objectives of the HOU and are accompanied by specific indicators, actions, responsibilities, and timeframes for implementation: (1.1) Strengthen the presence of the PSP on the internet; (2.1) Increase the participation rate of students in the internal evaluation of the PSP; (3.1) Teaching staff to participate in training and professional development activities. (4.1) Strengthen links with the PSP graduates; (4.2) Enhance student participation in the Erasmus+ Program.

As shown in the goal-setting document (A3), all goals are monitored and evaluated based on specific targets. In addition, further actions are outlined with the bodies/members responsible to undertake them within a specific timeframe. This ensures transparency and promotes responsibility among the involved parties of the programme. However, for the strategic goal 4 related to the enhancement of outward orientation of the programme, there are no specific objectives included for the development of bonds with external stakeholders and potential employers. Since the PSP incorporates a practical training module, it is important for the PSP and students to have a pool of associates as an established network in order to appoint students. This will serve the needs of students to search for an organisation of high-quality to conduct their practical training, with mentors who are well informed and guided for their role to assist students. A network of potential workplaces with a good long- lasting communication with the PSP, would be beneficial to ensure that the practical training modules would be of high quality and advantages for all students.

Specifically, regarding the Practical Training, it is an advantage that the PSP incorporated is a compulsory module. However, there are identified weaknesses in the organization of the module. Firstly, students are tasked with identifying "assessment and support institutions/facilities" on their own. This could result in these institutions being uninformed about their role and responsibilities, because of the limited communication with the PSP. Additionally, supervisors/mentors at these institutions should be well-trained and informed by the PSP about their responsibilities and expectations and be aware of the learning outcomes students are expected to achieve. The PSP should establish evaluation mechanisms, actively collecting data on the training practice's effectiveness and the satisfaction of both students and hosting institutions. For instance, if the institution provides low-quality practical training, it may lead to the student's failure or low attainment of learning outcomes, for which the student should not be held responsible. The PSP should be aware of such instances to take corrective action and improve collaboration with institutions. Furthermore, the PSP could consider creating a network of hosting institutions nationwide to strengthen long-term collaborative bonds, ease students' search for placements, and enhance the capacities of supervisors/mentors. Therefore, the PSP needs to implement quality assurance mechanisms to ensure the module's learning outcomes and specific objectives are met.

Last, as evidenced in the Appendix A18, the HOU has taken actions to address the weaknesses as identified from the previous external evaluation that was conducted in 2020. For example, it was reported that HOU's educational material had not been updated for a long time, causing dissatisfaction among students. Since then, the educational material is being updated and the old material has been replaced. This as well as other recommendations were successfully addressed during the previous years with actions that are presented in the report.

II. Analysis

Through a comprehensive overview of the available evidence (i.e., provision of documents, accreditation meetings, students and social partners perspectives, department and programmes websites), the PSP of EAG shows that is dedicated to providing quality specific

skills and knowledge in educational sciences. The QA Policy implementation, monitoring, and revision contribute to this purpose and processes are carried out in accordance with the procedures of the Internal Quality Assurance System of the institution. The QA Policy is approved by the School of Humanities at the HOU, and it is binding as formulated by the statements.

The EEAP acknowledges that the quality assurance system is in place and relevant processes are meticulously undertaken. The PSP seems to ensure teaching quality through staff qualifications, research activity, and contribution to the academic community. The teaching staff's commitment have a significant role in ensuring that postgraduate students receive quality education and expertise that prepares them for several career opportunities such as teachers in special education, staff of special schools and educational institutions, officers in public and private education-related organisations or other professional positions.

The outlined quality assurance procedures ensure programme alignment within HOU's strategic objectives, maximizing qualification recognition. The QA policy is directed towards promoting teaching quality, enriching thematic areas, improving visibility, and enrich academic excellence.

Based on the evidence, the EEAP recognises that effective mechanisms are in place and the faculty's is dedicated to complying with high standards. The PSP's quality assurance system prominently adheres to the *data-driven outcomes* model across operations. The programme has set 5 quality goals that adhere to evaluation based on key performance indicators and specific accountability measures. This approach applies the quality assurance process to promote ongoing academic development and research among faculty members, refine programme studies, improve visibility, and enhance research practices. The PSP makes efforts to improve these aspects as shown in the external evaluation report (A18). The activities undertaken to address the previously identified weaknesses identify are thoroughly explained. This was also evidenced during the accreditation meetings with students and external social partners and employers.

