



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Accreditation Report

for the New Postgraduate Study Programme of:

MBA Food Business Management

Department: Food Science and Technology

Institution: University of Patras

Date: 21 December 2024



Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση
της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



Πρόγραμμα
Ανθρώπινο Δυναμικό και
Κοινωνική Συνοχή



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of
the New Postgraduate Study Programme of **MBA Food Business
Management of the University of Patras** for the purposes of granting
accreditation.

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the new postgraduate study programme of **MBA Food Business Management** of the **University of Patras** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Prof. Athanasios Alexandrou (Chair)**
California State University – Fresno, United States of America
- 2. Dr. Demetrios Kazantzis**
Del's Lemonade and Refreshments Inc, United States of America
- 3. Prof. George Manganaris**
Cyprus University of Technology, Cyprus
- 4. Mr. Ioannis Demetrios Kamberos**
Agricultural University of Athens, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The members of the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) for the review of the new postgraduate study programme, MBA Food Business Management, at the University of Patras were appointed by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) from the Register of Independent Experts on 15 December 2024, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 and 4653/2020.

The EEAP reviewed all the supplied documents (which we, as Panel members, had pre-read and listed below in tabulated form) and agreed on the key questions and issues to focus on during our evaluation.

A0 Table of Contents

A1 Proposal for the Academic Certification

A2 Decision to Establish Postgraduate Programme

A3 MODIP Report

A4 Institution Strategy for the Development of the Postgraduate Programme A5 Feasibility and viability studies

A6 Academic Unit Quality Policy

A7 Academic Unit Quality Indicators

A8 Course Study Guide

A9 Course Outline

A10 Teaching Staff

A11 Internal Regulation of the New Programme of Studies

A12 Regulation Regarding Studies, Practical Training, Mobility, Assignment Writing

A13 Regulations for the Operation of the Students' Complaints and Objections Management Mechanism

A14 Regulations for the Operation of the Institution of Academic Counsellor

A15 Regulations of the Ethics and Research

A16 Diploma Supplement Template in Greek and English language

A17 Summarised Information on the Academic Staff Achievements

A18 Regulation Regarding Distant/Online Education

A19 Budget

The first day of the online meeting began on Monday, 16 December 2024, at 16:00 (all times are in Greek time) with a private session of the EEAP members. During the meeting, the committee members were introduced, discussed the submitted file, and distributed the responsibilities.

On Tuesday, December 17, 2024, the initial Zoom meeting commenced at 16:00, and the following administrators participated:

- Ioannis Venetis, Professor, Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs and Finance
- Grigorios Beligiannis, Professor, Head of the Department

- Evangelos Psomas, Professor, Director of the PSP Prof. Maria Papageorgiou, MODIP Member

They provided a brief yet comprehensive overview of the new postgraduate programme, including its academic profile, status, strengths, and potential areas of concern, and they responded to the committee's questions. Subsequently, the EEAP met with the programme's faculty. The participants included:

- Athanasia Mavrommati, Associate Professor
- Georgios Tsirogiannis, Assistant Professor
- Kleanthis Katsaros, Assistant Professor
- Prokopis Theodoridis, Professor (Hellenic Open University)
- Konstantina Pentaraki, Associate Professor (University of Patras, Department of Business Administration)

Next, the EEAP met with members of the school to discuss the facilities and services offered to students. A video presentation was shown. The members who participated are:

- Ms Vaia Athanasiadi, Head of Secretariat, Administrative staff
- Olga Malisova, Assistant Professor
- Dr. Maria Katsigianni, Laboratory Teaching Staff
- Dr. Ioannis Tassopoulos, Laboratory Teaching Staff

At 19:00, the committee met with the following employers and social partners of the new post graduate programme.

