



ΔΗΜΟΚΡΙΤΕΙΟ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΘΡΑΚΗΣ
DEMOCRITUS UNIVERSITY OF THRACE

DEMOCRITUS UNIVERSITY OF THRACE
DEPARTMENT CIVIL ENGINEERING

POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMME “WATER
RESOURCES ENGINEERING AND ECOLOGICAL
ENGINEERING”

ANNEX D6.5
PUBLISHED POLICY AND PROJECTS FOR THE
SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE
TEACHING STAFF WITH REGARD TO
DISTANCE LEARNING

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1. “Water Resources Engineering and Ecological Engineering” Postgraduate Study Programme’s policy on the support, development and evaluation of its personnel

The Department of Civil Engineering acknowledges the importance and contribution of all categories of personnel including faculty members, contracted instructors, specialized scientific staff, laboratory teaching staff, specialized technical laboratory staff, administrative staff, technical advisors, and external research project collaborators. Their contribution is crucial to the provision of high-level university education and the achievement of the Department's academic goals.

To this end, staff support and continuous professional development are core priorities of the “Water Resources Engineering and Ecological Engineering” Postgraduate Study Programme, which is committed to advancing these objectives through:

- the implementation of transparent and meritocratic procedures on personnel selection
- ensuring staff adequacy and suitability
- providing appropriate working conditions
- offering opportunities for academic and professional development

In particular, the Department has established and implements a comprehensive framework of policies addressing both academic and administrative staff, comprising the following elements:

- Staff orientation and development: Policies that promote professional development, provide appropriate guidance, and enable continuous improvement of skills.
- Evaluation and development: Systems for evaluating work performance, with criteria that support continuous improvement and mutual recognition of staff efforts and achievements.
- Professional development and agility support: Initiatives that promote training and participation in scientific seminars, conferences, and events in order to keep staff informed and competitive.
- Quality and innovation management in teaching, research, and administration: Applying innovative methods and technologies to improve educational, research, and administrative work.

2. Human Resource Allocation and Management at DUTH

Human resource allocation and management at DUTH is implemented through [Procedure D-2.4](#) of the Institution's Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS).

2.1 Permanent Administrative and Teaching/Research staff

Positions are filled in accordance with the corresponding legislation.

Continuous staff training is a prerequisite for achieving the institution's objectives and for improving the performance of its operations.

Staff evaluation is conducted in accordance with the corresponding legislation.

To manage staff in line with the above, DUTH establishes and implements procedures and/or internal regulations, which are incorporated into its Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS).

The Quality Assurance Unit delivers to the Institution's Administration annually (at a specified time) (Vice-Rector for Administrative Affairs) the previous year's human resources allocation data from the Structured National Quality Information System (OPESP) or other information systems of the Institution, accompanied by the corresponding indicators.

The Institution's Administration invites the academic units annually (at a specified time) to submit their annual recruitment plans to meet and sustain their activities.

The Strategic Planning Unit provides the Administration with information on the institution's strategic plan and on the development and operational plans of its Schools and Services. This process serves to define the human resource requirements for educational and research activities, as well as the operational needs of the administrative services.

The Institution's Administration, taking into consideration the above, along with the Institution's human resource development strategy, compiles proposals for increasing, decreasing, or redistributing staff among academic and administrative units.

The competent authority, having regard to the above, adopts a decision concerning the increase, reduction, or redistribution of human resources in academic and administrative units.

2.2 Contracted Staff

When the needs of the Institution's academic departments, laboratories, or clinics cannot be met by permanent administrative staff, the Administration seeks approval from the Governing Council to use funding from the Special Account for Research Funds (SARF)—either from the budget of specific approved programmes or from SARF's cash reserves—for the recruitment of personnel on employment or fixed-term contracts. The recruitment process for such staff is conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined in DUTH's SARF [Funding and Management Guide](#) and the applicable legislation governing the recruitment of project staff.

In the case of personnel referred to in Articles 171-175 of Law 4957/22 of the Hellenic Republic, particular procedures are specified.

