



Virtual Study Tour

Greece

2021/2022



Contents

Introduction	2
What is the current Higher Education sector context in Greece?	4
How do Private Colleges in Greece operate?.....	7
Metropolitan College	7
Deree College	8
City College	8
Mediterranean College	9
New York College	10
How are HE partnerships managed in Greece?	11
Which HE partnerships?	11
UK HE TNE delivery	11
Formation of HE partnerships	13
Management and Operationalisation of HE Partnerships	13
What motivates Greek students to travel abroad or undertake a TNE programme in-country? ...	14
How does the Greek HE Sector approach Internationalisation at Home (IaH)?	17
Spotlights	19
Quality Assurance within Partnerships: Case Study of Metropolitan College	20
Academic Organisational Structures in Greek Universities	23
Recognition of TNE in Greece	25
Kent in Europe	26
Elements of Greek Culture	27
Reflections on coordinating the AUA VST 2021/22	29
AUA Behaviours	32
Thanks and Acknowledgements	33
Meet the team!	34
Guest Contributors	39

Introduction

The Association of University Administrators (AUA) is the professional association for higher education administrators and managers. The Association aims to promote professionalism, career development, and offer networking opportunities within the higher education (HE) sector, whilst also giving members the chance to develop on a global scale.

The AUA runs an International Study Tour each year, and they are organised via the International Higher Education Network (IHEN). For more information on IHEN and how it promotes and strengthens connections between AUA and HE organisations overseas, visit the AUA website: www.aua.ac.uk/themed-networks/#international-higher-education

Taking part in a study tour is a unique event open to all members of the AUA and it offers a unique professional development opportunity, providing an alternative perspective and insight into global higher education, benefiting members' professional practice, institutions, and the AUA and its members more broadly, through sharing the learning and experiences.

This report follows our Virtual Study Tour (VST) to Greece which took place during 2021/22. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the previous Study Tour to China had been held virtually, and, given the ongoing uncertainty around travel restrictions, the decision was taken to proceed online with the Greek Study Tour.



Introduction



Transnational higher education (TNE), the movement across national boundaries of HE providers to offer academic programmes and qualifications in foreign countries, has become a big business internationally. Greece was chosen as it is the largest market for UK TNE activity. Despite Greece not featuring in the UK Government's international education strategy, the British Council is currently working with UUK to support links between British and Greek Universities.

Our chosen methodology combined a desk-based study with primary research, which included interviews with TNE specialists, representatives from the British Council, UK higher education institutions (HEIs) and Greek HEIs and private colleges. The secondary and primary sources used enabled the VST Team to develop an understanding of, amongst other things, the current context of HE in Greece, the management of partnerships in Greece, the different types of academic structures which occur, what motivates Greek students to travel abroad or undertake a TNE programme in-country, and Greek approaches to Internationalisation at Home.



What is the current Higher Education sector context in Greece?



Greek HEIs are fully self-administered legal entities of public law, with each institution administered by collective bodies that act in compliance with special legislation. The Greek Government is responsible for their funding (1). Currently there are 24 universities accredited by the Greek state; all state-accredited universities in Greece are public. The duration of most undergraduate degree programmes is four years. Along with the public universities there are a number of private colleges operating in Greece. The current Constitution of Greece prohibits the private colleges from operating as independent universities, however the colleges overcome this by establishing collaboration with foreign universities to offer both undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes.

There are a number of differences between state and private universities in Greece. State universities teach in the Greek language, offer a narrower choice of modern specialities and is completely free (including textbooks and meals in the canteen). Upon completion of the degree a European Diploma is issued which is recognised throughout the EU. Programmes offered in private universities are taught predominantly in English, cost around €10,000 per year, offer a wide variety of programmes linked to modern professions and on completion students are awarded a diploma from the partner institution (2).



A report commissioned by the British Council in 2018 (3) provided a useful starting point for the Virtual Study Tour to understand both Greek Higher Education and its role in Transnational Education. Key facts and figures from this report are summarised below.

The report confirmed that Greece is the top host country for UK TNE learners in the EU, and traditionally one of the top sending countries of inbound students to the UK. UK TNE programmes have been offered in Greece since the early 1990s, and at the time of the report being published 75% of TNE students in Greece were studying at the undergraduate level.

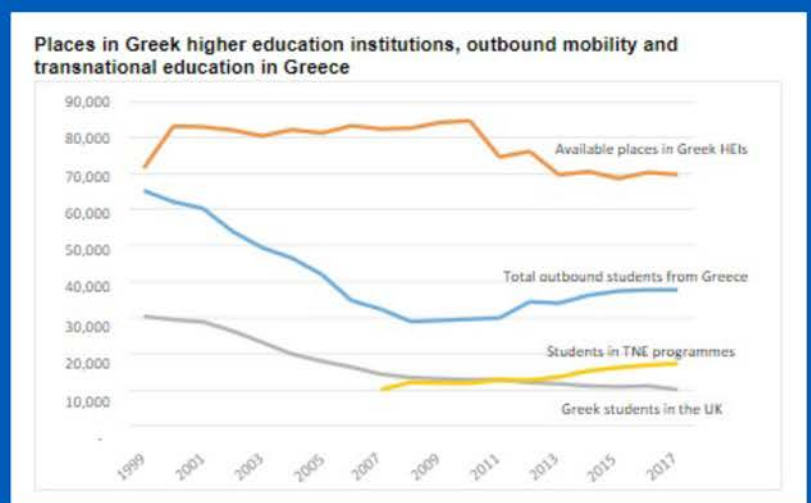
The majority of UK TNE provision in Greece happens through franchise and validation arrangements. More than 95% of UK TNE students are of Greek nationality, with a small number of students coming from other countries, mainly Albania and Cyprus.

While approximately 43% of UK HEIs have some TNE presence in Greece, five UK HEIs account for 60% of the UK TNE market in Greece, and more than 50% of the UK HEIs with a TNE presence in Greece have no more than 50 students. During the past decade, there have been significant changes in the market share of UK HEIs, demonstrated by the fact that the five UK HEIs in Greece with the highest number of TNE students in 2016-17 did not feature in the top five in 2007/8.

In Greece, UK TNE is offered by local partners who operate as private colleges. There are 35 colleges in Greece licenced to engage in TNE activity at the tertiary level. 80% of these collaborate with UK HEIs. The two other main countries of collaboration are France and the US.

