ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
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Εθνική Αρχή
Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης
Hellenic Authority
for Higher Education

Αριστείδου 1 & Ευριπίδου 2 • 10559 Αθήνα | 1 Aristidou str. & 2 Evripidou str. • 10559 Athens, Greece
Τ. +30 210 9220 944 • **E.** secretariat@ethaae.gr • www.ethaae.gr

Accreditation Report
for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Machine Learning and Data Science

School: Electrical and Computer Engineering Institution:

Technical University of Crete

Date: 09/02/2025

Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης
ΕΣΠΑ 2021-2027
Πρόγραμμα
Ανθρώπινο Δυναμικό και Κοινωνική Συνοχή
enqa.

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Postgraduate Study Programme of **Machine Learning and Data Science** of the **Technical University of Crete** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the postgraduate study programme of Machine Learning and Data Science of the **Technical University of Crete** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. Dr. Elias Pimenidis (Chair)
   University of the West of England (UWE)

2. Prof. Emeritus Yani Skarlatos
   Boğaziçi University

3. Prof. Emeritus Nicolas Spyratos
   Université Paris-Saclay & CNRS

4. Prof. Emeritus George Tsatsaronis
   Technische Universität Berlin, Germany

5. κ. Κωνσταντίνος Δεληγιαννάκης
   University of Macedonia

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) was formed in mid-January 2025 and received the accreditation support material concerning the Postgraduate Study Programme in Machine Learning and Data Science (henceforth MLDS) about a week prior to the accreditation visit. The review was organized by HAHE and the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering of the Technical University of Crete. The quality of the support material was very good. All documents were very well crafted and designed. During the visit, all the participants involved (MODIP, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates, and External Stakeholders) were very prompt with their responses and to provide us with all the information we asked for. The meetings took place on 20 and 21 January 2025 and were conducted online utilizing zoom video conference facilities. All meetings took place in a very friendly and cooperative spirit.

The timetable and agenda of the accreditation review were as follows:

On Monday, 20 January 2025, the EEAP members had a short meeting to organize the accreditation review and allocate the different tasks for the forthcoming accreditation meetings and the drafting of the report. Following this meeting, the EAAP had the welcome meeting with the President of MODIP, the Dean of the School, the Director of the PSP, the President of MODIP and Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs, as well as members of MODIP, the Steering Committee of the PSP, and members of the OMEA of the School. A brief and informative presentation was made by the Director of the PSP on the main features of the programme, challenges and opportunities and the strategic plans to develop and disseminate the educational value of the programme beyond Crete and the whole of Greece. The meeting concluded with a discussion on strengths and possible areas of concern, and the degree of compliance of the programme to the Standards for Quality Accreditation. The EEAP unanimously decided to view the informative videos regarding the facilities and equipment's adequacy, in private. The videos were kindly provided to them by the school.

On 21 January 2025, the EEAP met with the teaching staff members. We discussed their workload, professional development opportunities, methods for student evaluations, teaching, and research activities.

Following the meeting with the teaching members of staff the EEAP met with a group of current students. These came from different educational backgrounds and offered us the opportunity to have very informative discussions as to the strengths, attractiveness, and educational value of the programme. All students were very appreciative of the opportunity they have to study on the programme.

Next the EEAP met recent graduates of the programme. They were all very complimentary about the professional opportunities that the programme has offered them. They were all well employed and two of them have been inspired to continue with research degrees leading to PhDs.

The next meeting was with EEAP and employers and social partners of the PSP. They presented and discussed different types of relationships and collaborations with the school and graduates from the PSP. The stakeholders were from the private and public sectors and spoke very highly of the programme and its graduates. After the end of this meeting, the EEAP members met in a separate zoom meeting to discuss and reflect on their first impressions and prepare a brief oral presentation of the findings.

The EEAP had its last meeting of the day with the Vice-Rector/ and President of MODIP, the Dean of the School, the Director of the PSP and Steering Committee and OMEA members, during which additional comments and clarifications were discussed. The EEAP gave a short preliminary verbal report about their impressions and key findings.