3. Support of Teaching staff

Under the Democritus University of Thrace Quality Policy, it is recognized that enhancing the quality of education—through the provision of knowledge, skills, and competencies in line with current scientific trends and the application of modern educational approaches—constitutes a core pillar of the Institution's strategic framework. Accordingly, supporting the development and continuous advancement of staff across all study cycles, as well as the academic and administrative services they provide, represents a standing institutional commitment.

In line with this commitment, each academic unit, by implementing the procedures and individual processes defined in the Internal Quality Assurance System (ESDP), progresses in setting specific objectives whose attainment aligns with its responsibility to foster and support the development of its academic potential.

3.1 Departmental policy on teaching support

The Department of Civil engineering promotes the academic activities of its teaching staff through the introduction of innovative teaching methods and the use of modern technologies, provides educational leaves of absence to support mobility, and fosters research activities by developing infrastructure, procuring advanced equipment, and supporting applications to competitive international and national research programs. At the same time, it encourages collaboration with international academics at both educational and research levels.

The Department is committed to creating a community of learning, innovation, and continuous improvement in teaching. To this end, it supports faculty members and teaching staff in exchanging and developing best practices in learning and teaching, documenting their needs, and designing, revising, and implementing modern and effective educational activities that foster high-quality learning environments.

More specifically, the Department operates a mentorship and counseling system for newly appointed instructors and, within the framework of its performance review procedures:

- The suitability and effectiveness of teaching strategies, methods, and techniques employed in the Postgraduate Study Programme are discussed and critically

evaluated, with particular attention to the interdisciplinary nature of both the curriculum and the participating students.

- Best teaching practices are shared among participants.
- Specific teaching techniques and assessment methods are presented and examined.
- A reflective review is conducted based on each participant's personal experience.
- Ideas and suggestions for future improvements are documented.

3.2 DUTH's teaching support actions

Teaching staff of the Department of Civil Engineering, including **permanent faculty**, **appointed instructors**, and **visiting professors**, are supported through the following measures:

- They are informed about the training activities organized by the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) and are encouraged to participate. In accordance with Procedure D-2.5, "Staff Training in Quality Assurance," of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS), the topics covered in these training sessions—offered either systematically or as needed—include:
 - The Internal Evaluation Procedure
 - Compilation of the Study Program Certification File
 - Preparation for inspections by the External Evaluation and Accreditation Committee
 - Student Evaluation of Teaching
 - Orientation on all services and procedures, as well as on the DUTH Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)
 - Specialized training sessions delivered by guest speakers
- They are trained by DUTH's respective services (Directorate of Networks, Telecommunications, and Computing Infrastructure) in the use of digital applications (universis, eclass, zoom, teams, Quality Assurance Unit's MIS),
- They are informed about the **Academicians' Toolkit**, which is designed for faculty members of all Greek universities and provides a comprehensive compilation of information and educational resources to enhance teaching and learning at the university level. The Toolkit promotes inclusive teaching approaches that:
 - a. Foster students' learning strategies and focus on key scientific concepts ("big ideas")
 - b. Engage students in problem-solving situations
 - c. Encourage critical engagement with the core ideas of each course and train students in learning how to learn, and
 - d. Assess each learning outcome through formative assessment using multiple approaches, thereby supporting the adoption of deeper learning strategies.

The University Toolkit is available on the Quality Assurance Unit's website at the following link: https://modip.duth.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Toolkit_v1.1.pdf

- They receive regular training on teaching and learning issues from DUTH's **Teaching and Learning Support Center (KEDIMA)**. There is the possibility of organizing specialized training activities by KEDIMA exclusively for teachers of either an academic

unit or a postgraduate program. KEDIMA's training activities are posted on its website at <https://ctl.duth.gr/>.

- They are informed on the toolkit through a series of educational videos entitled "**Equal Access and Inclusion**" created by the Quality Assurance Unit of Democritus University of Thrace in collaboration with the Teaching and Learning Support Center <https://modip.duth.gr/εκπαιδευτικα-βιντεο/>
- They are referred to the Quality Assurance Unit's (MODIP) website under the "Documentation" menu (<https://modip.duth.gr/en/documentation/>), where resources from the ESU (European Students' Union) and other international organizations on various educational techniques (innovative techniques, student-centered learning, etc.) are available.