The report commissioned by the British Council gives a comprehensive overview of TNE market in Greece and identifies the key market trends and perceptions. Some key graphs and statistics from that report provide a useful context for the later sections of this VST report.

The graph to the right (4) produced by the Greek Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs displays places in Greek HEIs, outbound mobility and TNE in Greece.



The orange line demonstrates that between 1999 and 2017 the number of available places in Greek HEIs has stayed at about the same level. This is within the context of the economic and political challenges that Greece have experienced since 1999 alongside the 2008 financial crisis.

The impact of Brexit has led to a significant decline in Greek students in the UK. The report does note however that these numbers were starting to decline before the UK voted to leave the EU.

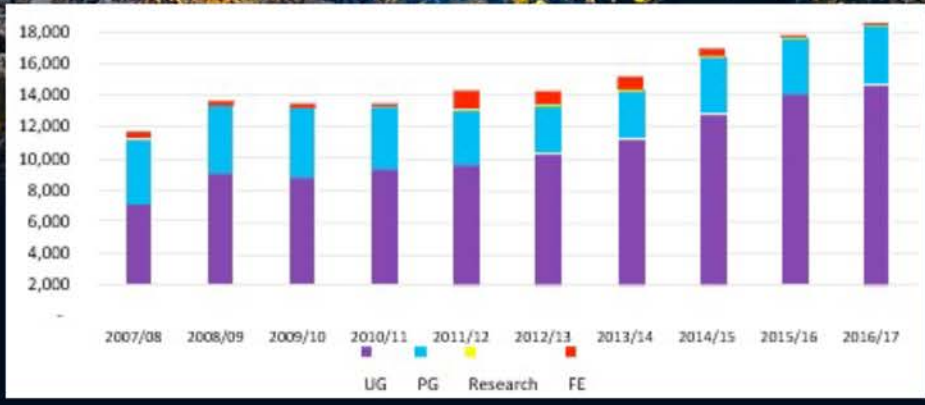
The report identifies a key issue as the understanding of quality assurance of TNE, noting that the minority of UK universities have a significant understanding of this, with many universities also being relatively inexperienced in TNE delivery.

1 <https://studyinggreece.edu.gr/why-greece/education-in-greece/education-system/>

2 <https://greece-invest.com/services/education?msclid=734d80bdc61a11ecb0dfc60e96b26d90>

3 http://irep.ntu.ac.uk/id/eprint/37618/1/14780_Tsiligiris.pdf

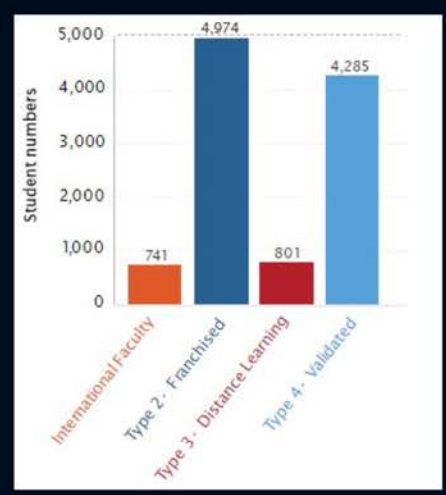
4 Ibid.



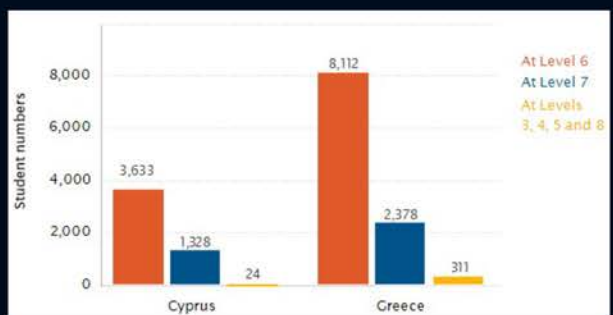
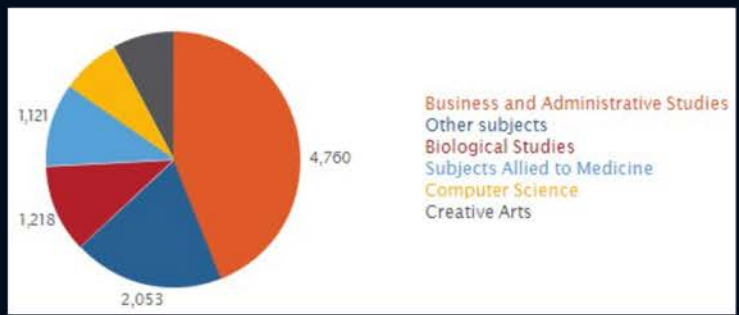
The graph on the left (5) details the differences in types of TNE provision, namely UG, PG, research and FE, with differentials according to subject and location. As the graph demonstrates, most TNE relates to undergraduate provision.

The report makes reference to the current UK sector focus on decolonisation of the curriculum noting that there is an increasing desire for those involved to see more equity between institutions rather than a UK university exporting its programme. The report notes that this is a particular issue for Greece as there are far more single university qualifications than qualifications involving more than one degree awarding body. Traditionally Greek state universities have not been allowed to provide degree education in English, which has made it difficult for institutions to partner with UK universities to develop a dual award.

The graph to the right (6) demonstrates student numbers on different types of TNE provision; international faculty, franchised, distance learning and validated.



The below graphs (7) outline the TNE subject range (largely Business and Administrative studies) and the number of students on programmes at each level of qualification in Cyprus and Greece.



5 Ibid
6 Ibid
7 Ibid

How do Private Colleges in Greece operate?

In Greece, private tertiary education colleges must be licensed by the government in order to engage in TNE. There are more than 30 colleges with this permission, but most have below 100 students. Nearly 70 per cent of the overall TNE market in Greece is accounted for by five big providers: Metropolitan College, Deree College, City College, Mediterranean College, and New York College.



The whole private sector is constrained by legislation that starts from the premise that it is only public institutions that can award degrees. The private sector works with regulatory restrictions that are very different from those that operate in the UK. Not only is it impossible, without a change to constitutional law, to see a future where private non-degree colleges can grow into private degree-level institutions, it is also impossible for private colleges to franchise degree-awarding programmes from state sector universities.



The legal framework for private colleges leads them to TNE collaborations, mainly with UK universities. For UK HE, according to HESA data for 2020/21, Greece is the most important TNE location in Europe. It is likely that Greece will retain a primary position because this is rooted in an economic reality: private colleges need their relationships with universities outside Greece and they have strong ties to British universities and the processes and procedures used by UK awarding bodies.