- Mr. Aris Liakopoulos, Vice President of Business Association of the Prefecture of Aitoloakarnania.
- Mrs Labrakopoulou Konstantina, Director of Piraeus Bank, Agrinio.
- Mr. Konstantinos Pistiolas, Member of the Board of Directors of EY.GE PISTIOLAS SA & Management Consultant of XENIA ANAPLASI SA/MARPESSA.
- Dr. Panagiotis Kafetzopoulos, Production manager of ION, Arta.
- Dr Theofanis Zaharatos, Consultant of the Region of Western Greece
- Dr. Alexandra Pliakoura, Manager of Directorate of Agricultural Economy

After a private meeting during which the members of the EEAP discussed the outcomes of the virtual visit, the EEAP held a meeting to discuss the findings with:

- Ioannis Venetis, Professor, Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs and Finance
- Grigorios Beligiannis, Professor, Head of the Department
- Evangelos Psomas, Professor, Director of the PSP
- Papadatou Fieroula, Head of MODIP

The entire process was conducted in a spirit of excellent collaboration. The faculty, staff, and social partners were helpful and transparent about the issues concerning the new programme, and they were highly willing to provide any additional information we requested.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The University of Patras was established in the city of Patras in 1964 and began operating during the 1966-1967 academic year. In June 2013, the University of Western Greece was integrated into the University of Patras. Similarly, in 2019, most departments of the Technological Educational Institute of Western Greece were incorporated into the University of Patras.

The University is located in Patras, Agrinion, and Messolongi. It comprises 35 departments covering a wide range of disciplines and hosts 161 laboratories and 17 fully equipped clinics. The University of Patras has earned a reputation for conducting high-quality, innovative research and for actively participating in numerous research projects, scientific organizations, and research groups.

The new PSP MBA in Food Business Management is part of the Department of Food Science & Technology within the School of Agricultural Sciences and Technology located at Agrinion. The Department was established in May 2019 under paragraph 3 of Article 36 of Law 4610/2019 (Government Gazette 70 / 7.5.2019, Vol. A) titled “Synergies of Universities and TEI, Access to Higher Education, Experimental Schools, General State Archives, and Other Provisions.”

This new PSP programme aims to address the needs of candidates who wish to specialize in business administration within the food sector. The programme's duration is three (3) academic semesters, including the time required for preparing and evaluating the Graduate Thesis. It will accommodate a maximum of 40 students per year, with tuition fees set at 1,000 euros per semester, amounting to a total of 3,000 euros per student (1,000 x 3 semesters).

The curriculum is designed to deliver contemporary, high-value content using the most up-to-date methods and tools. Furthermore, the programme contributes to the training and development of specialized and competent postgraduate-level scientists capable of meeting the modern demands of the business community.

The new post graduate programme was designed to address modern needs and requirements in its specific academic field. It integrates distance learning, characterized by diverse resources, teaching styles, and techniques that reflect the dynamic environment in which the University operates. Distance learning removes spatial and time constraints, offering numerous advantages. The postgraduate programme's objectives are:

- To meet the needs of candidates who wish to specialize their knowledge in the field of food business management.
- To provide a curriculum that will deliver contemporary and high-value content using the most up-to-date methods and tools.

- To contribute to the training and development of specialized and capable post-graduate level scientists who will be able to meet the modern demands of the business community.

The programme adopted the quality assurance policy of the university. The purpose of the quality policy at the University of Patras is the continuous and systematic assurance, improvement, and strengthening of quality within the institution.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The quality assurance policy of the academic unit for postgraduate study programmes should be in line with the Institution's strategy and must be formulated in the form of a public statement, which is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the postgraduate study programmes offered by the academic unit. Indicatively, the quality policy statement of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement a quality policy that will promote the academic profile and orientation of the postgraduate study programme (PSP), its purpose and field of study; it will realise the programme's goals and it will determine the means and ways for attaining them; it will implement appropriate quality procedures, aiming at the programme's continuous improvement.

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

- a. the suitability of the structure and organisation of postgraduate study programmes*
- b. the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education - level 7*
- c. the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching at the PSP*

- d. *the appropriateness of the qualifications and the availability of the teaching staff for the PSP*
- e. *the drafting, implementation, and review of specific annual quality goals for the improvement of the PSP*
- f. *the level of demand for the graduates' qualifications in the labour market*
- g. *the quality of support services, such as administrative services, the libraries, and the student welfare office for the PSP*
- h. *the efficient utilisation of the financial resources of the PSP that may be drawn from tuition fees*
- i. *the conduct of an annual internal review and audit of the quality assurance system for the PSP through the cooperation of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU)*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