3.3 Instructors' Evaluation

Teaching performance evaluation is implemented in accordance with [Procedure D-5.6](#) of the DUTH Internal Quality Assurance System (ESDP), through the collection of evaluation data, evidence analysis, and assessment of results.

3.3.1 Collection of evaluation data

In the evaluation of teaching performance within DUTH's Postgraduate Study Programmes, an electronic questionnaire is administered via the Quality Assurance Unit's (MODIP) Information System. The process is managed jointly by MODIP and the respective Department's Internal Evaluation Team (OMEA).

Surveys are distributed between the 8th and 11th teaching weeks of both the winter and spring semesters of each academic year, under the supervision of the Department's Internal Evaluation Team and the relevant instructors.

DUTH's Quality Assurance Unit first informs the members of the Internal Evaluation Teams via email about their obligation to conduct the evaluation of teaching activities within the designated timeframe.

Each Internal Evaluation Team begins by informing instructors and students about the start of the teaching evaluation process and provides guidance on the required actions through MODIP's Information System, enabling the student evaluation of teaching to proceed efficiently.

Upon completion of the assessments, the Departmental Secretariat digitally notifies DUTH's Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP), granting instructors access to their evaluation results. Members of the Department's Internal Evaluation Team and the Department Chair also receive access to the Department's aggregated evaluation results, allowing them to process the data and present the findings to the Departmental Assembly.

3.3.2 Evidence Analysis and evaluation of results

Each Academic Department's Internal Evaluation Team has access, via DUTH's Quality Assurance Unit Information System, to the overall results of the teaching evaluation. These results have been pre-analyzed by the system and are provided along with the average and standard deviation of student responses per course, including overall scores.

The Internal Evaluation Team reviews the results and any student comments, if submitted, and prepares a report on the relevant agenda item for the first Assembly meeting of the following year. The Team then proceeds to implement corrective measures where deemed necessary.

The minutes of the Assembly meeting in which the results were presented are forwarded to DUTH's Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) by the Department Chair by the end of October each year.

DUTH's Quality Assurance Unit subsequently compiles and processes the results and presents the overall assessment of DUTH's teaching activities to the Senate. The Senate's final conclusions regarding the evaluation of teaching performance are then forwarded to the Governing Council.

3.4. Teaching Staff Professional and Scientific Development Support Policy

3.4.1 Faculty Members promotion

The Department of Civil Engineering aims at the continuous enhancement of its faculty, as well as encouraging the consolidation of education and research. Procedures applied for the election and advancement of faculty members observe the legislation in force and are supervised by the Institution.

Briefly, the decision on the election or promotion of a faculty member is based on (a) the overall teaching and research work of the evaluated individual, including an assessment of their teaching ability, (b) on his/her overall scientific and research activity, with emphasis on international presence, the quality of published work and its impact on the scientific community, (c) his/her contribution to the exploitation of knowledge and technology transfer, and (d) his/her ability to attract research funding. Finally, the candidate's scientific ethics are assessed as an essential element constituting his/her personality, as well as his/her recognized social presence and intervention.

3.4.2 Support of the professional development of Faculty Members

The Department of Civil Engineering acknowledges the need for ongoing education of teaching staff to maintain their high level of knowledge and skills. Outreach activities, such as participation in mobility programs and conferences, are encouraged, following swift and straightforward procedures, in accordance with governing legislation and if they do not interfere with the Department's orderly teaching functioning. Such leaves of absence relate to various circumstances, in particular:

- Educational leave on standard salary (in the case of leave abroad absence, the salary is increased by 80% if the overseas assignment does not include remuneration). Leave is granted upon completion of three years of actual service at the University.
- Employment in Greek / Hellenic Studies Chairs at universities abroad, for up to three academic years (Article 158(5) of Law 4957/2022 of the Hellenic Republic)
- In parallel employment at a university abroad, for up to one (1) academic semester per academic year (Article 158(3) of Law 4957/2022).

