



**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ**  
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**Accreditation Report**  
**for the New Postgraduate Study Programme of:**  
**Environmental, Disasters, and Crises Management Strategies**

**Department: Geology and Geoenvironment**  
**Institution: National Kapodistrian University of Athens**  
**Date: 20 April 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 **Environmental, Disasters, and Crises Management Strategies** of the **National Kapodistrian University of Athens** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

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## **PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW**

### **I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel**

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the new postgraduate study programme of **Environmental, Disasters, and Crises Management Strategies** of the **National Kapodistrian University of Athens** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Professor Emeritus Nikolaos Katopodes (Chair)**  
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA
  
- 2. Professor Theodore Stathopoulos**  
Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, CA
  
- 3. Professor Thomas Panagopoulos**  
University of Algarve, Faro, Portugal
  
- 4. Professor Emmanuel Stefanakis**  
University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada
  
- 5. Mr. Miltiades Meliadis**  
Ph.D. Candidate, Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, Greece

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

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

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

### Monday, 15/4/2024:

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

### Tuesday, 16/4/2024:

1. Welcome teleconference meeting and short overview of the PSP with the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, International Relations, and Extroversion, Prof. Sophia Papaioannou, the Head of the Department of Geology and Geoenvironment, Prof. Asimina Antonarakou, and the Director of the PSP, Prof. Efthymios Lekkas.
2. Meeting with the teaching staff members of the PSP including Dr. Sevastianos Mirasgedis, Prof. Spyros Blavoukos, Prof. Michalis Diakakis, Prof. Panagiotis Nastos, Prof. Konstantinos Kartalis, Prof. Georgios Chortareas, Prof. Ioannis Psycharis, Mrs. Elena Margarita Mourelatou, Dr. Antonios Mavropoulos, and Dr. Nikolaos M. Katsoulakos.
3. Teleconference meeting and discussion of facilities and learning resources with teaching faculty: Prof. George Kaviris, Dr. Konstantinos Soukis, Prof. Hariklia Drinia, Dr. Emmanouil Vassilakis, and administrative staff members: Mr. Dimitrios Psarris, Ms. Paraskevi Tsiouma, and Ms. Alexia Grambas.
4. Meeting with employers and social partners including Mr. Costas Antoniadis (Quality of life department, Greek Ombudsman), Mr. Konstantinos Pappaspyropoulos (Ministry of Environment & Energy), Mr. Andreas Metaxas (Metaxa Hospitality Group), Dr.

Asimina Kourou (Earthquake Planning and Protection Organization of Greece), Ms. Maria Panoutsopoulou (Earthquake Planning and Protection Organization), Ms. Eleftheria Stamati (Local Government Institute), Mr. Konstantinos Chouvardas (Civil Protection at the Region of East Macedonia & Thrace), Dr. Athanasios Ganas (National Observatory of Athens), and Mr. Vasileios Martzaklis (Achaia Fire Services Department).

5. Private debriefing meeting (EEAP members only).
  
6. Closure meeting. Informal oral presentation of the EEAP key findings and clarifications to: the Head of the Department of Geology and Geoenvironment, Prof. Asimina Antonarakou, the Director of the PSP, Prof. Efthymios Lekkas; steering Committee faculty, Prof. Nikolaos Voulgaris, Dr. Stylianos Lozios, and Dr. Charalampos Kranis; OMEA faculty member Dr. Katerina Kouli; and, MODIP staff members Mr. Konstantinos Bourletidis, Mr. Theodoros Chajitheodorou, and Mr. Anestis Karastergiou.
  
7. Private debriefing meeting (EEAP members only).

Wednesday, 17/4/2024 to Saturday 20/4/2024:

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

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

### III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The postgraduate study programme (PSP) **Environmental, Disasters, and Crises Management Strategies** is organized and offered by the **Department of Geology and Geoenvironment** of the **National Kapodistrian University of Athens**. The PSP was first established in academic year 2014-2015 (Official Gazette 2776B/16/10/2014). The programme was re-established in 2016 (Official Gazette 2952B/16/09/2016), in 2018 (Official Gazette 2501B/29/06/2018) and currently, in its third incarnation, for the academic year 2023-2024 (NKUA Senate approval 06/07/2023 and Official Gazette 4913/4/08/2023). The PSP operates under the regulations of the NKUA for postgraduate and doctoral studies established by the University Senate (1432/20-01-2023).