- The new PSP is comprised of three semesters (30 ECTS each = 90 ECTS in total) covering requirements to be considered appropriate for level 7, according to the European and National Qualifications Framework. In principle, each MSc student needs to attend 12 modules (6 ECTS each) and to conduct a thesis (18 ECTS).
- A PSP with similar orientation was offered in the past with physical presence. The new PSP will be distant learning.
- The Quality Assurance Policy document of the academic unit is well structured and includes a commitment of the academic unit for its implementation and the efficient use of PSP financial resources.
- The academic unit has set some measurable goals regarding the postgraduate study programme yet not always paired with Key performance indicators that will strive excellence.
- The graduates of this PSP are expected to enhance their competencies and seek a position of professional maturity. The PSP is additionally aiming to attract a considerable number of MSc students who are already working in the private sector. To this aim, all courses will be offered during evening hours.
- The quality of the teaching will be monitored by the provision of electronic and anonymous questionnaire to the MSc students, in relation to the subject taught and the resources provided as well as the performance of the academic staff. Such results will be evaluated in a yearly basis by the Director of the PSP together with the MOPDIP and the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs
- The nature of the offered MSc programme provides incentives for fruitful collaboration with the food industry and other professional bodies and communities. This interaction is expected to additionally lead to enhanced visibility of the University of Patras and recognition of the “academically remoted” area of Agrinio within Greece.

II. Analysis

- A feasibility study was conducted linked to well-known MBA programmes offered in Greece from central Universities.
- Courses per module will be provided by distant learning and the duration of each course is 3 hours. No tentative timetable of the programme was provided.
- The PSP programme should set specific and measurable goals paired with suitable key performance indicators towards learning outcomes.
- There is a concern how the 18 hours per week for the first two semesters will be allocated in evening hours during weekdays.
- There is no evidence that MSc thesis conducted will strive academic excellence.

III. Conclusions

The current PSP is fully compliant towards Principle 1. A list of recommendations is provided based on the analysis conducted on aspects linked to the strategy, the QAP and quality goal setting for the new PSP.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Quality Assurance Policy to be sufficiently communicated to all parties involved. It is suggested also to be communicated in English language to increase visibility of the new PSP within an international context.
- To set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely goals regarding the PSP, and especially in respect of teaching methods, student satisfaction, learning outcomes and research outputs of the accomplished MSc thesis.
- The PSP programme to include a number of specific and measurable goals towards learning outcomes and research outputs (i.e. publications in refereed journal or presentations in Conferences per MSc student)

- To disseminate means to inform the alumnae and other potential interested parties from other Academic Units for enrolment to the current programme.
- Feasibility study to additionally include other MBA programmes that directly linked with the agrifood sector.

Principle 2: Design and Approval of New Postgraduate Study Programmes

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

The academic units develop their postgraduate study programmes following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile and orientation of the programme, the research character, the scientific objectives, the specific subject areas, the specialisations, the expected learning outcomes, the structure, the courses, the teaching and assessment modes, the teaching staff and the necessary resources are described at this stage.

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

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

In addition, the design of PSP must consider:

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

- The programme is supported by 8 Faculty (permanent staff, ΔΕΠ) of the Department who are supporting courses linked to their area of expertise.
- The teaching load of the majority of the faculty is excessive. In addition, they have to handle ca. 40 thesis per year as supervisors/co-supervisors.
- The workload for a specific number of personnel may jeopardize the quality.
- No adequate information was provided about the nature of the MSc thesis that will be offered and how they will be accomplished.
- The stakeholders interviewed by the Panel were enthusiastic about their interaction with the Department, and some of them were aware of the curriculum of the new PSP. However, there was no evidence regarding their participation in the curriculum development.
- The EEAP found no evidence of advice by an External Advisory Board in the strategic development of the PSP, potential curriculum enhancements, research needs, and alternative funding sources.

II. Analysis

- There was/is no formal procedure in place for the development of the new PSP and for periodic revisions of the curriculum.
- The remote, synchronous and asynchronous delivery of the PSP is essential for its success. This issue needs to be handled with special attention by the technical IT services of the Department in terms of inventory and qualified supportive personnel.
- There is concern of the heavy teaching load and the number of MSc thesis that each Faculty will supervise.
- There is no evidence of any on-site meetings, i.e. open days, meeting with supervisors for the implementation of the thesis.