The members of the EEAP wish to thank the Technical University of Crete for arranging and hosting these meetings and for the exceptional spirit of openness and collaboration with which it responded to the queries of the panel over the course of the virtual accreditation visit.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The Technical University of Crete had approved the establishment of the MSc Machine Learning and Data Science to be delivered and assessed in the English language in 2022 and this was published in the Hellenic Republic's Government Gazette (issue 3150, 22 June 2022). The programme first ran in the academic year 2022-23 and has been in operation continuously till present. It was approved to have an intake of a maximum of 20 students per intake.

The programme is run by the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering of the Technical University of Crete, in Chania. The PSP aims to train graduates to develop them as professionals with skills necessary for success in the international job market, to help meeting the demands of Greek and international job markets for people with specialized skills in data science, and to train individuals in modern methodologies that will allow them to become the next generation leaders in technology, research and education.

The programme runs in two semesters and can be completed during a single academic year. Students study modules of a total value of 60 ECTS (30 each semester). There is no dissertation in the programme structure, but students are required to complete a short capstone project for 2 ECTS.

The programme steering committee has established a coherent set of criteria for student admission and will often interview candidates to establish their suitability for admission to the programme. Students are expected to have good programming skills at admission.

The programme charges tuition fees that are considered quite low for this level of studies, and the attractive and popular title and content of the programme. These currently stand at €500 for EEA students and €1000 for all other students.

The programme has seen an increase in attractiveness with application numbers on the rise for the first three academic years, from 14 in 2022-23 to 55 in 2024-25. The admission numbers have been kept low to ensure that the admitted students have the required credentials and genuine interest in studying and completing this programme successfully. Intake has been at 5, 8, and 7 students in the three academic years since 2022-23. Five students have graduated from the 2022-23 intake and six from 2023-24.

The programme is seeking to expand the intake with suitable candidates over the next few academic years and to attract high-quality international students.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

A Quality Assurance Policy has been established to support the PSP of MSc in Machine Learning and Data Science (Docs M1.1, M1.2) and ensure the programme's quality. These documents reflect the broader quality policy of the TUC by affirming the commitment of the academic unit to establishing, maintaining, monitoring, and improving the relevant quality assurance mechanisms employed for the PSP. They also define the implementation of these mechanisms through the

setting of goals for continuous improvement with monitoring and evaluation on an annual basis, collection and analysis of data relevant to quality assurance, as well as the management of financial resources.

The quality policy of the unit is published on its website, along with the prevailing actions and goals.

An academic advisor to help students with any difficulties they may encounter during their studies is appointed to every student upon enrolment. (Doc. M3.3)

The School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science instituted a service for hearing student complaints in 2024, and the dean has been designated to handle students' complaints. (Doc. M3.2)

The financial resources drawn from tuition and other funding sources are fully utilised for the financial support of students and the procurement of goods and services intended to improve the quality of the educational provision and student experience.

Provisions have been made to investigate the graduates' nature and level of attractiveness by the corresponding job market.

II. Analysis

MODIP is responsible for monitoring and enforcing quality assurance. The coordination committee of the PSP and the School's administration manage this process. Annual internal audits are planned. The first such internal evaluation took place on January 30, 2024. The quality data collected pointed to several strong and weak points, and improvements/corrective actions were proposed as a result. (Doc. M1)

The academic staff maintain a positive attitude towards quality assurance evaluation. EEAP's discussion with students indicates a high degree of satisfaction with quality assurance. The students confirmed their views on the quality, relevance, responsiveness, and appropriateness of the educational provision offered by the academic unit.

The faculty encourages students to participate in projects and conduct research aimed at increasing their hands-on experience. Students and graduates speak favourably of their experience and express satisfaction with the support they received for transitioning to their professional careers.

A set of measurable goals in connection with teaching methods, student satisfaction, and learning outcomes have been codified in Doc. M2.4 They are commensurate with Key Performance Indicators and appropriate for Level 7 of the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher education. However, an analysis of the Key Performance Indicators is missing. The degree of attainment of the goals has not been audited.