The objective of the PSP is the multidisciplinary training and specialization of scientists, researchers and managers in civil protection with the ultimate goal of preventing and mitigating disasters and crises. Specifically, the programme involves the study of complex problems, the use of modern methods and techniques in the management of natural and technological challenges, as well as the development of integrated strategies for addressing major crises. The PSP confers post-graduate degrees in **Environmental, Disasters, and Crises Management Strategies** with the following specializations:

1. Hazard, Disaster and Crisis Management
2. Environment and Climate Crisis In Education Policies
3. Climate Crisis, Environmental Management and Governance.

Teaching in the PSP is provided by the 12 members of the faculty of the Department of Geology and Geoenvironment. In addition, instructors from other departments of NKUA, other universities, government agencies, research institutes, the private sector, and staff members of the Department of Geology and Geoenvironment contribute to the educational process of the PSP.

The programme has set the maximum number of admitted students per academic year to 210 (70 in each specialization). The actual number of enrolled students may actually be higher because candidates from the Civil Protection sector of the government, National fellowship recipients, and a limited number of NKUA staff members may be admitted to the programme without entrance examinations. It is the goal of the PSP to maintain a student to instructor ratio of six (6).

The EEAP did not interview any current students or recent graduates due the classification of the PSP as a “new” Programme by HAHE. However, two participants of the meeting with the stakeholders were alumni of the PSP and provided some information regarding the programme’s treatment of students. Apparently, the students have a diverse background, which offers the potential for great opportunities for multidisciplinary work. At the same time, this presents some challenges in the level of course offerings and deep learning. Both individuals that the EEAP interviewed were enthusiastic about the opportunities for learning provided of the PSP. They also indicated that they were impressed by the study program, research strength of the faculty, and overall reputation of the Department. Furthermore, they were appreciative of the quality of instruction, and the support they receive during the writing of their theses.

The PSP requires a minimum of three (3) academic semesters study and allows a maximum of six (6) semesters for the completion of the study. To graduate, a student must have successfully completed 90

European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits (60 ECTS for coursework and 30 ECTS for the preparation and successful completion of a postgraduate project). Attendance in lectures is optional, and final examinations are administered online. There is a satisfactory number of elective courses offered after the first semester, which allows for an adequate flexibility in the study program. The EEAP found that the number of courses offered cover most topics of interest in the three areas of specialization of the PSP.

The PSP prepares graduates trained in the management of the environment, hazards, disasters, and crises, leading to careers primarily in the public sector, such as government and civil protection agencies. In addition, a small fraction of graduates continues with doctoral studies. There are strong links to the needs of society, which is a key priority of the PSP in **Environmental, Disasters, and Crises Management Strategies**. The **Department of Geology and Geoenvironment** offers a total of three (3) graduate programs and participates in four (4) additional inter-departmental graduate programs. The department also maintains a very active programme in doctoral and postdoctoral studies.



## PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Documentation**

- *The Institutional strategy for postgraduate studies, which includes a special strategy for e-learning, as long as it is applied to the Institution's PSP*
- *Feasibility and sustainability studies for the new PSP*
- *Quality Policy of the academic unit for the development and improvement of PSP*
- *Quality Targeting of the academic unit for the PSP*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **I. Findings**

The PSP **Environmental, Disasters, and Crises Management Strategies** of the **Department of Geology and Geoenvironment** at the **National Kapodistrian University of Athens** has developed and implemented its Quality Assurance Policy as part of its broader strategy, as described in its proposal for accreditation of the subject PSP.

The **Department of Geology and Geoenvironment**, in collaboration with the University Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) and the Departmental Internal Evaluation Group (OMEA), has harmonized the quality policy of the PSP **Environmental, Disasters, and Crises Management Strategies** with that of the University, accompanied by annual quality assurance targets for the continuous development and improvement of the PSP, as well as that of the academic unit and other educational programmes.

The Quality Assurance Policy of the PSP is publicly accessible from the Department's website, and includes adequate references to the PSP delivery, including commitments to satisfy requirements and strive for continuous improvement. In addition to OMEA, a departmental Coordinating/Steering Committee further aids in the overall quality assurance of the PSP and the Department.