Particularly with the UK outside the EU, Greek private colleges can find a way to prosper despite regulatory constraints by partnering with a British university (and, for the larger colleges, there are links to several British universities). However, unlike TNE in other jurisdictions, there can be no development of double-degree programmes with private institutions. There can only be double-degree collaborations where both parties have degree awarding powers.

Metropolitan College

Metropolitan College (MC) welcomed an online meeting with the AUA team and was very open in answers to our enquiries. In some ways, MC is like other private colleges, but it is a larger and far more networked on a multi-campus basis. By student numbers, it is the largest TNE provider in Greece and, in many ways, functions as a private university. However, it is very centred on teaching. Academic staff are encouraged to engage in research, but it is difficult to find resource to fund their time.



MC was founded forty years ago and for more than thirty years has had academic collaborations with UK universities. Documentation provided by MC demonstrates strong UK connections with references to Queen Margaret University, University of East London, University of London (International Programmes), University of Portsmouth, Solent University and Oxford Brookes University. There are other international partners including the University of Arizona and Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne.

It is clear from a comparison of MC's subject and partner range, and from the number of campuses operating, that it is larger in scope than other private colleges. It appears also to be substantially larger in student numbers. In 2012/13 there were fewer than 1,000 students; ten years later, there are now about 8,000.

The extensive growth of MC over the last decade has been accompanied by the further development of the organisation's strategic mission: to be a global academic hub where learners, academics and partners will promote new ideas, findings and applications that will have a global impact.

Deree College

This institution is a part of The American College of Greece (with headquarters in Boston USA), together with the Alba Graduate Business School and a private secondary institution (Pierce). Deree offers UG programmes validated by the UK Open University; this relationship has operated for over ten years. It has also had accreditation from the New England Commission of Higher Education since 1981.



The origins of Deree lie in secondary education, with the foundation in 1875 of a school for girls in Turkey. The organisation relocated to Athens in 1923 and has been involved with higher education for nearly a century.

There are now approximately 3,000 degree-seeking undergraduate students in a student body that has several other categories of registration (including Study Abroad, and graduate students). A useful case study was published in 2016 by QAA in a review of TNE in Greece and Cyprus (8).

City College



City College, in Thessaloniki, was founded in 1989 as a private college of higher education. It had a close relationship with the University of Sheffield and, in 2009, its academic and teaching functions were integrated into the University as one of its faculties. However, the institution continued its financial and legal independence (9).

After ten years, in 2019, the University of Sheffield decided to end its relationships with City College. A report to the Sheffield Senate, minuted from the meeting on 16 December 2020, stated that the University of York had signed an agreement with City College whereby it will validate City College programmes for admission from Autumn 2021.

A news announcement on the University of York website, posted 8 December 2020, stated that York had signed a major strategic alliance with CITY College. A lengthier public statement declared that CITY College has been granted the status of University of York Europe Campus with the aim of offering students from South-Eastern Europe and adjacent countries access to University of York degree awards, reflecting the University's international mission to increase access to high quality British Education.

CITY College, University of York Europe Campus, is now offering, with the Faculty of Economics and Management of the University of Strasbourg, a Pan-European Executive MBA dual degree programme delivered across South East & Eastern Europe, as well as the Caucasus region.

Mediterranean College



Mediterranean College operates campuses in Athens and Thessaloniki, and has recently opened a new campus in Glyfada. Mediterranean College offers 40 programmes across eight Academic Schools, at Bachelor's and Master's levels (Finance and Management, Shipping, Computing, Psychology, Education, Engineering, Health and Sports, and Tourism and Hospitality.) On its website, Mediterranean claims to have been the first college in Greece (in 1992) to "franchise" a degree programme from a British university.

Now it has partnerships with several UK universities and awarding bodies, including Derby and Wolverhampton. Students have the option of registering as full-time or part time/flexible mode students on programmes that are taught in either English or Greek. Like other similar colleges, Mediterranean is licensed and approved by the Hellenic Ministry of Education.

8. <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/international/transnational-education/review-of-tne-in-greece-and-cyprus>

9. <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/international/university-of-sheffield-cc-tne>



New York College

New York College (NYC) was founded in Athens in 1989 in collaboration with SUNY (State University of New York). It offers undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD degrees in a wide range of specialties through its academic collaborations with SUNY (Empire State College), the University of Greenwich, the University of Bolton, and the French Université Toulouse 1 Capitole.



NYC has a campus in Thessaloniki and helped found the University of New York in Prague in the Czech Republic: a private higher education institution recognized in 2001 as a Private University by the Czech Ministry of Education.

There are six schools: Business; Informatics; Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences; Health and Sports Science; Tourism; Maritime Studies. The University of Bolton appears to have exclusive awarding rights at PhD level in a wide range of subject areas.



TNE provision in Greece has deep roots and results from various imperatives and objectives. However, the acceleration of programme delivery and diversification has been very marked since 2000.

Seen from a UK perspective, where a neo-liberal view has become something of a conventional wisdom, the restrictions on private colleges in Greece might appear outdated. It is clear that some institutions have prospered despite restrictions on their activities. A common theme that is apparent from scrutiny of published statements, particularly on websites, is that the successful colleges emphasise their own contributions, the development of networks, and their commitment to quality.

There is every reason to believe that the private sector will continue to grow and to diversify. If the state sector were to become more dynamic in its approach to international partnerships, this might produce some dampening of demand for registration in the private colleges.



How are HE partnerships managed in Greece?



Which HE partnerships?

It might be helpful to begin by clarifying specifically what is meant by 'HE partnership' here, since it could encompass a wide-reaching definition. Successful partnership and collaboration play an important role in Summer School initiatives, for example, or in Erasmus-related exchange programmes. However, for the purposes of our Study Tour, we focussed on UK-Greek Higher Education (HE) partnerships predominantly within the context of Transnational Education (TNE) provision.

Since, as mentioned previously, Private Colleges are not authorised to award Greek degrees, they offer degrees in partnership with international HEIs. Conversely, for the same reason, the State Universities do not need to offer international partners' degrees. As a result, it is the Private sector which gives us more to consider for this particular piece.