III. Conclusions

The programme is substantially compliant with Principle 2. Below are some recommendations that may enhance its quality.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- To establish a formal process for students/alumni/stakeholders to participate in the continuous improvement of the curriculum.
- An excessive number of elective courses are being offered. Several modules with similar orientation can be merged to avoid overlapping.
- Guest lectures by invited speakers (both from the academia and the industry) either on-site or virtually should be an intricate part of each module.
- To assemble and publicize an External Advisory Board regarding the strategic development and enhancement of the programme.
- The curriculum per module should be amended with special reference to learning outcomes.

Principle 3: Regulations for Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Postgraduate Studies, and certification

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

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

Indicatively:

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

- ☐ The master's Programme in Food Business Management of the University of Patras is utilizing a system that was developed by the University, for easy application procedures for perspective applicants to the programme.
- ☐ Information includes admission procedures, student welfare (i.e. feeding, housing), social welfare (i.e. complaints, students with special needs), the library, electronic services, the University gym, obligations and rights of students, participation in Erasmus programmes, services of the Departments e-learning.
- ☐ The student's progress is monitored through the PMS Coordinating Committee which at the end of each academic semester analyses the progress of the students with the help of the Academic advisor.
- ☐ A number of scholarships are awarded yearly, based on academic criteria to fulltime students up to ten percent (10%) of the number of students.
- ☐ The terms and conditions of students' mobility is based in accordance with the internal regulations of Erasmus and supported by a grant of the University of Patras for studies and for internships.
- ☐ The implementation of the credit transfer system (ECTS) is applied across the entire curriculum according to the course outlines, internal regulations, and in total corresponds to 90 ECTS, or 30 per teaching semester for 3 semesters.
- ☐ In addition to the PMS title, a diploma supplement is granted that does not replace the official degree. It provides information on the content and status of the studies completed by each and every student. The diploma supplement is issued automatically at no cost in both Greek and English.
- ☐ The MBA programme does not require an internship, but it is highly recommended in order to prepare the student in the business of food, and acquire practical experience, in their field of study.
- ☐ A completion of a mandatory master's Thesis has to be original with a topic related to one of the academic subjects under supervision of the department faculty. It is equivalent to 18 credits (ECTS), and it is written in Greek or English. The master's thesis has specific writing guidelines, and it is orally presented in front of a 3-member faculty committee and an open audience. After the presentation, the committee evaluates the text and the oral presentation from zero (0) to ten (10). After a successful defence the thesis is posted on the PMS website of the University of Patras.

II. Analysis

- The teaching of the courses of the Food Business Management MBA programme is administered through the "distance education method". Since the programme is new, e-learning is going to be carried out through a special electronic education platform. The courses taught are using identification codes of the University of Patras and are supported by a Zoom teleconferencing application through the Open e-class platform of the Hellenic Academic Internet (GUNET).
- Through this method, students and faculty participate in online classes, meetings and questions and answers, successfully simulating real-time classroom experiences.

Modern teaching also allows the use of technological tools for effective participation in interactive online activities and utilizes the potential of technology to enhance learning with minimizing loss of transport time.

- A special regulation for the implementation of electronic learning, conditions and procedures for the organization of master's degree Programmes with e- learning are applied and described in extensive detail.

III. Conclusions

The above Principle 3 has fully met the requirements according to the specific guidelines and directions provided by HAHE.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

Principle 4: Teaching Staff of New Postgraduate Study Programmes

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ASSURE THEMSELVES OF THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF THEIR TEACHING STAFF, AND APPLY FAIR AND TRANSPARENT PROCESSES FOR THEIR RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.

The Institution should attend to the adequacy and scientific competence of the teaching staff at the PSP, the appropriate staff-student ratio, the proper staff categories, the appropriate subject areas, the fair and objective recruitment process, the high research performance, the training, the staff development policy (including participation in mobility schemes, conferences, and educational leaves-as mandated by law).