The processes and procedures used for the monitoring and continuous improvement of the quality of the PSP are as follows:

1. The strict implementation of the PSP Policy for Quality Assurance;

2. The optimal disposition and management of the PSP resources, including those resulting from tuition fees;
3. The establishment of Quality Assurance objectives of the PSP on an annual basis;
4. The periodic internal evaluation and monitoring of the PSP on an annual basis;
5. The collection of Quality Data, quantitation, analysis and improvement of the PSP;
6. The disclosure and publication of all information related to the PSP made publicly accessible;
7. The periodic external evaluation and accreditation following established procedures by HAHE.

The quality and effectiveness of teaching at the PSP is closely monitored through the course/instructor evaluation by the students, the collection of data by the OMEA and transfer to MODIP on an annual basis. The goals of quality of the programme include:

1. Specialization in directions of research;
2. Improvement of the learning process and timely graduation of students;
3. Participation of students in research projects;
4. Internationalization of the PSP;
5. Connection of the PSP to the job market and society;
6. Improvement of the computational facilities;
7. Improvement of the programme's accessibility;
8. Promotion of equal gender representation.

## II. Analysis

The structure and organization of the PSP is well planned and in line with the overall goal of the programme. The material covered along with the study of new technologies in the area of **Environmental, Disasters, and Crises Management** result in learning outcomes and qualifications of the postgraduate students consistent with Level 7 of the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. The teaching methods, learning outcomes, and student satisfaction are explained in the PSP Study Guide.

The Quality Assurance Policy is sufficiently communicated to all parties involved. The PSP has set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely goals regarding the postgraduate programme. The targets that are monitored include the annual percentage of graduates to all registered students; the grade point average of postgraduate theses; the research output by the faculty such number of publications; citations and impact; participation of postgraduate students in research; the number of publications with postgraduate students as co-authors, the number of conferences in which postgraduate students participate; and the percentage of postgraduate students who continued for doctoral studies.

Based on the data provided to the EEAP, the targets are also paired with suitable key performance indicators (KPIs). Goals are monitored, updated, and communicated, according to the Quality Assurance Policy implemented by the Institution and the PSP. The quality assurance system is reviewed on an annual basis by the OMEA and results communicated to the University MODIP, which issues an annual report.

According to 2023 Quality Targets report, overall, the PSP is at a satisfactory quality level in terms of

achieving set targets. Potential areas of improvement include management of the number of admissions, the number of students completing the course/instructor evaluations, and students' mobility.

### III. Conclusions

Overall, this is a well-organized PSP focusing on the quality of the teaching and effectiveness of learning. The Department has established a Quality Assurance Policy that is appropriate for the PSP. It includes a commitment for its implementation and continuous improvement of the programme. The metrics established by the PSP and the Institution are adequate in tracking and documenting the quality of the programme. The findings are supported by the documents provided to the EEAP by the PSP, the interviews with the teaching faculty, support staff, and stakeholders of the programme.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

To enhance adherence to Principle 1, the EEAP recommends the following:

- Improve the documentation and communication of the course/instructor evaluations to all involved. Publish (discretely) the results on the PSP website.

- Incorporate modern assessment methods in the course evaluation process. For example, instead of asking “was this course/instructor excellent?” give the student an opportunity to rate their ability to complete a series of tasks, thus reflecting their level of learning.
- Establish a formal External Advisory Board, which could provide input for the continuous review, and further improvement of the curriculum and vision of the PSP.

## 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).*

### **Documentation**

- *Senate decision for the establishment of the PSP*
- *PSP curriculum structure: courses, course categories, ECTS awarded, expected learning outcomes according to the NQF, 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: teaching assignments per subject area and per course*

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings**

The EEAP was generally satisfied with the development and delivery of this PSP on **Environmental, Disasters and Crises Management Strategies** of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens**. The programme is well designed and covers a broad selection of topics in the field of Environmental Disasters, Decision Analysis and Crisis Management for a great variety of causes, including but not limited to earthquakes, windstorms, floods, fires, volcanoes and the like, addressing not only the technical but also the economic, social and political aspects of these phenomena. There are several elective courses addressing the professional interests of all students regardless of their background. There is minimum overlapping with the content of similar undergraduate courses, so the students' needs to upgrade their knowledge are fully satisfied and the quality of the programme at the postgraduate level deems to be high.

The percentage of students graduating from this programme (in the order of above 80%) is good and consistent with other similar programmes. The grades of the students are rather high – typically in the order of 80 to 90%. The hybrid delivery of the programme has been successful and quite critical for its development, notwithstanding the general concern of the EEAP panel about the remote learning, particularly for courses involving critical experimental or field work and technical visits. Nevertheless, there is no evidence of student participation in the curriculum development, although no complaint has been expressed to the panel in this regard when talking with the stakeholders, some of whom have been graduates from the predecessor of this PSP.