There is little evidence of using the information gathered from course evaluations, however scarce, to make improvements. Neither is there evidence of attempts to track down graduate career data in a systematic way, as stated in the Quality Assurance Policy statement.

III. Conclusions

The PSP has established a quality assurance policy that should be monitored and evaluated on a systematic basis. The process provides specific directions for improvement, which is considered necessary for further actions. Several KPIs are

not clearly shown in the policy goal setting.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Make an effort to systematise and document the information collected about the market demand for professional qualifications expected from the programme's graduates.
- Make an effort to track and document the professional careers of the programme's graduates.
- Ensure that the corrective measures decided during the programme's internal evaluation have materialised.
- Although the annual audit performed in conjunction with MODIP is well documented, periodic internal reviews carried out by the programme administration should be more formalised and better documented.
- Quality goals should be compared with Key Performance Indicators, monitored, and communicated.

PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

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

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

In addition, the design of PSP must consider:

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP in Machine learning and Data Science is designed to equip students with the necessary skills to succeed in the industry, both nationally and internationally. The curriculum is developed in line with the institution's policies and European recommendations and is regularly reviewed and updated in the study guide. The programme is committed to providing high-quality education and research in accordance with the National Administration of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ADIP). The institution's quality assurance unit (MODIP) oversees the programme's internal and external evaluations to ensure continuous improvement.

The programme comprises core courses that establish a common foundation for students from diverse informatics, computer science, electrical engineering, and mathematics/science backgrounds. These courses are supplemented by elective courses that prepare students for research and provide in-depth knowledge in relevant subjects. The programme concludes with a capstone project based on research in a specialised area.

All necessary documentation, including the senate decision establishing the programme, curriculum, list of teaching staff, study guide, course descriptions, and success criteria, have been provided (Docs. M2.1, M2.3, M2.5, M2.5). Annual internal audits of programme operations are planned to be conducted in collaboration with MODIP, and data from various sources are analysed to evaluate and improve the educational process.

Periodic revisions of the curriculum, in consultation with internal and external experts, students, graduates, and other stakeholders, are stipulated in the rules of procedures of the PSP approved by the University Senate. However, the evaluation committee did not find relevant documentation regarding this process.

II. Analysis

The Machine Learning and Data Science programme at this institution closely resembles similar programmes at universities in the US and Europe. Its design is based on the needs of both national and international relevant markets and meets the standards outlined in Level 7 of the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education.

The information outlined in the relevant documents and provided by administrators and faculty members indicates that the academic unit is committed to implementing the quality assurance policy. The PSP's goals, as they appear in the quality assurance policy and the policy goal setting, indicate an emphasis on research, teaching, and student-related considerations.

III. Conclusions

The programme has been designed and approved in compliance with Principle 2.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The programme is relatively new and has undergone only internal quality assessment so far, while the first external evaluation is currently in progress. Although the design and approval of the programme seem fine on paper, there are surely corrections and/or additions that will have to be made as the programme evolves. The unit should be alert and respond to the recommendations of the present report in order to alleviate any problems related to the programme's design.
- Although graduates of the programme are satisfied with their employment status and employers appear to be satisfied with their employees, further efforts should be made towards increased cooperation with external partners, who will come up with ideas for the continuous development of the goals and the curriculum of the programme.

PRINCIPLE 3: STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE THAT POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES PROVIDE THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE LEARNING PROCESS. THE ASSESSMENT METHODS SHOULD REFLECT THIS APPROACH.

Student-centered learning and teaching plays an important role in enhancing students' motivation, their self-evaluation, and their active participation in the learning process. The above entail continuous consideration of the programme's delivery and the assessment of the related outcomes.