This accountability approach can be furtherly enhanced with activities to developed bonds between the PSP, its graduates, and external stakeholders (e.g., educational institutions, special of conventional schools, public authorities, other Universities, research centres, social partners). The practical training involves students independently identifying the hosting institutions/facilities, which may lead to these being uninformed about their roles. To address this, well-trained supervisors/mentors should be informed by the PSP about their responsibilities. The PSP should establish evaluation mechanisms, collecting data on training effectiveness and satisfaction while considering the creation of a nationwide network of hosting institutions for long-term collaboration and improved quality assurance. Last, the QA Policy and targets are available to students through the PSP website, though only in Greek. In general, as evaluated by the EEAP, the internal quality assurance system of the PSP is effectively operating and facilitated by the appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This attention to the QA Policy highlights the PSP commitment to providing high-quality education in special education.

III. Conclusions

The PSP's Quality Assurance Policy and systems operates effectively and systematically collects and analyses data to inform decisions on continuous improvement. The QA policy and goal setting are transparent and well-defined. The PSP Coordinator, the Quality Assurance Unit, Internal Evaluation Group and faculty assembly collects, analyses, and utilizes the aforementioned information to prepare the quality assurance evaluation reports. These evaluations lead to actionable plans and monitoring indicators. It is positive to identify that several stakeholders take responsibility for the attainment of the quality objectives, since actions towards the targets are collectively undertaken by the Director, teaching staff, cooperative education staff (SEP), as well as other offices in the University such as the Department of Public Relations, Operations office and Liaison office. This approach of setting specific actions and responsibilities within a defined timeframe, fosters transparency and accountability among the program's stakeholders.

The EEAP recognises that the outlined quality assurance plan and procedures maintain clarity, relevance, measurability, and adherence to the operational strategic plan. The systematic approach as presented by the programme ensures that the quality assurance processes remain effective and adaptive and underscores the faculty's commitment to delivering a high-quality educational experience. This commitment encompasses structural alignment, rigorous qualification standards, effective teaching, qualified instructors, continuous improvement, labour market relevance, robust support services, efficient resource management, and ongoing evaluation. In conclusion, the outlined QA approach promotes transparency, responsibility, and practical goal achievement, with some room for improvement in incorporating activities to develop bonds with external stakeholders and workplaces to accommodate students for their practical training. However, students independently identify assessment institutions for practical training, highlighting the need for well-informed mentors, PSP-established evaluation mechanisms, and the potential creation of a nationwide network for quality assurance and collaborative partnerships. For these reasons, the quality assurance policy and quality goal setting are deemed fully compliant to achieving excellence within the PSP of Educational Sciences: Special Education and Training for People with Oral and Written Language Difficulties, while demonstrating continuous dedication to improvement through well-established quality assurance processes.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The PSP is suggested to establish quality assurance mechanisms to ensure high-quality of the practical training such as developing long-term collaborations with potential hosting organisations, ensuring well-trained supervisors through meetings and training sessions, and implementing evaluation mechanisms for the effectiveness of the practical training and satisfaction of both parties, students, and hosting institutions.

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 of Interdisciplinary PSP Education Sciences: Special Education for People with Oral and Written Language Difficulties (EAG) is a Joint Inter-University Postgraduate Studies Programme between the HOU and the University of Thessaly. It started its operation in the academic year 2016-2017 and offers six (6) units and an Internship unit. An Internal Quality Assurance System (MO.DI.P) is in force at the University and it covers the entire range of functions and activities of the Institution. The relevant Quality Assurance Unit undertakes the responsibility for the programme's operation. The programme design is subject to a formal departmental approval by OMEA, and it is regularly monitored considering students' expectations, needs and satisfaction.

According to the programme supporting material provided to the EEAP, the programme [website](#), and the presentations during the evaluation meetings, the PSP is addressed to offer in-depth knowledge concerning issues pertaining to oral and written language difficulties, theoretical frameworks associated with speech problems, and educational strategies that can be developed and applied to address and/or alleviate those difficulties faced by monolingual and bilingual/multilingual individuals. the development of well-trained staff capable of staffing education.

Specifically, after completing the Inter-Institutional PSP of EAG, students are expected to:

- know the basic concepts of Special Education and be familiar with educational assessment issues
- know the theoretical and methodological issues related to language development in both monolinguals and bilinguals/multilinguals
- understand the relationship between language and cognition, the role of cognitive factors in the processing of language as well as the two primary mechanisms involved in language processing, namely production and comprehension
- have knowledge of the theoretical frameworks pertaining to the developmental kind of difficulties of oral and written language
- be familiar with the fundamental research designs and their utilization in the field of Special Education
- have acquired knowledge of the assessment and support services available for individuals experiencing difficulties in oral and written communication
- can describe, design, and implement educational interventions for monolingual and bilingual/multilingual speakers with oral and written language difficulties.