### **II. Analysis**

The EEAP was impressed by the success of this program. However, this success was anticipated considering that this PSP, although technically new, in reality is an extension and enhancement of its predecessor, which was also popular and in high demand. This is also due to the recent natural disasters (fires, floods, etc.) that took place in Greece. These disasters contributed to people's awareness of the significance of knowledge regarding crisis management.

In addition, it is also remarkable to mention that the numerous stakeholders interviewed by the EEAP panel expressed a very positive opinion of the programme and the technical and professional skills of the programme graduates both in depth and breadth. These stakeholders have employed the predecessor program' graduates or have taken the programme themselves.

Finally, the EEAP discussed the possibility of formal development of an External Advisory Board and suggested including in its membership the stakeholders of the programme output, for instance senior government or industry officials and other experts from academia and technology to advise the PSP administrators regarding the strategic development of this programme, potential curriculum enhancements, research, technological and socioeconomic needs and the like.

### III. Conclusions

The PSP on **Environmental, Disasters and Crises Management Strategies** is highly successful and complies fully with the HAHE requirements of Principle 2. However, this PSP could be enhanced and enjoy even higher success with the establishment of an External Advisory Board providing critical input on issues such as:

- Language of instruction – it would be beneficial to recruit students from abroad and offer some courses in English.
- Curriculum evolution – enhancement of case studies and fieldwork experience.
- Tuition fee level (several stakeholders feel strongly that the current level is on the low side) etc.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

To enhance adherence to Principle 2, the EEAP recommends the following:

- The programme actively engage and publicize an External Advisory Board made of senior government/industry officials to advise the programme administrators regarding the strategic development and enhancement of this programme.
- The establishment of a formal process for the active participation of students in the curriculum development of the programme.





### **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.*

#### **Documentation**

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the postgraduate study programme*
- *Special regulation for the implementation of e-learning if the PSP is delivered through distance methods*
- *Research Ethics Regulation*

- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility, and student assignments*
- *Degree certificate template and Diploma Supplement template*

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings**

Student admission: The EEAP has confirmed that predefined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place. The admission criteria are clear, consistent, and transparent. Admission to this study programme is well-defined and regulated. The PSP adheres to the same admission criteria as other state universities in Greece, in accordance with national law. The programme has established processes and mechanisms to support incoming students and has created a welcoming and engaging environment. A student support and services system are in place to assist students with academic and personal challenges.

Student progression: The EEAP has confirmed that predefined, published, and clear regulations regarding student progression are in place. All regulations and information are conveyed to students clearly and transparently. All academic and other relevant data are readily available to students on the PSP's website and the Learning Management System (e-class). The programme has established services to ensure effective delivery of courses both in-person and online, and mechanisms to monitor student satisfaction through course evaluations. Student progress is continuously monitored to ensure that students have registered for and completed the expected courses each semester, and that they have been assigned a post-graduate report and a supervisor in their 3<sup>rd</sup> semester of study. The necessary administrative support and technological infrastructure are in place for delivering the programme.

Student recognition: Appropriate recognition procedures are in place and align with standards. Various scholarship opportunities and awards are available to students. Graduation requires a total of 90 ECTS, of which 60 ECTS are obtained from 10 courses (5 mandatory; 2 mandatory per specialization; and 3 elective courses) each worth 6 ECTS, and 30 ECTS are allocated for the post-graduate report. There are well-defined criteria for the completion of the post-graduate report, which can take various forms. The EEAP noted that instructors from a wide range of departments, other universities, as well as research institutes and government organizations contribute to the transfer of knowledge and experience to the students of the PSP.

Student certification: Certification procedures are established, and students are properly informed about them. A Diploma Supplement is provided to all graduates of the programme. Receiving the Master's Diploma allows graduates to enhance their profiles more effectively, both professionally and academically, at national and European levels.

### **II. Analysis**

The PSP in **Environmental, Disasters, and Crises Management Strategies** at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens employs effective processes and tools to properly manage, coordinate, and address student admission, progression, recognition, and certification. The internal assessment mechanisms are well-developed and enable continuous monitoring of key student performance indicators. Programme requirements and other relevant information are readily available to both prospective and current students on the PSP's webpage.