The student-centered learning and teaching process

- *respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs by adopting flexible learning paths*
- *considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate*
- *flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods*
- *regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods aiming at improvement*
- *regularly evaluates the quality and effectiveness of teaching, as documented especially through student surveys*
- *strengthens the student's sense of autonomy, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teaching staff*
- *promotes mutual respect in the student-teacher relationship*
- *applies appropriate procedures for dealing with the students' complaints*
- *provides counselling and guidance for the preparation of the thesis*

In addition

- *The academic staff are familiar with the existing examination system and methods and are supported in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The assessment criteria and methods are published in advance. The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Student assessment is conducted by more than one examiner, where possible.*
- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and conducted in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *The function of the academic advisor runs smoothly.*

Documentation

- *Sample of a fully completed questionnaire for the evaluation of the PSP by the students*
- *Regulations for dealing with students' complaints and appeals*
- *Regulation for the function of academic advisor*
- *Reference to the teaching modes and assessment methods*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP follows the requirements for student centered learning and offers a range of modules that allow students to select suitable areas that focus on their desired development of skills within the context of the PSP. It is a full-time intensive study programme and requires compulsory attendance on campus.

Students must attend, be assessed and pass eight taught modules at postgraduate

level. They must also participate in research seminars and are expected to further enhance their learning with independent study. To complete the requirements for graduation, each student must research, prepare, and present successfully a capstone project at the end of second semester of studies.

The pass mark for the eight taught modules is 6 on a mark scale 0-10. These comprise five compulsory (core) modules and three optional modules selected from two groups of twelve modules in total.

The capstone project is assessed in a public presentation that can be attended by faculty members from the PSP, other faculty from the school, other postgraduate, undergraduate, and research degree students. There is no specific mark awarded for the project, but it is either deemed successful or unsuccessful.

Research seminars are offered by high profile industry professionals and esteemed academics from other institutions from Greek and international institutions.

Student evaluations of the PSP and teaching staff are taken into account when reviewing and evaluating the outcome at the end of an academic year.

II. Analysis

The module descriptors offer distinct and accurate information as to the learning outcomes of each module. They also provide detailed information as to the nature of the assessments for each module.

Assessments are conducted according to the university's regulations and marking of the student work is completed according to the agreed standards by the institution and under the monitoring of the steering committee. The programme team should consider offering alternative assessments where a student's condition, or a hidden disability could prevent them from demonstrating their skills and knowledge acquired. Such a case could be the public presentation of the capstone project. This might not be suitable for all students and might put a student in an awkward position that could lead them to failure. In all cases examples of alternative assessments should be clearly documented in the PSP study guide.

The PSP observes the quality regulations of the institution and in case of any discrepancies in student assessment where a student may dispute a result the programme applies the relevant procedures for student complaints.

A student adviser is appointed and made known to the students at the beginning of their studies. This is according to the institution's regulations for student support. The role of the adviser is both academic and pastoral. Currently, due to the low number of students this role is fulfilled by the director of the PSP. In case of a much enhanced student numbers other members of the faculty will be

employed in this role.

Student feedback suggests that learning and assessment procedures are very effective and operate appropriately with no complaints.

III. Conclusions

The PSP operates in an efficient manner in terms of learning and assessment. It offers students a wide range of learning methods that will suit different styles of learning.

Assessment procedures are clearly defined and are considered as fair by the students.

The capstone project appears to offer appropriate exposure to research and professional issues, within the context of the PSP. The public presentation format of the assessment might pose a disadvantage for certain students and the PSP team might want to consider alternative formats of assessment.

Panel Judgement

Principle 3: Student-centered learning, teaching, and assessment	
Fully compliant	**X**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

To explore alternative modes of assessment where a student's needs are different due to disabilities and other personal conditions.

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

There is a procedure for the admission of students.
Students are supported in taking full advantage of all available services by the academic staff and the staff of the Electrical and Computer Engineering School.
Students' progression is monitored by the Academic Advisor, the Steering Committee, and the Instructors of the PSP.
The MLDS PSP does not provide mobility opportunities to students.
The ECTS are effectively utilized across the entire curriculum.
A Student Guide is available only in the Greek language.
The PSP MLDS program does not require the preparation of a master's thesis.
The PSP MLDS does not provide practical training placements.
The Code of Research Ethics of the Technical University of Crete is utilized.
The Diploma Supplement is issued in both the Greek and the English language.