UK HE TNE delivery

UniversitiesUK (UUK) defines UK HE TNE as delivered variously "through online/distance learning (either with or without local support), through local delivery partnerships (eg franchised delivery, joint and dual degrees, twinning arrangements, validation and quality arrangements) or through a UK institution's physical presence in another country (eg branch campus, study centre or through flying faculty)" (10).

The majority of UK HE TNE programmes offered in partnership with Greek Private Colleges fall into UUK's second bracket of delivery method, with most offered through franchise and validation agreements.





The Higher Education Services Provider section of the UK's Student Loans Company sets out the differences between franchise and validation agreements rather neatly:

- “Franchise arrangements are used when a lead provider (the franchisor) enters into an agreement with another provider (the franchisee). Under this agreement, the franchisee will deliver a course on behalf of the lead provider. The franchisee may deliver all or part of a programme that the franchisor (the lead provider) approves and owns. The lead provider keeps overall control of the programme's content, delivery, assessment and quality assurance.” (11)
- Validation arrangements are required when “a provider (Provider A) does not have the level of degree-awarding powers needed to run a course leading to a designated qualification. Such a provider can enter into a validation arrangement with another provider (Provider B)”(12) where that provider does have the necessary degree-awarding powers. “In validation arrangements, the degree-awarding body (Provider B) is ultimately responsible for the academic standards of any awards granted in its name and for the quality of the learning programme”. (13)

Our Study Tour group welcomed Pete Richards, from SannamS4, to one of our meetings, where he presented on ‘TNE Prospects for UK Institutions in Greece’. This included some enlightening facts and figures regarding current TNE provision between UK-Greek partners. Especially relevant here, and reproduced with kind permission from Pete Richards, is a slide demonstrating high-volume UK-Greek TNE partnerships in terms of the number of students undertaking a UK TNE programme in Greece, and from which UK institution.

UK Institution	Number of Students	Delivery Method
East London	2,975	all via franchised/validated delivery.
Queen Margaret	2,575	all via franchised/validated delivery.
Derby	1,615	20 online and 1,595 via franchised/validated delivery.
Sheffield	1,375	15 online and 1,360 via franchised/validated delivery.
Middlesex	1,295	all via franchised/validated delivery.
Canterbury Christ Church	1,165	all via franchised/validated delivery.
Plymouth	700	all via franchised/validated delivery.
Cardiff Met	565	all via franchised/validated delivery.
Solent	500	all via franchised/validated delivery.

*NOTE: Open University (1,400) excluded.

Referring back to UUK's definition of TNE delivery, it is worth considering that we may now see a rise in joint and dual degree partnerships and twinning arrangements particularly within the State sector, given the current initiatives being undertaken by the British Council in Greece, the Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, and the British Embassy in Athens, focussed on fostering collaboration between Greek and UK Universities under the UK-Greece Strategic Partnership in Education programme.

10 [https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/universities-uk-international/explore-uuki/transnational-education/what-uk-higher-education-transnational#:~:text=Transnational%20education%20\(TNE\)%20is%20education,a%20university%20in%20country%20Z](https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/universities-uk-international/explore-uuki/transnational-education/what-uk-higher-education-transnational#:~:text=Transnational%20education%20(TNE)%20is%20education,a%20university%20in%20country%20Z)

11 <https://www.heinfo.slc.co.uk/resources/guidance/courses-management-service-user-guide/provider-attributes/designation/english-providers/franchise-and-validation-arrangements>

12 *ibid*

13 *ibid*

Formation of HE partnerships

HE partnerships in Greece appear to be formed in ways familiar to employees of the UK HE sector. That is to say, HE partnerships are identified, created and nurtured through various methods, with the initial spark usually coming from Academic Staff and their professional contacts and academic or research synergies. Otherwise, the driving force may be specific strategic engagement with a partner institution, and this could be facilitated through overt partner-matching exercises such as those



provided by the British Council initiative mentioned above, through an external agency such as SannamS4, or through the Global Engagement or International Office of the relevant institutions, for example.



The various rationales behind identification of an HE partner will be specific and unique to the partners involved, but it is interesting to note that Greek Private Colleges do not necessarily limit themselves to one single HE partner institution within a specific country. Similarly, UK HEIs do not necessarily partner with only one Greek Private College. This makes sense, since it allows them to engage different and multiple partners to fulfil different and multiple objectives, be they academic, reputational, developmental, or other.

Management and Operationalisation of HE Partnerships

The management and day-to-day operationalisation of HE partnerships from the Greek side is determined by the organisational structure of the institution in question.

State Universities follow a rigid hierarchy headed by the Rector and most have an office or department dedicated to external affairs and engagement, along the lines of the Department of European Educational Programmes at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (14), the Office of International Relations & Outlook at the University of Crete (15), or the International Relations Office at the University of Thessaly (16). Academic and Professional Services colleagues (known as Administrative staff in Greece) in these departments manage HE partnerships to ensure smooth and fruitful operations.

14. <https://www.auth.gr/en/directorate/admin-gddy-en/admin-dsam-en/admin-teep-en/>

15. <https://en.uoc.gr/university/administration>

16. <http://erasmus.uth.gr/index.php/en/>

What motivates Greek students to travel abroad or undertake a TNE programme in-country?

As with most students who choose to undertake part of their education in a different country to the one they have been brought up and educated in, there are a number of motivations for these students. The first and foremost motivation is employment and employability; and this is especially true for Greek students who want to increase their employment prospects for their chosen career path. With sometimes limited opportunities and wages, as a result of the financial crisis in 2014/15, the lure of working for a company abroad, particularly in the UK, the US, Scandinavia or other high-income European countries such as the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland, is very high. The best way to open these doors is to study in these countries to enable such opportunities to be sought.

Many of these European countries now offer degree programmes in English, which has made it easier for Greek students to undertake studies in these universities and they are now seen as a major competitor to the UK market in particular. However, another key motivation is achieving an award from a globally-renowned university and this is where the UK has a good stronghold, and can certainly have a positive impact on international employment prospects. HE Recruitment fairs in Greece are consistently filled with UK, European and some US universities showcasing their institutions. These events, which are well-attended by top-attaining Greek students looking to study in foreign universities, reflect the strong demand for education abroad.