The EEAP concluded that the programme adequately addresses all individual aspects required to

ensure student admission, progression, and completion of studies. However, the EEAP also expressed some concerns in the following areas:

- The programme enrolls a large number of students (210 students/year), with many participating virtually.
- The programme boasts a notably high number of instructors (over 40) from various departments, universities, and agencies. The EEAP noted that the communication channels among these instructors are quite limited, potentially hindering student learning.
- The programme offers flexible delivery with optional student participation in labs, exercises, and site visits. However, this flexibility does not guarantee that all graduates will acquire sufficient practical experience in the PSP subject area.
- The student mobility in the PSP appears limited, even though industry and government partners / employers have emphasized the value of practical experience and site visits.

### III. Conclusions

The programme is fully compliant with the Principle.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

To enhance adherence to Principle 3, the EEAP recommends the following:

- The PSP should develop more personalized communication strategies, particularly for virtual participants, to ensure all students are fully engaged and receive an enhanced learning experience.
- Regular meetings should be held for instructors within and across the three specializations to share experiences and coordinate the integration of course content delivery.
- The PSP should implement a mechanism to ensure that all students receive a minimum level of practical training activities before graduating.

- Efforts to enhance student mobility should be further expanded and encouraged to include internships (also known as "praktiki askisi"), student exchanges with international schools, and participation in national and international workshops and training programmes. This will further enhance student learning and promote the internationalization of the programme.

#### **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.*

#### **Documentation**

- *Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment, policy for attracting highly qualified staff, and PSP Obligation Regulation*
- *List of the intended for recruitment teaching staff including subject areas, employment relationship, Institution of origin, Department of origin and relevant individual achievements*

#### **Study Programme Compliance**

##### **I. Findings**

The criteria and recruitment procedures for faculty members and Collaborating Teaching Staff (CTS) are outlined in the Greek State laws. National Kapodistrian University of Athens, being a public university, must adhere to strict regulations, akin to all Greek public universities. The EEAP found that the teaching staff of the PSP on **Environmental, Disasters and Crises Management Strategies** has excellent qualifications to teach the syllabus of the programme. The workload of teaching staff is approximately 6 hours per week. The PSP has 42 teaching staff of which 12 are members of the Department of Geology and Geoenvironment. The CTS are members of other departments and universities or from the private or public sector with significant experience on the topics of the PSP. The workload of each CTS varies from 6 to 72 contact hours per year at the PSP courses, while total teaching responsibilities vary from 142 to 308 hours annually. Additional to teaching in postgraduate programs and postgraduate programs, the CTS have duties in student postgraduate project supervision and administration duties. This workload proves to be challenging and demanding, allowing only limited time for

research activities. However, research activities and publication in international journals is satisfactory. The average number of citations the last 5 years is 771 per CTS which is excellent, however, only 67% of the CTS can be found in SCOPUS, and a low number (51%) has a public profile in Google Academic. Most of the CTS holds a PhD (72%), and only 56% of the CTS are faculty members in universities or researchers in public Institutions.

## II. Analysis

The Department provides support to the teaching staff by organizing teaching seminars in regular intervals. Additionally the Department provides opportunities for Erasmus teaching mobility with several international collaborations.

The student-teaching ratio in this PSP is 6:1, which is very good. A small number of students graduated from this programme follow doctoral studies (<1%). Increasing this number might be an excellent by-product of this programme contributing to the academic targets of the faculty members to promote their academic objectives and obtain research funding.

The research output of seven academics teaching in this programme is outstanding. However, the teaching staff without a PhD and without presence in Scopus and Google Academic should improve. The teaching staff with high practical experience is very important for this programme, but 44% are not from Academia; however, at the Master level the CTS holding a PhD should be over 75%.

The department intends to achieve equity in the CTS ratio of women/men, which is currently below 0.4.

All pertinent information about the PSP is thoroughly presented on the dedicated webpage. However, it is difficult to find information about the CTS of the PSP because this information is incomplete. The brief curriculum of the teaching staff and a Scopus link should be more visible.

## III. Conclusions

Faculty members are highly capable to teach the topics they are assigned to; however, some CTS don't have significant recognition, and PhD holders are below 75% of the teaching staff. More resources should be allocated to the professional development of teaching staff. There is room to increase the recruitment efforts for this program.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

To enhance adherence to Principle 4, the EEAP recommends the following:

- Increase the fraction of PhD holding instructors to enhance the academic character of the PSP.
- Increase the motivation of the teaching staff for internationalization and recognition.