The School implements the European System of Credentials (ECTS), which indicates the study hours for each Module. The programme corresponds to 120 ECTS and leads to a Master of Education on ISCED 2011 level 7 and ISCED 2013 (0111-Education science). The minimum duration of study is two (2) academic years and the maximum duration is six (6) academic years. The language of instruction of the MSc is Greek, though for the successful attendance of the unit(s) a good knowledge of English at B2 level is required, because of literature and teaching material that are provided in English.

The programme is structured with 6 modules and 1 practical training module. Each module corresponds to 20 ECTS. The programme is spread into 2 years divided to 4 semesters. Students may choose from one (1) to two (2) modules per semester. To obtain their MEd degree, students need to have successfully passed six (6) Modules, all compulsory and the attendance is sequential, meaning that in order to choose a specific module, students must have successfully completed its prerequisite. The PSP website includes a detailed description for each Thematic Units in Greek and English. The assessment of the Thematic Units is mostly carried out with written assignments (30%) and final examination (70%).

The content of the programme consists of the following Thematic Units:

1st semester

- EAG50 Special Education
- EAG51 Linguistic Development

2nd semester

- EAG52 Linguistic Processing
- EAG53 Problems of oral and written language: Theoretical approaches

3rd semester

- EAG60 Research Design in Special Education
- EAG61 Educational interventions for oral and written language difficulties

4th semester

- EAG62 Practical Training Module

When declaring a module, students must first exhaust the modules of the previous semester and then declare the modules of the next semester or select the remaining modules (from the previous semester) at the same time. Module EAG is compulsory for all in the first semester. The completion of the programme requires the acquisition of 120 ECTS credits, which results from the successful completion of all the modules, as well as the Practical Training (which is carried out in public assessment and support structures for people with oral and written language disorders).

It is an advantage that the PSP incorporated the Practical Training Module (EAG62), providing students with opportunities to engage with institutions/facilities dealing with oral and written language disorders/difficulties. This exposure allows students to become familiar with the services offered and develop the ability to provide independent assessment and intervention services. It is anticipated that students will observe and participate in assessment and intervention procedures, enabling them to design educational activities, create materials, and evaluate procedures independently. However, as mentioned above in principle 1, there are identified weaknesses in the organization of the module that also relevant to this principle but will not be mentioned to avoid replication.

The PSP of EAG provides only 5 compulsory modules which does not allow to address the different needs, profiles, and interests of students. Moreover, there is no option for students to conduct a thesis dissertation if they are interested. This might hinder the potential of students who wish to deepen their expertise in a specific topic of interest and enhance their

research skills. Last, it is encouraging to notice the presence of a module focused on research (EAG60), which is appropriate for postgraduate studies. However, the course is limited to the introduction and familiarization with basic principles, procedures and issues of research design. Therefore, it does not assist students to learn how to collect, analyse, and interpret data, which could be part of the practical training or their future professional role. This gap could have been fulfilled through a potential synergy with the PSP of Educational Science. However, the two programmes follow a different type of structure (i.e., the PSP of Educational Science is structured in yearly thematic units, while the PSP of EAG is structured in semester modules). In addition, some further attention might be placed to address the long average period of programme completion by the students. The PSP is suggested to explore alternative solutions to address the above weaknesses.

The Open University and the Programme emphasize the policy and the importance of the construction of a Student Community through collaboration and communication between students and Professors. They also support a direct, meaningful and personalized relationship between each student and the Professor-advisor. The cooperation between students is also encouraged through a students' forum for discussion of related issues of each module. Additionally, a forum is provided to each group-department of students to discuss topics among themselves and with the Professor. The cooperative climate between and among teachers and students has been commended by the students and graduates participating in the evaluation meetings.

II. Analysis

The PSP of EAG is well-structured, useful and constructive to students, and it covers emerging needs in special education. As evidenced by the documentation A5 and A6, the modules aim to provide comprehensive education around the thematic areas of special education, specifically for the training of people with oral and written language difficulties. It is acknowledged that the incorporation of the practical training is particularly beneficial for students, offers valuable opportunities for students to engage with institutions dealing with oral and written language disorders, enhancing their skills for independent assessment and intervention, and prepares them for their professional steps.