More specifically, the academic unit should set up and follow clear, transparent, and fair processes for the recruitment of properly qualified staff for the PSP and offer them conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching and research; offer opportunities and promote the professional development of the teaching staff; encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research; encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies; promote the increase of the volume and quality of the research output within the academic unit; follow quality assurance processes for all staff (with respect to attendance requirements, performance, self-assessment, training, etc.); develop policies to attract highly qualified academic staff.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

- The new master's Programme for Food Business Management of the University of Patras plans to employ 8 faculty teaching-research staff. Overall, the teaching staff is characterized by modest research outputs.
- The Department of Food Science and Technology of the University of Patras follows certain rules for the selection and development of faculty in order to ensure transparency and meritocracy in the selection of their members. The publication of the positions is posted on the website of the Department and the University of Patras. In order for the Department to attract high level academic staff members, it relies partially on the relationships of the faculty with professors at other Universities both at home and abroad by sending a personal invitation through an email.
- The average weekly load of academic faculty is a minimum of 6 hours per week, but in some instances may exceed 10 hours per week, not including laboratory or tutorial hours. Faculty members teach courses that usually fall within their academic or research interest and subject.
- Student evaluations of teaching staff are done by filling out the questionnaires online, during the 8th to 10th week of each semester. Data collected is used by the teachers in order to improve in areas of specific concern.
- The department's internal assessment team submits the results of student questionnaires to a three-member nomination committee and is used when the faculty is up for renewal or permanence of this position.

- The promotion and recognition of the research work of faculty members is of particular importance at the University of Patras. A process based on automatic search that collects data, i.e. number of papers, references, etc., for the last one up to five years of production of each faculty member.

II. Analysis

- Also, academic members can be awarded financial support in the mobility of the Erasmus office with a provision for Travel expenses.
- An important element for professional development is the operation of the teaching and learning support centre. The University of Patras is the first University, starting in 2016, to help in the development of teaching staff members and the upgrading of teaching. This includes, but is not limited to, techniques and methods of teaching by upgrading the digital skills of teaching methodology.
- To date, ten educational material packages have been developed for university education that participate in European networks for the upgrading of university teaching.
- These packages are directly connected with quality assistance procedures and operate within the framework of the quality assurance unit.

III. Conclusions

The above Principle 4 is substantially compliant to the specific guidelines and directions provided by HAHE.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The MSc thesis to direct to publications in refereed journals.
- To invite guest lecturers of high academic standards to enhance visibility of the offered MSc programme.
- The teaching load per Faculty, including their conventional teaching load for the undergraduate programme, not to be excessive.

Principle 5: Learning Resources and Student Support

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER THE TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS OF THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES. THEY SHOULD -ON THE ONE HAND- PROVIDE SATISFACTORY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORT, AND- ON THE OTHER HAND- FACILITATE DIRECT ACCESS TO THEM BY ESTABLISHING INTERNAL RULES TO THIS END (E.G. LECTURE ROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, NETWORKS, CAREER AND SOCIAL POLICY SERVICES ETC.).

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

- The institution maintains sufficient IT infrastructure for distance learning delivery, complemented by comprehensive library resources and research database subscriptions that support postgraduate programme implementation.
- The university offers online student support through career services and welfare provisions, including psychological support and counselling services, accessible to all PSP students.
- Information about student welfare services is effectively communicated through systematic email notifications and website announcements.
- Student welfare services are operated by qualified personnel with appropriate staffing levels.
- The institution implements a comprehensive plan for tuition resource utilization.

II. Analysis

- The institution demonstrates a well-structured foundation for delivering quality distance learning education through a comprehensive infrastructure and support system. The IT

infrastructure is appropriately scaled for remote education needs, while the availability of physical classrooms provides essential flexibility. The academic resources, particularly the libraries and research database subscriptions, create a robust scholarly environment that aligns effectively with postgraduate-level academic demands.

- The university has successfully implemented a multi-faceted student support system that encompasses career development services and comprehensive welfare services, including vital psychological support mechanisms. These services are thoughtfully designed to be accessible online, ensuring that distance learners have equal access to all support resources. The institution maintains clear communication channels through email and web-based announcements, ensuring students stay well-informed about available services and opportunities. The adequate staffing with qualified personnel further strengthens the delivery and effectiveness of these support services. Finally, the presence of a comprehensive tuition utilization plan suggests sound financial planning and resource allocation.
- There is concern regarding the fact that all courses will be conducted online. There is a lack of a robust plan of MSc students who wish to additionally interact face-to-face with the instructor and/or take advantage of the available infrastructure on site.