Another key motivation is having the opportunity to access state-of-the-art research, e.g. in a specific field. Many European countries have strong research backgrounds and this is especially true of UK institutions who regularly receive European funding for research projects. This can be very attractive to students who are not only looking for the opportunity to receive an award from a well-known university but also for those wishing to pursue a PhD after their Bachelors/Masters; it is this research reputation that can be a significant motivation for travelling abroad. The diverse student and staff population at most UK universities makes for a rich learning environment where many connections can be formed. It is often the case that research papers will have co-authors from different nationalities, and once these networks have been formed, they normally last long into an academic career, irrelevant of movement between future institutions. Having the opportunity to interact with different cultures in an academic environment is imperative, particularly in a research capacity as well as a learning capacity more generally.





Regarding TNE programmes in Greece, the motivations for these are similar to those for traveling abroad, with the exception of research reputation. This is because private institutions are not allowed to compete for EU grants. However, there are other key factors at play. The 2018 British Council Report on Greece-UK collaboration in TNE (17) states that the top three factors for students choosing a TNE programme in-country are the following: a) employability in the international market, b) quality of education, and c) prospects for further study abroad (page 8). One of the key authors of this report and research is Professor Vangelis Tsiligiris who shared his expertise on the Study Tour and was able to provide some background on students' choices.

Today, it is more about other factors than access, and cost is one of these; those who can afford it generally will move abroad for their studies. For those who cannot, a TNE programme is a good alternative. These programmes also have the added advantage of attracting students who are already working and would like to revisit academic study but do not want to leave their employment in order to do this. TNE programmes provide flexibility and are a good compromise for those students not wanting to travel abroad. There are also other reasons which often motivate students into a TNE programme, including family commitments.

Greece typically nurtures a family-centred culture and this can play an important role not only in the choice of institution but also the location, particularly where an institution has many campuses. As parents mostly pay for the education, they can have a large say in this and for those students who would rather be close to their families, a TNE programme is a good alternative to studying in another country. They still get the recognition of a UK degree (or other country, but the UK is by far, the largest provider) without having to physically relocate for this. This factor was listed in the report as one of the main ones in terms of employment prospects in the international market.

Revisiting the second major motivation of the quality of education in private institutions, there seems to be a perception amongst students, certainly according to the report, that the teaching quality in state universities can be more variable than that of private colleges in Greece. Some of these colleges have been offering UK qualifications for over 25 years (18) and have become particularly strong in the area of international partnerships. State universities do not have this strength currently. Not only are the academics generally seen as very good, there are good managers and organised structures in place to support the whole student experience, and often with better/newer facilities.

17 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335542963_Research_on_Greece-UK_higher_education_institutional_collaboration_in_the_field_of_Transnational_Education

18 <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/international/transnational-education/review-of-tne-in-greece-and-cyprus> (pg.6)

It is this experience which lies at the heart of many of the private colleges including Metropolitan College, who is the largest private provider in Greece. They are very mindful of the impact of their decisions on their student experience; they follow the student journey right from the application stage through to being an alumnus to build loyalty. This is typical of other private colleges too, for example, City College in Thessaloniki who are partnered with York University, emphasise in their public statement (19) that their graduates will become part of two alumni communities and that they are committed to outstanding and empowering student experiences. Such a student-centred approach is very attractive to Greek students who are pursuing university study.

Private colleges tend to have smaller classes and thus increased availability of staff and interactive teaching, in addition to the use of virtual learning environments, and now the availability of some niche programmes not offered in state universities (20). They also have opportunities to be part of the wider UK community (not just as alumni), for instance with university awards and developing relationships with staff and students in the UK. Having a more personalised experience is a key part of the student experience offered by these colleges, and indeed Metropolitan College for example, aims to enhance this further with admitting increasing numbers of international students. Currently, the College has more than five hundred international students which makes for a diverse and rich learning experience. This, coupled with the offering of some courses in English, can be very attractive to those students wishing to stay closer to home (though most courses are taught in Greek, which in turn provides an advantage for those who want the UK recognition without having to study in English). These factors certainly play a role in the third key motivation for choosing a TNE programme, which is the prospect of continuing studies abroad. Both the English language and working with different nationalities help to increase the international awareness.

Whether travelling abroad for study, or undertaking a TNE programme within Greece, there is a clear appetite for both and this trend does not look like changing soon. Those who can afford it and desire working and pursuing a career abroad, will choose to study overseas; and for further study, most of these are from state universities. With being much cheaper overall, a TNE programme provides a more cost-efficient alternative whilst having the status of another university, providing dual and parallel student experiences, and effectively, with certain partnerships, being awarded two degrees despite the challenges around recognition. So, despite recent challenges, and with internationalisation now being prioritised in Greece, there are exciting opportunities ahead for those students eager to experience an international education.

19 <https://www.york.ac.uk/media/globalyork/Europe-Campus-Public-statement.pdf>

20 <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/international/transnational-education/review-of-tne-in-greece-and-cyprus> (pg.9)



How does the Greek HE Sector approach Internationalisation at Home (IaH)?

During the course of the Study Tour, we also wanted to find out how Greek institutions approached Internationalisation at Home activities. What we discovered was in fact very little, and we could suggest that active or systematised approaches to IaH are not largely in place, especially within public institutions. Metropolitan College, a private college, with its familiarity of UK education system and outlook was already there in terms of its strategy and formalising how it hopes to implement this. Of course, there may be other pockets of best practice that we may not have uncovered within our study.

Internationalisation at Home (IaH) has been defined as “...the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments” (21).

It has much in common with Internationalisation of the Curriculum, which focuses on the importance of internationalising learning outcomes for all students, not simply those who study abroad. In practice, approaches to IaH moves beyond electives or specialised programmes, and offers all students global perspectives within their studies whether they go abroad or not. It is supported by and involves all staff, not only academics and international offices, in creating opportunities for purposeful student engagement with ‘cultural others’ and/or international students in the local society, informal extra-curricular activities and use of cultural diversity in the classroom for more inclusive learning, teaching and assessment practice.

From our discussions, it was clear that there is an appetite to develop internationalisation strategies further and these were slowly forming. Greece is looking to establish itself as an attractive destination of choice for international students to its universities. As this grows, the diversity of the student body will also develop which can in turn help institutions to begin looking at other activities that support IaH and go beyond the offer of a traditional mobility period abroad. The COVID-19 pandemic forced institutions to move online and some have started to engage in COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) projects, which provides further exposure to bringing in other perspectives and student interactions into the classroom.