The PSP is also recommended to address some weaknesses to further enhance the provision of high-quality education to students. These deal with students independently identifying hosting institutions for their practical training, may lead to communication gaps and uninformed roles. The PSP should address this by developing long-term collaborations with potential hosting organisation, ensuring well-trained supervisors through meeting and training sessions, implementing evaluation mechanisms for the effectiveness of the practical training and satisfaction of both parties, students and hosting institutions. Additionally, the limited number of compulsory modules in the PSP restricts students' diverse needs, profiles, and interests, with no option for a thesis dissertation. While there is a research-focused module (EAG60), it lacks depth in data collection and analysis skills. Collaboration with other programmes to address this gap such as the PSP of Educational Science is challenging due to structural differences (thematic units vs modules). Attention should be also given to the extended program completion period. There is always room for improvement, therefore, the EEAP recommends the PSP to explore potential solutions to address the above challenges.

III. Conclusions

The PSP of EAG is well-structured and demonstrates a constructive approach, addressing student academic and professional needs in special education. However, the PSP lack some flexibility to cater diverse needs of students since all modules are compulsory and there are no elective units. Moreover, there is no option to conduct a thesis dissertation, which hinders the potential of students who are interested in research and deepening into a specific topic. The PSP is recommended to address the challenge of students independently identifying practical training institutions, potentially leading to communication gaps and uninformed roles. The EEAP recommends that the PSP develops long-term collaborations with hosting organizations, ensures well-trained supervisors through meetings and training sessions, and implements evaluation mechanisms for practical training effectiveness and satisfaction. Additionally, while a research-focused module exists, it lacks depth in data collection and analysis skills. Some attention should be given to the extended program completion period. The EEAP suggests incorporating relevant targets into future planning to expedite student completion and further enhance the program's quality. The EEAP recommends exploring solutions to address the above challenges to further enhance the program's quality. Overall, the programme is evaluated as substantially compliant because of the strong areas and points for improvement as explained above.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The PSP should consider incorporating the option for students to conduct a thesis dissertation, potentially as optional.
- The PSP is suggested to explore solutions to provide more flexibility to students in modules selection and enhance the research-focused module to acquire more depth, potentially through synergies and collaboration with other programmes at the university.
- The EEAP suggests the PSP to address students' time of completion of the programme and explore potential solutions to further assist postgraduate students to complete their studies within a shorter period of time.

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

It is adopted student- centred learning which is a teaching method in which students are the centre of the learning process. It replaces the traditional teacher-centred model with one that focuses on individual student needs, interests, and abilities. Not only can students choose what

they want to study, they can also choose how and why they learn. Because students actively participate in the learning process, take responsibility for their education and play an active role in decision-making. Students see their education differently as partners, and the more responsibility they feel, the more engaged and active they are in their learning. The student-as-partner model allows faculty and students to work together toward common goals rather than working for each other. Both faculty and students value equality in partnerships and ensure that all participants have a voice in the decision-making process.

II. Analysis

Students are not passive recipients of knowledge, but active participants in their learning. This active participation allows students to develop their understanding, ask questions, engage in meaningful discussions, and collaborate with their peers. The faculty member's advisory role supports the entire process. PSP also recognizes the importance of assessment methods that reflect a learner-centred approach. It recognizes that traditional assessment methods may not effectively measure the depth of understanding and critical thinking associated with active learning.

In order to be successful, partnership between students and faculty should be based on three principles: respect, reciprocity, and shared responsibility in learning. These principles, fundamentally reshape the relationship that is currently established between faculty and students. Both faculty and students see each other as peers, as people who can meaningfully (albeit in diverse ways) contribute to the process of teaching and learning.

Assessment methods and assessments vary, including written or oral exams for students with special educational needs at the end of each term and a formal mode with assignments throughout the term. Therefore, they pay special attention to the fact that students' final grades are determined not only by their final exam scores, but also by the mid-year assessment method. Grading components and assessment methods will be announced in advance and can be found in the syllabus. Interviews with students emphasized that they could improve their skills through continuous monitoring and feedback.

The educational process is evaluated through questionnaires completed each academic semester. This method guarantees anonymity and does not identify specific students, as it only

produces average statistics for each question. Encourage and support students to actively participate in the learning and assessment process.

The teaching staff adopts the role of Academic Advisor. The primary function of academic advisor is to provide comprehensive support to students as they pursue higher education and their journey after graduation. The advisor should be aware of university policies such as general education requirements, graduation requirements, adding/dropping courses, etc.

III. Conclusions

A process for managing and tracking student educational complaints is planned to be implemented pilot-wise through an electronic form. This is not learner-centred learning (because learning is a learner-driven process), but rather an environment that makes learning possible.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

More attention needs to be paid to designing environments where students can use what is provided (activities, tasks, resources, tools, training, etc.) to enable, enhance and support students.