II. Analysis

The Machine Learning and Data Science (MLDS) Postgraduate Studies Program (PSP) admits a maximum of 20 students annually. Eligible applicants are graduates from fields like Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE), Computer Science, and other related disciplines from Greek or recognized foreign universities, demonstrating English proficiency. Certain ECE School staff may enroll as supernumeraries, limited to one per year. A master's degree will not be awarded to holders of degrees from unrecognized foreign institutions. Application evaluations are conducted by the Steering Committee (SC) based on degree grades,

interview performance, thesis relevance, and other factors. Shortlisted candidates may be interviewed to assess research capabilities, and the final rankings will be communicated personally. Criteria are not weighted for flexibility and can be modified with SC and ECE School Assembly approval.

The MLDS PSP promotes rapid skill acquisition, spanning two academic semesters of intensive study without mobility opportunities, though students can utilize Erasmus+ agreements. Instruction is in English, requiring 60 ECTS credits for the diploma, which consists of lectures and workshops for 13 weeks. Details concerning students' adequate attendance, assessment criteria, and procedures to deal with unforeseen circumstances are communicated orally at the beginning of each course. Assessments involve written evaluations and a final exam, with a passing grade of at least 6. Research seminars and the capstone project are graded as Successful/Unsuccessful, and all work must be in English. Each course is worth 7 ECTS, with research seminars and capstone projects worth 2 ECTS each, requiring 8 courses for diploma completion. The Transcript of Grades will detail course grades, seminar attendance, and capstone project titles. Instead of a master's thesis, students undertake a capstone project monitored by a supervising instructor. The program does not include internships due to its intensive nature. The Technical University of Crete's Code of Research Ethics governs the program, and the Diploma Supplement is issued in Greek and English.

III. Conclusions

All details regarding student attendance in lectures and workshops, adequate attendance, assessments, marking criteria per course, and dealing with unforeseen circumstances should be clearly documented in the study guide.

The study guide is provided only in the Greek language.

The Code of Research Ethics is provided only in the Greek language.

The document M1 states at paragraph 4.7 only that the diploma supplement is supplied in the English language.

The development of a master's thesis could be considered for the students of the PSP. It will enhance students' experience and outcomes and support their employability and eligibility to continue their studies at the doctorate level.

It is not stated at the website that MLDS is industry and employability oriented. Therefore, students interested in attending a PSP towards research and doctoral studies could consider the alternative PSP of the ECE School.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

All details regarding student attendance in lectures and workshops, adequate attendance, assessments, marking criteria per course, and dealing with unforeseen circumstances should be clearly documented in the study guide.
The study guide that is provided in the Greek language should be translated to the English language.
The Code of Research Ethics should be translated to the English language as well.
In the document “Μ1 Πρόταση Πιστοποίησης ΞΠΜΣ MLDS_new” it should be stated at paragraph 4.7 that the diploma supplement is supplied in both the Greek and the English language.

PRINCIPLE 5: TEACHING STAFF OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

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

Documentation

- *Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment*
- *Employment regulations or contracts, and obligations of the teaching staff*
- *Policy for staff support and development*
- *Individual performance of the teaching staff in scientific-research and teaching work, based on internationally recognised systems of scientific evaluation (e.g. Google Scholar, Scopus, etc.)*
- *List of teaching staff including subject areas, employment relationship, Institution of origin, School of origin*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

This PSP is a one-year degree corresponding to what is usually called a “Professional Master’s Degree”. It prepares its students for highly qualified positions in the labor market. However, its students are well prepared to follow doctoral studies as well – and some of its graduates already do so.

The programme is delivered by established academics from the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering of the Technical University of Crete. These are recruited and their performance and professional progression through the academic ranks is controlled according to the laws and regulations of the Ministry of Education of the Hellenic Republic and the University’s internal regulations.