If we were to suggest ways that both UK and Greek institutions could do more in this space, it would be to think outside the traditional year/semester abroad programmes. Short-term mobility options such as summer schools and faculty-led courses can bring diversity of students to a campus, but also potentially opens up access to those who could not otherwise afford to go for a longer period abroad. There are also the many possible virtual interactions, both within the formal and co-curricular space, which allow for a greater range of interactions between students and a greater appreciation of different perspectives within the academic community. It will be interesting to see over the next few years how partnerships between the UK and Greece develop and how they lend themselves to supporting Internationalisation at Home.

21 Beelen, J., Jones, E. (2015). Redefining Internationalization at Home. In: Curaj, A., Matei, L., Pricopie, R., Salmi, J., Scott, P. (eds) The European Higher Education Area. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-20877-0_5



Spotlights



Quality Assurance within Partnerships: Case Study of Metropolitan College

Dr Penny Masoura, Dean of Quality & Academic Standards and Deputy Director (Academic) at Metropolitan College kindly agreed to be interviewed regarding the processes by which private colleges in Greece quality assure their TNE provision.

Metropolitan College was founded in 1982 and is the largest College of University Students in Greece, and in collaboration with 7 international universities, it offers the widest range of modern study programmes in demand in the market. The College is made up of ten schools and offers over 70 degree programmes (bachelors, masters and doctorates) and 30 international certifications.

Dr Masoura explained how Metropolitan College was unique within Greek HE, noting that the College was split over eight campuses across the country. The College is the largest provider of British University Education in Greece and Europe. The College currently collaborates with several UK universities with a variety of different programmes offered. These collaborations include both franchised and validated provision. For programmes validated by the partner, the College has full responsibility for producing and quality assuring all of the required paperwork (for example the programme specification and module specifications). For franchised provision, the partner university has the responsibility for the programme documentation which the College then adjust to fit with the Greek context.

Annual monitoring of provision with partner institutions varies between different universities in terms of specific paperwork requirements however the Quality Team's responsibilities are divided so that each Team member is assigned to specific partnerships and receives annual training to ensure they are fully aware of the partner university's requirements. The annual reports required cover all of the key performance indicators relating to the programme regarding retention, progression, completion and graduate outcomes, as well as a full consideration of the programme's delivery, the teaching and learning on the programme, and feedback from students and the academic team.

The consideration of a programme's performance in terms of retention, progression and completion data as we are used to in the UK is not reflected in the Greek HE system. The government do not hold universities or public colleges to account in the same way, and in Greece there is not a quality assurance body that oversees the partnerships. There is a Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQA – and in Greek ΑΔΙΠ) but at present they oversee public universities only, not TNE.





The Central Quality Team at Metropolitan College alongside the Deans of Faculties and Academic Directors offer a variety of staff development sessions relating to quality assurance with sessions on feedback and moderation, writing module learning outcomes, preparation for validation events and committee membership training. Partner institutions also offer staff development for relevant colleagues. Dr Masoura was pleased to note that engagement with these staff development sessions is generally positive with new members of staff particularly responsive to the sessions offered throughout the academic year.

Dr Masoura explained the governance structure of the College and highlighted the introduction of working groups which had significantly improved the dissemination of information across the eight campuses. The College has recently undergone an extensive reorganisation and this restructure and allocation of key colleagues on a number of committees (such as the Deans of the Faculties) due to their roles and responsibilities has ensured that information is properly circulated and has facilitated communication across staff.

Students at Metropolitan College are fully engaged with the quality assurance processes. With validation events, for example, student focus groups are organised prior to the events where students are asked to give feedback on the proposals. There is then student representation at the validation events where they discuss the proposals in full with the panel. Following the event the outcomes of the process are communicated formally to students. Dr Masoura was pleased to note that students are interested and fully engaged with this process.

Student feedback processes at the college are also thorough. Each programme leader or year tutor hosts regular weekly or bi-weekly meetings with students which take the form of an open forum. Students are invited to programme committees which are held once per semester. At these meetings the agenda includes student performance, teaching, and support available to students. Students are also invited to provide feedback through questionnaires. Findings from these surveys are processed and analysed by the Central Quality Team. This includes both quantitative and qualitative data. Findings from the questionnaires are circulated to key stakeholders in the College, namely programme leaders and heads of faculties as well as being circulated to all students in a timely manner. Any actions arising from this feedback are responded to, with students made fully aware of how their feedback has been used.

The pandemic had provided a challenge to the quality assurance processes at the College however the Quality Team had managed to mitigate most of these. An example given was the virtual tours of resources which had replaced visits from partner representatives. There had also been positives for the quality assurance processes with certain aspects being streamlined and taking a more risk-focused approach. During the first phase of the pandemic, programmes were transitioned to an online delivery model which had led to some difficulties particularly with programmes which had certain teaching or assessment restrictions due to professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) requirements.

As such the College needed to extend their academic calendar to manage both PSRB and student expectations which had required the approval of the partner universities. During the height of the pandemic student feedback was sought regarding the online delivery of the programme and how this had been managed. Students were pleased with the training provided by the university in transitioning to online study.

Post-lockdown many programmes have retained a blended learning model which has been tailored depending on the particular demands of each programme and in collaboration with the particular partner institution. The transition to online learning also prompted an extensive digital transformation of the Colleges online resources and tools available for staff and students. There have been a number of new facilities and student support services developed to support this which students have responded positively to.

In terms of Brexit, Dr Masoura noted that the key challenges related to students membership with professional bodies based in the UK which she noted had the potential to affect the recruitment on certain programmes.



Academic Organisational Structures in Greek Universities

Greek State Universities are organised, governed, and led by a variety of official individual roles and collective bodies. These structures are largely the same across the State Higher Education sector, with some variations and fluctuations present.

They are headed by their most senior official, the Rector, who is supported by several Vice or Deputy Rectors responsible for their respective relevant areas of focus. These individuals, along with other staff and student representatives, may form the membership of a Rector's Board or Council, which is the primary governing body of the University.

Beyond the Council is the Senate, which supervises the University's overall operations and internal regulations and is also composed of University Officials and representatives. Senate forms the University's policies on education and research, and its strategic planning and development.



As an example, let's take a closer look at the organisational structure of the University of Patras, located in Western Greece (22):

- Rector;

- 4 Vice Rectors for
 - o Academic and International Affairs
 - o Research and Development
 - o Student Affairs
 - o Finance and Planning;

- Rector's Council, which proposes suggestions to Senate, and advises Senate on matters from drafting annual financial budgets to distribution of academic staff;

- Senate, whose membership includes the Rector, Vice Rectors, Deans of Faculties, Heads of Departments, Student Representatives, and staff representatives from several Technical, Laboratory, and Administrative support areas.