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

IV. Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Institution and the School apply internal regulations for the operation of the Postgraduate Study Programme of EAG. The staff and the administrative personnel facilitate the student admission procedures, and they provide them with the required documents and information. Specifically, there is separate and analytical documentation for internal regulation for the operation of the PSP (A14.1), mobility regulation (A14.3), library regulation (A14.4), and scholarships regulation (A14.5). There is also a specific regulation for conducting the practical training (A14.6), which is considered an advantage. The PSP also provided a degree certificate template in English and Greek (A15).

Students' admission requirements are published on the website. The PSP accepts graduates of Departments and Faculties of Universities of the Greek Federation and similar recognized institutions abroad, as well as graduates of Departments of ATEI of related cognitive unit, including:

- Graduates of Pedagogical Departments (Special Education, Primary Education, Pre-school Education)
- Graduates of the Department of Education and Social Policy of the University of Macedonia
- Graduates of the Departments of Philology of AEI
- Graduates of foreign-language faculties of AEI
- Graduates of the Department of Mediterranean Studies of the University of the Aegean from the Department of Linguistics of the South-Eastern Mediterranean,

- Graduates of the Departments of Psychology
- Graduates of the Departments of Psychology and Psychology
- Graduates of Speech and Language Therapy Departments of ATEI
- Graduates of the Department of Infant Care ATEI
- Graduates of other related to the units and objectives of the programme of the university of the national territory or graduates of recognized similar institutions abroad
- Graduates of corresponding Departments of ATEI, relevant to the units and objectives of the program.

Holders of a degree or diploma of higher education means graduates of Greek Universities or Polytechnics or Higher School of Fine Arts or Higher School of Pedagogical and Technological Education or Higher Technological Educational Institutions (ATEI) or those who hold academically equivalent first cycle degrees from recognized foreign educational institutions with the degrees awarded by the Greek Higher Educational Institutions, in accordance with the provisions of article 304 of Law No. 4957/2022 (Government Gazette 141/21.07.2022, vol.). Certification of English language competency at level B2 is also a requirement for the successful completion of the programme.

The PSP of EAG effectively aligns with the regulation of the HOU by addressing key elements such as enrolment procedures, the recognition of modules, and criteria for their acknowledgment. The organizational structure of studies, educational activities, and evaluation processes within the PSP reflects the outlined rules for student participation and examination rights. There is a close collaboration and communication of students and faculty through official and unofficial means. Additionally, the inclusion of Group Counselling Sessions reflects the commitment to fostering collaborative learning and support mechanisms.

The PSP of EAG meticulously addresses the core elements of the regulation study programme. The modules cover key issues in special education, including a compulsory practical training. In essence, the PSP aligns closely with the regulatory framework, offering a comprehensive and tailored educational experience. The regulation student mobility comprises fundamental principles and requirements, program objectives and actions, mobility processes, study and internship recognition, and interinstitutional agreements. It delineates the Erasmus Policy Statement and defines Individual Learning Mobility. The library regulation serves to support distance education and research processes, with the library functioning as a hub for collecting and disseminating information through various modern means, providing resources and training to students, and acting as a repository for materials related to distance education. Students are satisfied with the feedback they have been receiving on their progress. The PSP follows the ECTS credit system, which is applied uniformly across the modules.

II. Analysis

Based on the provided comprehensive documentation, the PSP of EAG demonstrates adherence to regulatory standards. The internal regulations reflect a commitment to clarity and compliance of the study programme processes. Admission procedures are clear and accessible through the website, catering to both university graduates and holders of academically equivalent degrees from recognized foreign institutions, in line with regulatory provisions.

The modules' structure addresses key issues in special education. Further flexibility might be required through the provision of non-compulsory and selective modules, allowing students to tailor their educational experience, profile, interests to their academic path. Effective communication and collaboration between students and faculty shows an open communication culture. Group counselling sessions underscore a commitment to fostering collaborative learning and support. The library regulation supports distance education and research processes, as a central hub for information dissemination and resource provision. The programme also supports recognition and certification, as well as facilitation of possible mobility.

Student satisfaction is noteworthy, supported by clear procedures and terms for assignments and practical training, as well as the effective monitoring of study progression. The program's adherence to the ECTS credit system ensures consistency in evaluation across modules. The Students' Guide and the other supportive material are of very good quality, and they support appropriately students' studies.