All staff that are included in the documentation submitted by the PSP are well-established academics with proven teaching and research records and are well esteemed in the academic community. Most of them have extensive experience in delivering postgraduate courses within the School and have been doing so successfully over several years. Most importantly all of them seem to be dedicated to making this PSP a successful programme. This is notably attested also by the fact that the teaching staff is not receiving extra pay for their teaching in the programme.

The teaching load for each member of staff is four hours per week and the evaluation of teaching quality (course content, lab support, course notes etc.) is based on quite detailed student questionnaires. Each staff member provides an annual activity report.

The University has a well-established system for supporting the continuous development of academics in staying at the university forefront of their field of knowledge and expertise, including the following actions:

- leaves of absence for research and/or teaching visits (especially in foreign Universities);
- encourages the participation in scientific conferences by covering living and travel expenses as well as page charges for publications;
- seminars on modern teaching methods, through an agreement with the University of Crete so that its staff members can participate in a "Training of Trainers" programme;
- establishment of a teaching excellence award.

Moreover, the School has established an international advisory board composed of top academics around the world offering external perspectives to enhance education quality and research initiatives, as well as supporting networking and knowledge exchange opportunities for faculty and students.

Last but not least, the EEAP heard from current students and graduates, as well as from external stakeholders, that there is an excellent atmosphere in the programme and students can freely talk to their teachers about the problems they face during their studies.

II. Analysis

The PSP has assembled a competent and experienced team of highly ranked academics that inspire confidence in delivering the programme well, covering adequately all aspects of courses taught in the PSP and linking adequately research and teaching. Moreover, the existence of an international advisory board offering advice on emerging fields and trends further enhances the competences of the programme team and ensures that students will be offered the best possible academic and professional teaching. One area which will probably need to be organized and reinforced is contribution from external stakeholders, especially by Alumni and Industrial stakeholders. Although there are close relationships between the staff and such stakeholders, this is done mostly on personal relations somehow in an ad hoc manner.

III. Conclusions

Overall, the School has put together a well selected team of established and accredited academics from its resources to deliver the proposed PSP.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Encourage the programme's graduates to establish an Alumni Association also providing the necessary technical and administrative support for maintaining it.
Put in place an external advisory board including members of the staff, Alumni and industrial stakeholders.

PRINICPLE 6: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

Facilities, material, and infrastructure are available to ensure an appropriate teaching and learning environment.

There is a range of support services available to PSP students.

Students are aware of the services available, which are functional and accessible.

The PSP has administrative staff to ensure the operation of the student support services.

There is a tuition utilization plan.

II. Analysis

The MLDS PSP courses are led by faculty members in accessible classrooms. Key details about the course structure, syllabus, textbooks, and examination methods are provided in the first session. Assessments include mid-terms, final exams, laboratory exercises, and reports as specified in the course outlines. The School of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) operates eleven laboratories, each

directed by a faculty member, where faculty and students collaborate on research projects. Students in the MLDS PSP have access to the ECE School Library, a dedicated study room on campus, and the e-class platform, which hosts course materials and allows submission of assignments and receipt of grades.

Details about the MLDS program can be found on the program's website (www.mlds.tuc.gr), and general information, including admissions and course schedules, is available on the ECE school's main website (www.ece.tuc.gr). Applications and required documents can be submitted electronically via a website (e-graduate.tuc.gr).

Administrative support is provided by the ECE secretariat, which assists students with requests and information. Tuition fees are €500 for European Economic Area (EEA) students and €1,000 for non-EEA students, with an instalment payment option available. Fees support publicity, equipment purchases, administrative staff, website maintenance, and scholarships for outstanding students.

III. Conclusions

The tuition utilization plan seems feasible, given that additional expenses can be covered by sponsorship or any other legitimate source.

There is a dissemination of events and activities, but this can be more intense to adequately inform all students, especially those who come from alternative disciplines and are trying to delve into computer science.

Public transportation does not seem adequate to support students who do not live in the Chania city center.

The eclass platform does not provide full content in the English language.