For all other members of the teaching staff, specialized scientific staff (EEP), specialized technical laboratory staff (EDIP), educational leaves are granted for conferences, seminars, etc., in accordance with the provisions of Article 6 of Presidential Decree 147/2009 of the President of the Hellenic Republic.

Furthermore, the Department encourages its staff to participate in scientific conferences in Greece and abroad, with the financial support of the Institution's Research Center. As a result, the Department's teaching staff demonstrates increased scientific mobility by participating in national and international conferences. The actions above also strengthen the connection between teaching and research and promote staff's scientific and professional development

3.5 Instructor development Policy on distance learning issues

Particularly regarding DUTH's policy for the development of teachers on **issues related to distance learning**, the following apply:

- **Directorate of Networks, Telecommunications, and Computing Infrastructure:** Training and development of detailed guides and videos for the services, software, and Information Systems available to the Institution that relate to distance learning. Examples of published user guides:

- [Teleconferencing using e:Presence](#)
- eclass.duth.gr
- [e-mail](#)

- [Asynchronous Distance Learning](#)
- [Teleconferencing](#)
- **Teaching and Learning Support Center (KEDIMA):** Examples of Materials to Support Instructors in Distance Learning related issues:
 - [Good Practices for Distance Learning](#)
 - [Asynchronous Distance Learning using the e-class platform](#)
 - [Digital Media Contribution to University Education](#)
 - [Digital learning, teaching and assessment tools](#)
 - [Instructions for Recording Video in PowerPoint](#)
 - [Mentimeter User Guide](#)
 - [Padlet User Guide](#)
- Furthermore, the Institution has a fully equipped A/V studio in Komotini and three One Button Studios located in Xanthi, Alexandroupoli, and Orestiada ([Studio | Democritus University of Thrace](#)). These serve as a specialized infrastructure of Democritus University of Thrace and enable instructors to create high-quality digital material for their instructional needs in the context of asynchronous distance learning.

4. Research Staff Support

4.1. Departmental policy on research

The Department's research policy is associated with its objectives and is shaped by the research activities of its faculty members. To this end, Departmental laboratories have been established and are in operation. In conjunction with basic and applied research activities, these laboratories also serve the educational needs of undergraduate and postgraduate study programmes.

In the context of its research activities, the Department supports: (a) the promotion of recent scientific and technological trends, (b) interdisciplinarity and collaboration with other research institutions, (c) better education for undergraduate and postgraduate students, and (d) strengthening its ties with industry and the business environment.

Faculty teaching and research performance is posted on the Department's website. Departmental staff are well represented in Greek and international research networks, whilst their research activities are published in highly influential international journals. Several of these publications have attracted significant scientific interest.

4.2 Departmental research policy monitoring

In general, the research activity of faculty members is monitored annually in terms of the number, quality, and recognition of their scientific work. In addition, the quality and pertinence of the work of faculty members to the Department's academic fields is evaluated through the faculty advancement review process.

4.3 Research process support

The Department's research activities are managerially supported by University Centre for Research and Innovation (PA.K.E.K.), whose mission is to develop basic, applied and

interdisciplinary research within the framework of the National Strategy for Research, Technological Development and Innovation and the National Smart Specialisation Strategy, to promote interdisciplinary knowledge, technology and innovation, to develop literature and arts, to ensure effective interaction between education and research, the training and utilisation of research potential, as well as the satisfaction of the educational, research, social, cultural and developmental needs of the country, and to contribute to economic growth on a local, national, European and international level.

Faculty members, in collaboration with researchers from other institutions, have implemented and are implementing a significant number of competitive research projects. Furthermore, the Department sees to the smooth operation of the laboratories, and the laboratory directors attend to the continuous advancement of their material and technical infrastructure.