III. Conclusions

The HOU, School, and PSP of EAG shows a commitment to provide clear guidelines to students through internal regulations and broader supporting mechanisms. The program's strengths lie in its transparent admission procedures, comprehensive modules' structure, strong communication channels, and robust support services. Student satisfaction and effective progress monitoring further underscore the success of the program. Further flexibility might be required through the provision of non-compulsory and selective modules, allowing students to tailor their educational experience, profile, interests to their academic path. Overall, the EEAP evaluates the PSP fully compliant regarding the executed regulations and procedures for admission, progression, and recognition of the students' postgraduate studies.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The PSP may consider providing further flexibility to students through the provision of more non-compulsory and selective modules, so they can tailor their educational experience, profile, interests to their academic path.

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 EEAP 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 – positions 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 EEAP was told, is merit-based and transparent. For the renewal of the contract the results of the evaluation by students conducted after each module and the evaluation of the coordinators of the program is taken into account.

Both the faculty members of the Hellenic Open University and the of Program of “Special Education and Training for People with Oral and Written Problems” 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 teachers who are not familiar with distance learning must spend some time learning new techniques. The regular discussions with students and providing detailed comments on various memos and papers is time consuming. Professors are also obliged to prepare assignments, updating digital learning space, supporting students in the preparation of assignments throughout their study schedule (14 weeks), proofreading 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 differentiation between professors (depending on the number of students). Thus, the workload is certainly more than in conventional universities. It must also be noticed that each thematic unit corresponds to four written assignments or three assignments/activities per semester. To assist students, regular meetings are scheduled. Teachers participate in online Group Counselling Meeting - five meetings per year, and there are also intermediate meetings when it is deemed necessary. The duration of a regular meeting is four hours.

II. Analysis

The evaluation of teachers is semi-annual and is carried out before the start of the final examinations. Evaluation results are first provided to the assessors for their knowledge and self-improvement. The responsible of the program, in turn, takes them into account when evaluating the teaching candidates (in the context of renewing the cooperation with them). Only in exceptional cases has a teacher's contract not been approved by the university. Looking at the CVs of the faculty members as they appear on the department's webpage there is evidence of considerable scholarly work. Several students expressed admiration for the expertise of their teachers.

III. Conclusions

- The students were very positive about the organization of the curriculum, the competence, help and support they receive from the teachers.
- Students and postgraduates underline that the meticulous feedback they received from professors had improved their texts which is reflected in the high grades they received at the exams.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- There is a need for at least one faculty member to be recruited.
- The EEAP underlines the importance of substantial financial support by the State to ensure and increase research outputs.
- Stable research structures must be established.

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

PSP has a variety of software tools used to collect and process information to draw conclusions. The computer system provides special questionnaires for evaluating student and teacher learning, but learning coordinators also use special forms for evaluation. The data from the aforementioned evaluation activities are processed by special software that includes appropriate analysis mechanisms and the semi-automatic generation of evaluation reports.

The university sends a newsletter containing announcements and messages from directors, coordinators and professors through its educational platform (course.eap.gr/study.eap.gr)

and provides information and support to new students through discussions and problem solving during early semester counselling.

The students are aware of the available services and these services are functional and easily accessed by the students by using the educational platform (course.eap.gr/study.eap.gr)

II. Analysis

Student data, including demographics, test scores and program participation, is automatically collected and processed by our internal assessment department to generate reports for the information of program administration and academic authorities. The results of teacher evaluations of students are sent first to the teachers themselves and then to the program coordinator, the dean and the steering committee. Initially, the coordinator will investigate specific assessment situations that require attention and work with teachers to take matters to the next level if there are serious concerns.

PSP provides a tuition utilization plan. Student data, including demographics, test scores and program participation, is automatically collected and processed by our internal assessment department to generate reports for the information of program administration and academic authorities.

III. Conclusions

The PSP has made commendable progress in supporting its students, and with a commitment to continuous improvement, it can further enhance the quality and impact of its support services.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The academic unit has established procedures for the collection of data. It is distributed to all interested parties (current and potential students, researchers, graduates, etc.) mainly through the website (www.eap.gr). The home page of the website contains complete and accurate information about the institution, faculties and educational institutions, including contact information. It has 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. 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.

II. Analysis

The information systems used for the collection of data are software tools for collecting information and processing it to draw conclusions. The IT system provides a special questionnaire for evaluating teaching and instructors by students, but also, the program coordinators use special forms for evaluation.

The Internal Evaluation Unit provides a special questionnaire for the evaluation of the teachers by the students. The data of this evaluation are processed by special software of the Internal Evaluation Unit.

There is provision for the information obtained from the satisfaction surveys to be systematically analysed, appropriately communicated and used towards improvement. The results of teacher evaluations of students are sent first to the teachers themselves and then to the program coordinator, the dean and the steering committee. Initially, your coordinator will investigate specific assessment situations that require attention and work with teachers to take matters to the next level if there are serious concerns.