Current students and graduates recognize the need for an alumni association to improve engagement, feedback, and employability.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Students require greater dissemination of events and activities they are eligible to participate in, especially for computer science topics since many of them have other scientific backgrounds like physics, environmental engineering, mathematics, etc.

Public transportation should be improved to facilitate reaching the campus, especially for students that do not live in the Chania city center.

The detailed course outlines with all details including learning outcomes should be provided in the English language as well.

Suggestion to establish an MLDS alumni association for the PSP graduates' community.

PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The information management system used for the collection of data regarding students, teachers and administrative personnel of the PSP (and the School) is the University's system of electronic secretariat [https://universis.gr/]. The information and services that a user of this system can access depends on the user's credentials. For example:

- students [https://students.tuc.gr/] can renew their registration for each semester, submit their choice of courses, see their marks, ask for issuing of a certificate etc.
- teachers [https://professors.tuc.gr/] can see courses, students in each course

and their marks, student assignments, student profiles, the list of courses they have taught etc.

- secretaries [https://secretaries.tuc.gr/] can register students and teachers, organize and manage programmes of studies, open and close student registrations, deliver certificates, etc.

The collection of data feeding the system is done through detailed questionnaires filled by accepted students, current students and graduating students. Graduate students don't seem to systematically receive such questionnaires. All questionnaires are anonymous and answering them is not compulsory.

The annual collection of quality data is also input to the integrated information system of HAHE which monitors several performance indicators and statistics that support the decision making process at HAHE. It is also input to the MODIP subsystem supporting organized and harmonized course descriptions, and monitors teaching methods, student progression, employability and career paths of graduates.

II. Analysis

The procedures for collecting and analysing information on teaching, study programmes, project work and other activities are clearly documented in the quality manual. The data is fed into the internal system of QA, and communicated for use by OMEA for further programme improvement. The procedures are well defined and seem to work well. However, since the PSP was created in 2022, there is no sufficient volume of data so far, for a statistical analysis and the extraction of significant results.

III. Conclusions

The PSP has established procedures to collect data, analyse and communicate the results to the relevant bodies. However, since the PSP was created in 2022, there is no sufficient volume of data so far, for statistical analysis and extraction of significant results.

Panel Judgement

Principle 7: Information management	
Fully compliant	**X**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Establish a PSP specific Alumni database and actively engage with them.

PRINCIPLE 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP maintains a dedicated website in English, https://www.mlds.tuc.gr/en/home.

There, interested persons can find information about the PSP in general, the organization of the program, the courses, the schedule per semester, the faculty members, the selection criteria, forms, and reports. The web pages contain information and forms that students might find helpful, including the detailed programme and course descriptions and a list of the teaching staff. The organization of the web pages is good and simple, with obvious links for each section. Guidelines for the appropriate maintenance of the website are in place. A study guide and the university rules and regulations are not presented on the website in English.

The PSP is also present on LinkedIn and Facebook.

II. Analysis

The EEAP can confirm the timeliness, accuracy, and usefulness of the information provided in the well-organized web pages dedicated to the PSP. The study guide is not available in the English language.

III. Conclusions

The EEAP can confirm the timeliness, accuracy, and usefulness of the information provided in the well-organized web pages dedicated to the PSP.

A copy of the study guide in English could enhance the already rich information available online.

Panel Judgement

Principle 8: Public information concerning the postgraduate study programmes	
Fully compliant	**X**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Present the study guide and the university rules and regulations on the website in English.

PRINCIPLE 9: ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC INTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS AND ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR THE AUDIT AND ANNUAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF THEIR POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES, SO AS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES SET FOR THEM, THROUGH MONITORING AND POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS, WITH A VIEW TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

The regular monitoring, review, and revision of postgraduate study programmes aim at maintaining the level of educational provision and creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

The above comprise the evaluation of:

a) the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the PSP is up to date
b) the changing needs of society
c) the students' workload, progression and completion of the postgraduate studies
d) the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students
e) the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme
f) the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the PSP in question

Postgraduate study programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date.