III. Conclusions

- Overall, the institution has established a foundation for delivering distance learning education at the postgraduate level, with appropriate consideration given to both academic and student welfare needs, positioning it well for successful programme delivery and student support.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The tuition utilization plan could be strengthened by developing clear performance indicators and conducting regular reviews to ensure resource allocation aligns with evolving programme needs and student support requirements.

Consider options for students that prefer face-to-face interactions for mentoring purposed for both the courses that are offered online and thesis preparation.

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

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

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

The above comprise the assessment of:

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

- The academic personnel engaged in the Postgraduate Studies Programme demonstrate comprehensive understanding of external evaluation and accreditation mechanisms, recognizing their vital role in programme enhancement and quality assurance.
- Academic staff maintain active involvement throughout internal and external evaluation processes, supported by the institution's well-developed evaluation framework.
- The institution has established systematic procedures for implementing recommendations and insights derived from the external evaluation of the Postgraduate Studies Programme.
- The Postgraduate Studies Programme is undergoing its initial external evaluation process, having not previously participated in external assessment procedures.

II. Analysis

- The academic staff demonstrated awareness of evaluation and accreditation processes indicates a strong foundational understanding of quality assurance mechanisms. This awareness is particularly significant as it suggests the faculty's preparedness to engage meaningfully with improvement processes and implement necessary changes. The institution shows commitment to evaluation through two key elements: active staff participation and a robust evaluation framework. The comprehensive involvement of academic personnel in both internal and external evaluation processes suggest an integrated approach to quality assessment. The established evaluation programme framework provides essential structure for these activities, though specific details about its components would offer deeper insight into its effectiveness.
- The presence of systematic procedures for utilizing external evaluation outcomes indicates forward-thinking preparation for implementing improvements. This suggests the institution has developed mechanisms to translate evaluation findings into actionable enhancements, though this system remains untested given the programme's evaluation history.

III. Conclusions

- The overall assessment suggests an institution well-prepared in theory for evaluation processes, with appropriate structures in place, but yet to be tested through practical application. This first external evaluation will likely provide valuable insights for refining these preparatory measures and strengthening the programme's quality assurance mechanisms.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The current evaluation framework could be benchmarked against international standards and peer institutions' best practices. This comparison would help identify potential gaps and areas for enhancement before any future external evaluation process.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- Commitment of the Faculty involved in the PSP programme
- Comprehensive quality Assurance Policy document
- Commitment of the administrative personnel

II. Areas of Weakness

- Modest research outputs for the majority of the faculty involved in the PSP.
- There is no evidence that MSc thesis conducted will strive academic excellence.
- No adequate information was provided about the nature of the MSc thesis that will be offered and how they will be accomplished.
- There is no evidence of any options for the attendees for on-site meetings, i.e. open days or meetings with supervisors for the implementation of the thesis.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- The outline of the modules needs to be amended and provide in a clear manner the learning outcomes.
- To establish open days, meeting with supervisors for the implementation of the thesis.
- To establish a Board member from the pool of stakeholders to offer consultancy in the curriculum and future Programme developments
- To develop an Alumni Association that track the employability and career paths of graduates.
- The PSP programme should set specific and measurable goals paired with suitable key performance indicators towards learning outcomes.
- Several modules with similar orientation can be merged to avoid overlapping.
- Guest lectures by invited speakers (both from the academia and the industry) either on-site or virtually should be an intricate part of each module.
- Courses teaching material (i.e. .ppt presentations) to be available online through the e-class platform by the beginning of semester.
- Feasibility study to additionally include other MBA programmes that directly linked with the agrifood sector.
- Guest lectures by invited speakers (both from the academia and the industry) either on-site or virtually should be an intricate part of each module.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

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

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **2,4**

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

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: **None**

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

- 1. Prof. Athanasios Alexandrou (Chair)**
- 2. Dr. Demetrios Kazantzis**
- 3. Prof. George Manganaris**
- 4. Mr. Ioannis Demetrios Kamberos**