Similarly, the University of the Peloponnese, as another example, follows an almost identical structure (23):

- Rector;

- 4 Vice Rectors for
 - o Administrative Affairs
 - o Finance, Planning and Development
 - o Academic & Student Affairs
 - o Research and Life Long Education;

- Rector's Board;

- Senate, whose membership also includes the Rector, Vice Rectors, Deans, Heads of Departments, Student Representatives, and staff representatives from several Technical, Laboratory, and Administrative support areas.

Greek State Universities include their organisational structure and the Rectorate authorities on their websites, for further information.

22. <https://www.upatras.gr/en/university/administration/>

23. <https://www.uop.gr/en/home-page/administration/rectorate-authorities>



Recognition of TNE in Greece

Under the Greek constitution, university education can only be provided by state institutions, that is universities and technological education institutes (TEIs), both of which have their own degree-awarding power. State institutions can freely engage in collaborative partnerships with foreign higher education institutions leading to joint award. When TNE degrees are jointly awarded with Greek state institutions academic recognition is not necessary.

Private colleges by law cannot be granted degree-awarding power. To obtain approval to operate from the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs they must collaborate with recognised and accredited foreign higher education institutions. However, foreign qualifications obtained studying on TNE partnerships with Greek private colleges are not recognised for academic purposes, although can be recognised for professional equivalence under the EU professional qualifications directive (Directive 2005/36/EC) when offered in partnership with EU higher education institutions.

Following the UK withdrawal from the European Union, the recognition of UK TNE qualifications is subject to each EU country's national regulations for recognition of professional qualifications from third countries. In 2020, the Greek government assigned the authority of granting professional recognition for both regulated and non-regulated professions from the EU and third countries to The Independent Department for the Implementation of European Legislation (ATEEN), within the Ministry of Education. However, the EU harmonised professions (Doctors, Pharmacists, Nurses, Midwives, Dentists and Architects) fall outside of the scope of action of ATEEN. This means that UK university graduates in these disciplines, regardless of where they have been studied, are not entitled to seek recognition for professional equivalence in Greece.

Recent legislative changes foresee that the academic recognition of foreign qualifications will be done automatically based on a list of recognised foreign institutions, and that the ATEEN's function will be moved under DOATAP, the Hellenic National Academic Recognition and Information Center (24). This is expected to streamline recognition of UK TNE qualifications going forward, although operational details and the impact of the merger are still to be defined at time of writing.

Other recognition issues for UK degrees remain. These include recognition of three-year degrees, which are typically recognised as the equivalent of a TEI degree. To be recognised as equivalent to a Greek state university degree, which includes four years' study, a three-year undergraduate degree must be followed by a postgraduate degree - that is, four years' study. Different recognition policies might also affect the recognition of post-graduate qualifications, which require, for example, that a determined percentage of permanent academic staff associated with the programme of study hold a doctorate degree.

24 <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1175684/changes-to-foreign-degree-recognition/>



Kent in Europe

The University of Kent has a long-established reputation in Europe. Its proud history includes contributing to the foundation of the Erasmus programme and establishing internationally recognised postgraduate teaching centres in Europe and a legacy as the UK's European university.

During the study tour, we had the pleasure of speaking with Alastair Ross, Head of Operations (Europe) at the University of Kent, who is based in Brussels at the university's Brussels School of International Studies (BSIS), which is also a member of the newly established UK University Overseas Campuses Network (25).

As part of his role, he manages the university's operations on the continent, which includes various elements from strategic vision and the facilitation of partnerships to estate management and finance & legal, to the management of local staff, student support and provides the link between local and remote operations.

During our conversation, he shared the university's experience of managing TNE programmes in Europe, sharing both the administrative considerations as well as resulting experience of students based at an overseas campus. Considerations of quality assurance, admissions processes, IT systems, financial matters, in addition to the impact of Brexit on working restrictions of flying faculty, and the advantages of being based in the EU for recruitment of staff not having as significant an impact as the UK. Having strong alumni groups in-country allows for good connections for programme development.

Kent in Europe forms a vital part of the University of Kent's international outlook, which in the 2021 THE World Ranking is higher than 8 of the top 10 universities in the world at 91.1%. While Brexit may slightly alter that profile in years to come, the university's European connections contribute to its international student and staff numbers, as well as supporting joint international research publications. For more information, please see <https://www.kent.ac.uk/brussels/handbook/kentineurope.pdf>

25 <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/universities-uk-international/events-and-news/uuki-news/new-uk-university-overseas-campuses>



Elements of Greek culture

Sunshine, beaches, feta, ouzo... all of these probably come to mind when thinking about Greece but there is so much more to this beautiful and culturally-rich country than just the wonderful food, drink and climate including the infamous Greek salad! There are traditions which date back many years and which are passed through every generation of Greek families. One of the traditions at Christmas for example, is to display a Christmas boat (trees are also commonplace now but will be normally be an accompaniment to the boat). This symbolises the naval past of Greece and honours the sailors who returned home to be with their families at Christmas. Following on from Christmas is New Years which is traditionally celebrated with a vasilopita – a cake in which a coin is placed. The cake is cut at midnight and whoever takes the slice containing the coin is said to have good health and good luck for the year ahead.

Easter is highly celebrated and is one of the most important periods on the Orthodox calendar, with events taking place from Lent until Easter Sunday. For example, on the Thursday before Easter (Good Thursday), eggs are boiled and traditionally dyed red to represent the blood and sacrifice of Christ. These are then placed in large bowls as decorations before being cracked on Easter Sunday to represent the resurrection. They are not cracked with a spoon but by playing the game 'tsougrisma' (τσούγκρισμα in Greek). A player cracks their egg on top of another player's egg; whoever does not have a cracked egg at the end, or whoever cracks both ends of their opponent's egg is the winner and is said to have good luck through the year!