PSP analyses and evaluates data related to the availability and accessibility of resources. Student evaluation is the most important tool for evaluating teachers' teaching activities. It relies on standardized questionnaires to collect information on teaching methods, teaching skills, curricula and the adequacy of administrative and support infrastructure.

The data collected properly is not presented in graphs, demonstrating trends and allowing direct interpretation and comparisons.

III. Conclusions

Student assessment is an established practice. However, there is no evidence that data collected through student evaluations will change teaching and learning standards in modular facilities in the coming year.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

PRINCIPLE 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES IN A DIRECT AND READILY ACCESSIBLE WAY. THE RELEVANT INFORMATION SHOULD BE UP-TO-DATE, OBJECTIVE AND CLEAR.

Information on the Institutions' activities is useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders, and the public.

Therefore, Institutions and their academic units must provide information about their activities, including the PSP they offer, the intended learning outcomes, the degrees awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures applied, the pass rates, and the learning opportunities available to their students. Information is also provided on the employment perspectives of PSP graduates.

Documentation

- *Dedicated segment on the website of the department for the promotion of the PSP*
- *Bilingual version of the PSP website with complete, clear and objective information*
- *Provision for website maintenance and updating*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

Information about the MSc in “Education: Special Education and Education of Individuals with Oral and Written Language Problems” is aimed primarily at students and teachers of the Programme as well as the general public. The students and teachers of the MSc are provided with all the information on the functioning and activities of the Programme as a whole and of the subject matter of the Thematic Units. This information includes, among other things, announcements, all the regulations of the Programme/Thematic Units, the study guide, all the educational material (compulsory and optional), study timetables, assessment results, feedback from teachers, class and thematic unit discussions, useful material for examinations, and course calendar. To the public, a set of information is made public, either concerning the Programme or information about the Hellenic Open University in general. The Institution disseminates information through its website (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 special site as a subdomain of the main website. On the website, there is a dedicated segment containing detailed information about the PSP (www.eap.gr/education/postgraduate/biannual/criminological-and-criminal-approaches-to-corruption-economic-and-organized-crime-ped). In particular, the PSP section contains descriptive information about its structure, course outlines, learning outcomes, degree awarded, tuition fees, study regulations and admission procedures. Information on academic staff is also available, but not all faculty CVs. All information is provided both in Greek and English language.

In addition to the main website, the university operates the training platform for students of the programme (courses.eap.gr) through which students can be informed about all the issues mentioned above. In the same platform there is a forum with a high visiting frequency which is also an important information tool. The Student Registry Department acts as a service centre and answers (by telephone and e-mail) to a considerable number of questions from students

and potential students. It provides personalized information as it can answer - among other things - specific questions concerning each individual student.

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 EEAP discussed with staff, students, and stakeholders, examined relevant materials, and thoroughly studied the PSP's public information system. The Director and the Assistant Director of PSP, as well as the coordinators of courses, play a key role in monitoring, controlling, and ensuring the quality, validity and timeliness of public information concerning the PSP. The PSP distinguishes itself by ensuring that information is up-to-date, transparent, and objective to interested parties in multiple ways, as described above. In addition, the PSP promotes transparency, accountability, and relevance, providing comprehensive information about quality, regulations, and admission issues. The analysis showed that the PSP has put much effort into presenting itself to its students and the public.

III. Conclusions

Overall, the EEAP believes that the PSP provides a wide array of complete and useful information for interested parties. This dedication is in line with the demands placed on Institutions to provide accurate and current information about their postgraduate study programs and benefits both the institution and the individuals, ensuring informed decision-making, accountability, and the overall quality of higher education.

Panel Judgement

Principle 8: Public information concerning the postgraduate study programmes	
Fully compliant	X
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 annual internal evaluation of the Programs, which is carried out by the OMEA of each Faculty, is completed with the Annual Evaluation Reports of the programs, which include, in the form of tables, aggregated data on the curricula, the educational and research work, as well as on the other services offered by the programs during an academic year (two consecutive - winter and spring - teaching semesters). The data are collected from the information systems of the Internal evaluation unit, which are linked to the databases of the Student Registry. The Internal evaluation unit derives the necessary data and produces the requested reporting reports. In parallel (and in addition), the internal evaluation of the

The curriculum undergoes an annual internal evaluation. The responsible Offices that cooperate and carry out actions for the operation are: The Internal Evaluation Unit, The

Strategic Planning and Development Office, The Quality Assurance Unit. There is an established practice of reassessing, revising, and updating the syllabus. The duty of the Internal Evaluation Unit is to 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, and research staff as well as internal regulations are available online (in Greek and English). Announcements are available on the homepage. The information is up-to-date, transparent, and accessible.