## 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.*

### Documentation

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

### Study Programme Compliance

#### I. Findings

The Postgraduate programme in **Environmental, Disasters and Crises Management Strategies** of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens** is a three-academic semester programme. It consists of students with different academic backgrounds. Every year, the Postgraduate Programme accepts approximately 200 new graduate students. The postgraduate programme has three different specializations, the first one is Risk, Disaster and Crisis Management; the second one is Educational Policies on Climate Crisis and the Environment; and the third one is Climate Crisis, Environmental Management and Governance. The first semester has five required courses, which are common for all specializations. During the second semester, students attend



five elective courses as follows:

- 2 compulsory elective courses, offered only in the specialization they have chosen
- 3 courses of free choice, from two groups of courses
- Courses offered in all specializations.
- Courses that are only offered by certain student specializations.

Finally, during the last semester, there is a **post-graduate report**. Each course corresponds to 6 ECTS units except for the postgraduate project, which provides 30 ECTS units. The courses are mainly delivered through lectures while it is worthy of mention that only some of them require laboratory or field meetings. The courses are not taught simultaneously during each semester, but sequentially. Thus, when a course is completed, the students proceed to taking the next course they have elected. The **post-graduate report** can either be research or literature-based, and the choice of topic is made by the student. However, the majority, if not all the students, choose a literature-based **post-graduate report**.

According to the curriculum guide, the predominant method of course assessment is open-ended questions, and multiple-choice questions. The examination period is scheduled at the end of each semester, and the grade for each course is mainly based on the performance in the final exams except for those with a laboratory.

The university provides students with an evaluation system at the end of each academic semester. The evaluation system is in the form of a questionnaire where students can rate the courses, lecturers, and lecture content, etc. The same platform provides an opportunity for students to express any complaints, dissatisfaction or harassment.

The teaching staff takes into account the diversity of the postgraduate students, who come from different disciplines. The students have backgrounds that are not only from the Department of Geology, and may actually have entirely different knowledge and experiences. For this reason, the lectures and their content are designed to be understood by the entire student population. Furthermore, the lecturers make themselves available both in person and on line for answering any questions.

## II. Analysis

The curriculum of this postgraduate course includes a wide range of courses covering current and emerging issues in the fields of Environmental Disasters and Crisis Management Strategies. Consequently, the theoretical training of the students at the end of the PSP is quite satisfactory, as they expand and specialise their knowledge in this field. As a result, following this PSP, the student may gain a satisfactory level of experience in the corresponding discipline.

Although this postgraduate programme is presented and considered as new, it is worth

mentioning that it replaces a similar postgraduate programme, which was modified to comply with a new national law in higher education. Based on the previous postgraduate programme review, the effectiveness of the courses is generally satisfactory. This is commendable considering the heterogeneity of the students, who come from different departments and have different backgrounds. The teaching staff has adapted the content of their courses to this broad audience, and they are always available to respond to any questions and queries. One concern though is that this PSP is not very active in placing student abroad through the Erasmus program.

Based on the previous postgraduate programme review, the courses' and teachers' evaluation system are widely available to the students. Unfortunately, only a moderate percentage of students participate in the internal evaluation process. However, no significant dissatisfaction has been reported.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the majority of the students choose this PSP in order to secure employment or advance their position in the public sector, in particular the armed and rescue forces, and in the national and prefectural Civil Protection.

### III. Conclusions

The curriculum of the postgraduate programme **Environmental, Disasters and Crises Management Strategies** is generally in line with the standards of the HAHE. The instruction quality is good, and the graduates achieve specialized knowledge and experience in both the professional and research fields.

#### Panel Judgment

<b>Principle 5: Learning Resources and Student Support</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

#### Panel Recommendations

To enhance adherence to Principle 6, the EEAP recommends the following:

- Increase the students' training and use of sophisticated software and equipment.

- Encourage students to pursue a research thesis, as this would help develop more contacts and relationships with other universities and institutes.
- Increase student participation in the Erasmus programme within this PSP.