Documentation

- *Procedure for the re-evaluation, redefinition and updating of the PSP curriculum*
- *Procedure for mitigating weaknesses and upgrading the structure of the PSP and the learning process*
- *Feedback processes concerning the strategy and quality goal setting of the PSP and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*
- *Results of the annual internal evaluation of the PSP by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), and the relevant minutes*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

An audit and an internal evaluation of the PSP are conducted, aiming at its continuous improvement so that, through monitoring and potential corrective actions, the goals that have been set can be achieved. The internal evaluation of the programme takes place once every year, and a report is drawn up according to the Quality Assurance Unit policy. Questionnaires have been developed for the incoming students, the evaluation of the classes, and the PSP graduates.

The entire procedure is coordinated by QAU and considers international developments in the field, suggestions made by faculty, students, support staff,

and recent graduates, the results of the evaluation questionnaires, and advice from stakeholders. Every effort is made to address the negative points identified in the Internal Evaluation Reports.

II. Analysis

From the discussions during the meetings, it became evident to the EEAP that significant efforts are made by the program director and the teaching faculty to collect, analyse, and discuss information obtained within the PSP. The evaluation questionnaires are filled in satisfactorily and considered in redesigning the teaching program.

No Key Performance Indicators have been explicitly formulated. Their development will facilitate the progress monitoring and the internal evaluation procedures.

III. Conclusions

The monitoring and the annual Internal evaluation of the program is well organised. There is some potential for improving the documentation of these efforts.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Develop key performance indicators

Improve the documentation of monitoring and internal evaluation efforts

PRINCIPLE 10: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY PANELS OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HAHE, AIMING AT ACCREDITATION. THE TERM OF VALIDITY OF THE ACCREDITATION IS DETERMINED BY HAHE.

HAHE is responsible for administrating the PSP accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by panels of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, based on the Reports delivered by the panels of external experts, with a specific term of validity, following to which, revision is required. The quality accreditation of the PSP acts as a means for the determination of the degree of compliance of the programme to the Standards, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees. Both academic units and Institutions must consistently consider the conclusions and the recommendations submitted by the panels of experts for the continuous improvement of the programme.

Documentation

- *Progress report of the PSP in question, on the results from the utilisation of possible recommendations included in the External Evaluation Report of the Institution, and in the IQAS Accreditation Report, with relation to the postgraduate study programmes*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

This is the first external evaluation of this PSP. Therefore, there are no previous reports or any action points that can be addressed. The persons who participated in this evaluation made clear that they would address any significant issues identified in this external report of the EEAP. Overall, the procedure of external evaluation of the PSP Machine Learning and Data Science at the Technical University of Crete was conducted well. All presentations and discussions took place in a very constructive atmosphere.

II. Analysis

This PSP finds the accreditation procedure appropriate for its further evolution in training graduate students in Machine Learning and Data Science for professional careers. In the discussions, there has been a limited attempt to address some of the points made here.

III. Conclusions

We expect a thorough response to this EEAP report. The response should discuss possible solutions and measurable targets.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

Well-structured programme covering the needs for professionals in the relevant industries

Robust student selection process that yields high-quality intake and potentially high-quality graduates

Very good connections/relations with students, graduates, and external and social partners

II. Areas of Weakness

Although the programme is taught and assessed in the English language, many of the pertinent documentation is not available in English.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

Establish a PSP specific Alumni Association

Create a PSP Advisory board comprising teaching staff, industrial and social partners, and alumni

Quality goals should be compared with Key Performance Indicators, monitored, and communicated.

All details regarding student attendance in lectures and workshops, adequate attendance, assessments, marking criteria per course, and dealing with unforeseen circumstances should be clearly documented in the study guide.

All documents intended for student attention should be made available in English as this is the language of delivery and assessment.

Encourage the programme's graduates to establish an Alumni Association also providing the necessary technical and administrative support for maintaining it.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

2,3,5,6,7,8,9,10

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

1,4

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

0

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:

0

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