II. Analysis

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

III. Conclusions

There is no institutionalized channel for feedback from the internship institutions to the program. The website must be enriched with links that direct students to additional information on similar programs in other EU universities.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

There is a need to strengthen the relations with social partners as they are sporadic and occasional now.

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 in the past. During the current external review, all stakeholders were actively engaged. The Department and the University worked diligently in preparing materials, and presentations and organising and hosting 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 members of staff (teaching and administrative), as well as students, alumni and other stakeholders, are aware of the importance of external review, its usefulness and the contribution it can make in improving the Programme. The current external evaluation process showed that the University and the Department are committed to the letter, spirit and process of quality assurance and external review. There is already in place a step-by-step action plan for utilizing the findings and recommendations of the external evaluation. As they pointed out during the meetings, it will help them improve by enabling them to identify problematic areas and find suitable solutions.

III. Conclusions

The panel's impression is that the Department and the University are committed to external evaluation as a vital 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 impact the Programme and contribute to its continuous improvement positively. However, more tangible results and a more meaningful assessment regarding this Principle will be possible when a second external evaluation is carried out.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

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

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

The PSP is the only university-level Postgraduate Programme in Greece dealing with Special Education for People with Oral and Written Language Difficulties. It is stated that it was designed based on the most up-to-date international standards and combines academic knowledge and practical experience.

The PSP has been designed by considering the gaps in specialised training at the postgraduate level in specific objects and the needs in Special Education of the professionals of the educational system in Greece.

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 activities in their 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 the leadership of the University supports it.

The Programme delivers a student-centred distance education that cultivates diverse perspectives and independence and prepares students for important roles in combating corruption and organized crime, a major issue in Greece's public life. It prioritizes transparent student selection and a full-time attendance model. The Regulation of Studies document provides comprehensive guidance.

The Programme encourages and values continuous student course evaluations to drive improvement.

II. Areas of Weakness

- The research environment that supports the Programme is not structured in terms of an institutionalized research profile in Special Education 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.
- Relations and interactions with stakeholders are sporadic and ad hoc.

- The sense of community among students and instructors is relatively weak due to the geographic distances of students' residences and the disparity of institutional affiliation of the teaching staff. The students would like more face-to-face meetings.
- A disadvantage of the program reported by students is that there is not always a direct relationship between the course material and what is covered in the lectures and seminars.
- Most students see it as a positive feature of the program that there is no obligation to write a thesis. However, some students reported that the option of writing a thesis should be provided by the program.
- There is a need for regular updating of the syllabus.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Stable research structures must be established since the research conducted is occasional, depending on those working at the time. The EEAP underlines the importance of substantial financial support by the State to ensure and increase research outputs.
- Full-time staff recruitment is necessary to achieve the PSP's strategic objectives effectively.
- 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 EEAP encourages the PSP to create opportunities for enhancing belonging and cohesion within the academic community. It is recommended to create a healthy, student-centre learning environment is creating a positive and supportive classroom. This means creating a safe and comfortable space for all students. It is important that all students feel included in the classroom and that their voices are heard. The emphasis is on cooperation rather than competition. It should be created a healthy learning environment, in which students work together to support and help each other. This type of environment creates a sense of community and connection.
- The PSP is suggested to establish quality assurance mechanisms to ensure high-quality of the practical training such as developing long-term collaborations with potential hosting organisations, ensuring well-trained supervisors through meetings and training sessions, and implementing evaluation mechanisms for the effectiveness of the practical training and satisfaction of both parties, students and hosting institutions.
- The PSP should consider incorporating the option for students to conduct a thesis dissertation, potentially as optional.

- The PSP may consider providing further flexibility to students through the provision of more non-compulsory and selective modules, so they can tailor their educational experience, profile, interests to their academic path.
- The EEAP suggest the PSP to address students' time of completion of the programme and explore potential solutions to further assist postgraduate students to complete their studies within a shorter period of time by incorporating related targets into the quality assurance planning process.
- More attention needs to be paid to designing environments where students can use what is provided (activities, tasks, resources, tools, training, etc.) to enable, enhance and support students.
- There is a need for regular updating of the syllabus.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

2.

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

None.

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:

None.

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

- 1. Professor Apostolis Papakostas (Chair)**
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- 2. Professor Dimitris Michailakis**
University of Linköping, Sweden
- 3. Professor Leonidas Kyriakides**
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