## 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.*

### Documentation

- The Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) procedure for verifying whether the requirements of the Standards for Quality Accreditation of New PSP are met, as well as the procedure for organising and supporting their external evaluation procedures*
- Assessment and feedback mechanisms of the PSP strategy and quality targeting, and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*

### Study Programme Compliance

#### I. Findings

The PSP of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens is following the Principles of the present Standards and the quality procedures of the Institution's Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS). The EEAP found that the self-assessment of the PSP on **Environmental, Disasters and Crises Management Strategies** is based on procedures that support the learning environment for the students and the strategic goals of the Institution. Factors considered for the assessment of the PSP include the student's workload, students' expectations, and the assessment of the student

satisfaction. Additionally, the PSP self-assessment takes into consideration scientific and technological developments, societal and job market needs, as well as national, European, and international policies. The PSP Director and the coordination committee will collect information from the students, teaching staff and other stakeholders for annual self- assessment of the programme. The annual report will be submitted to MODIP for review, and recommendations will be shared with the general faculty assembly. A clear timeline of the self-assessment procedure is established. Decisions for improvements will be made at the end of the academic year (1-15 July) and a report will be delivered, which includes suggestions for improvement to be implemented by the beginning of the following academic year.

The PSP did not have a previous external evaluation, however, the Institution, through its Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) and the corresponding academic units, organize and support the external evaluation procedures of the new PSP, according to the specific guidelines and directions provided by HAHE.

## II. Analysis

Through the process of internal review and continuous improvement plan, the positive aspects of the programme will be reinforced by adding new topics based on scientific developments. The collected information will be analysed, and the programme will be adapted to ensure that it is up to date. There is a strategically designed consideration for improving courses using the course evaluations by students. Programme weaknesses will be addressed when problems are identified in student evaluations. In the past, the PSP has been reviewed and revised without the direct involvement of other stakeholders.

## III. Conclusions

The self-assessment procedure of the programme is adequate, but should include more active participation of the students, alumni and the external stakeholders.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

To enhance adherence to Principle 6, the EEAP recommends the following:

- An External Advisory Board (EAB) be established to enhance further development of the Programme and to create a permanent link with the professional world.
- The students' participation and the involvement of external stakeholders in the study programme revisions should be enhanced further.

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

### **I. Features of Good Practice**

- The **National Kapodistrian University of Athens** and the **Department of Geology and Geoenvironment** have implemented compliant and efficient mechanisms for monitoring and ensuring a high-quality education and services relative to the PSP **Environmental, Disasters, and Crises Management Strategies**. The existing quality assurance and continuous improvement policy and practices followed by the PSP align with the strategic objectives of the Department of Geology and Geoenvironment and the University.
- The faculty and staff are enthusiastic and dedicated to their mission.
- The students' overall experience is very positive. The enthusiasm of recent graduates, employers, and stakeholders is evident.
- Employment of the postgraduate study programme graduates in public and/or private positions is very high.
- Employers and social partners praised the postgraduate study programme and believe there is a clear need for such graduates.
- Overall, this excellent PSP offers many opportunities to its graduates.

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

- There is no structured, well-defined process for students, graduates and external stakeholders' in the PSP improvement.
- Hands-on student laboratory training is insufficient.
- Student participation in internship training is limited.
- There is no published historical track of actions in response to past evaluations (students, external and internal evaluations).
- There are limited interactions with stakeholders and alumni after graduation.
- There is no formal External Advisory Board.

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

- Establish a formal External Advisory Board comprised of social partners, academics from foreign institutions, and other stakeholders to actively assist and guide the continuous review, revision, and further development of the PSP curriculum, enhance the entire programme, as well as attract resources.

- Increase the fraction of PhD holding instructors to enhance the academic character of the PSP.
- Implement a mechanism to ensure that all students receive a minimum level of practical training activities before graduating.
- Encourage students to pursue internships and facilitate their participation in national and international workshops and training programmes. Increase mobility of students, faculty and other scientific personnel by supporting participation in the Erasmus programme.
- Publish on the PSP website all actions in response to past evaluations (students, external and internal evaluations).
- Hold meetings for instructors within and across the three specialization areas to share experiences and coordinate the integration of course content delivery.
- Develop more personalized communication strategies, particularly for virtual participants, to ensure that all students are fully engaged and receive an enhanced learning experience.

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

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

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

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

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

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



## The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname	Signature
<b>1. Professor Emeritus Nikolaos Katopodes (Chair)</b> University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA	
<b>2. Professor Theodore Stathopoulos</b> Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, CA	
<b>3. Professor Thomas Panagopoulos</b> University of Algarve, Faro, Portugal	
<b>4. Professor Emmanuel Stefanakis</b> University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada	
<b>5. Mr. Miltiades Meliadis</b> Ph.D. Candidate, Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, Greece	