The Department encourages and supports faculty members in conducting high-level research work. Strengthening the Department's research activity is a strategic goal, in the context of which the following are pursued:

- Integration of all faculty members into a Departmental workshop to support their research activities and promote research collaborations among faculty members.
- Establishment of new laboratories, aiming on the one hand to support educational programs and on the other hand in creating an attractive academic environment for the preparation of doctoral theses of high quality and the supporting of newly appointed faculty members having intense research activity.
- Academic and scientific staff increase by attracting internationally renowned scientists of high potential and doctoral candidates of a high-level.
- Supporting all laboratories through specialized lab personnel
- Increasing research programmes.
- Promoting the Departments research collaborations with universities or research centres in Greece and abroad.
- Participation of faculty members in recognized international research networks.
- Strengthening the Department's collaboration with professional entities and connecting research with industry.
- Increasing the dissemination of the research achievements of the Department's members.
- Increasing the number of faculty members publications in prestigious scientific journals.

With regard to the incentives provided to promote the research activity of faculty members, the main measures include:

- a. Funding for the presentation of papers at international conferences or for publication in peer-reviewed scientific journals, supported through the University Centre for Research and Innovation,
- b. Recognition and support for the professional development of faculty members within their scientific fields,
- c. Facilitation of faculty members' integration into the Department's research culture,
- d. Granting educational leaves of absence to conduct research at institutions abroad, and
- e. Recognition of faculty research activity in the evaluations related to faculty promotion and advancement.

5. Administrative staff support

5.1 Departmental support of administrative staff

The Department of Civil Engineering maintains a supportive rapport with administrative staff, acknowledging their significant contribution to the Department's seamless operation. The Department's faculty members offer personalized and specialized training in various fields, such as quality, student management, internship entities management, etc., to enhance their skills and knowledge. In addition, the Department's Administration closely cooperates with administrative staff to ensure that their needs and suggestions are taken into account in administrative decisions.

5.2 Institutional support of administrative staff

Administrative staff members of the “Water Resources Engineering and Ecological Engineering” Postgraduate Study Programme are supported as follows:

- They are informed about training activities implemented by the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) and are encouraged to attend them.
Under the [Procedure D-2.5](#) of DUTH's Internal Quality Assurance System, the subjects for which MODIP provides training, either systematically or whenever deemed necessary, are:
 - Internal evaluation procedure
 - Training on issues affecting administrative staff (e.g., staff evaluation, personal data, etc.)
 - Training on specific topics presented by guest speakers
- They are trained by the DUTH's competent services (I.T. Department) in the use of digital applications (universis, eclass, zoom, Quality Assurance Unit's Information System).
- They are motivated to participate in training seminars on their line of work and in new technologies.

5.3 Administrative Staff Evaluation

The evaluation of permanent administrative staff is conducted in accordance with the provisions of applicable legislation and is performed annually, as regulated and under the direction of the Ministry of the Interior.

Furthermore, in accordance with the [Procedure D-5.2](#) of DUTH's Internal Quality Assurance System, an annual satisfaction survey is administered to all stakeholders of the Institution regarding the services provided by administrative staff.

5.3.1 Satisfaction Survey

The survey is conducted during the winter semester of each academic year, following a decision by DUTH's Quality Assurance Unit, ensuring that responses are received before the University's Administrative Review.

The questionnaires are completed online after a link is sent to the emails of all parties involved.

5.3.2 Data analysis and evaluation of results

Subsequently, DUTH's Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) compiles the results in .xls format and assigns a committee to process them, deriving average questionnaire scores, average scores per question, and an overall average satisfaction score for stakeholders.

Questions that have not been answered by stakeholders are given the average value of the answers of the remainder of the stakeholders. Acceptable results are regarded as those with values of 3 and 4.

In the case of results with values lower than 2.5, an analysis of the reasons that may have led to this rating is performed and remedial action is taken, if necessary.

Any comments from stakeholders are considered and discussed at DUTH's Quality Assurance Unit meeting.

The results of the stakeholder satisfaction survey are presented at the Review Meeting. In the context of the Review Meeting, possible corrective actions resulting from the analysis of stakeholder satisfaction data are decided upon and recorded in a formal document.

The current policy is available at the following link: <https://waterecol.civil.duth.gr/>