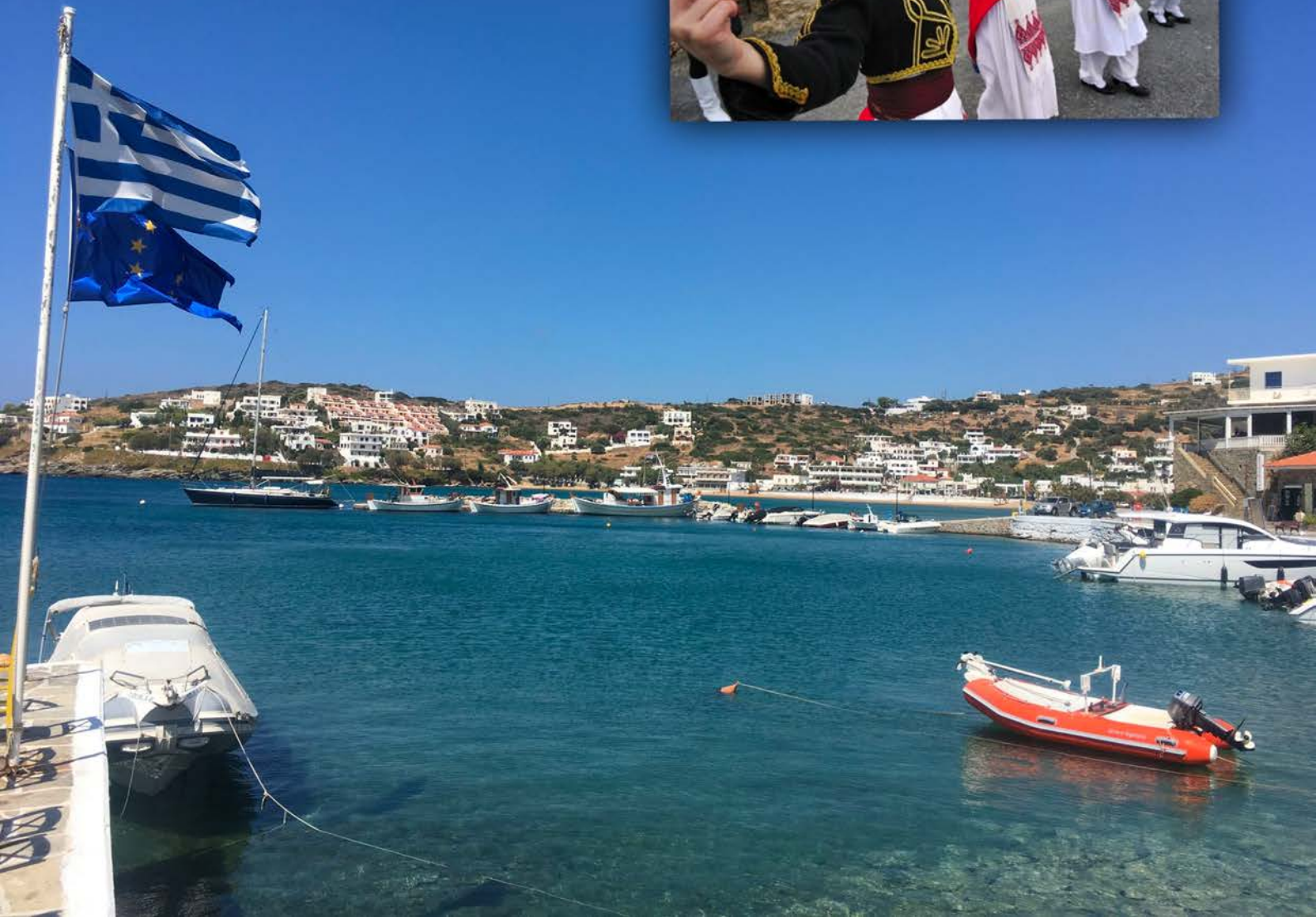
And of course, no visit to Greece is complete without sampling the local food, freshly-cooked at a traditional Greek taverna. Food plays a huge role in Greek life and as well as being incredibly delicious, brings friends and family together. No celebration is complete without a huge feast! Many of the Greek islands will have their own local cheeses and sublime seafood, as well as other traditional foods such as dolmades (vine leaves stuffed with rice) and souvlaki (marinated skewered meat).



Local wines, ouzo and raki are commonplace and it is almost impossible to leave a taverna without being offered a glass of one of these, or another liqueur, mastiha. In fact, wine-making has been customary in Greece for centuries and today, Greek wineries are becoming more recognised but certainly don't have the acclaim they so rightly deserve. It is definitely worth visiting one or two if you get the chance, particularly on a Greek island!

There are many more customs and traditions that encompass Greek culture and the country's rich history, and the last one which I feel should be mentioned is the 'evil eye', which is part of a superstition whereby it is believed the evil eye is a curse placed upon someone by a jealous person. A charm is often worn to 'protect' oneself against this; this is the famous blue glass with an eye painted on, though nowadays there are many clothing items and other accessories with this symbol (a tourist goldmine!) Any visit to Greece will always include seeing this symbol.

Hopefully the photos here give a glimpse into the some of the wonderful elements of Greek culture and at the very least, inspire you to book a trip!



Reflections on coordinating the AUA VST 2021/22

We (Helen Duell and Samantha Heffernan) were appointed co-coordinators of the Greek VST. Neither of us had led such a project before, so we were keen to collaborate and grateful for the support offered to each other. We were also guided by David Law, Chair of AUA's International HE Network, throughout the programme, and his experience and support allowed us to grow in confidence to lead the Team.

The VST description proposed a relatively open-ended programme and allowed for organic development, based on the individual members and our respective interests and expertise. Helen, David and I held a couple of preliminary calls on MS Teams to meet each other and discuss how the Tour might take shape, and we decided on an approach to suggest to the rest of the Team for their feedback.

Initially, the Tour was expected to start in September 2021 and conclude before Christmas that year. The recruitment process was extended, so we had a slightly delayed start, and really got going in mid-November 2021. The VST group held a first meeting to introduce ourselves and our roles, and professional interests and motivations. As you can see from the Team's bios, we have diverse roles, experiences and backgrounds. We also reflected on what our strengths were as a team and where we could draw on our own expertise, and we started to collate a list of Greek contacts we already have and people we could potentially approach for assistance.

Also in that first meeting, we presented a 2-part model of how the project might play out: part one being a preliminary education phase, then part two where the Team research specific areas of interest which are important on a personal, professional or institutional level. The Team were amenable to this and open to discussion about how best to approach it.

The AUA logo consists of the letters 'AUA' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'A' and 'U' are black, while the 'A' is a teal color.

Annual Conference
and Exhibition
2022



Colleagues favoured a thematic approach over individual case studies of specific institutions, and we considered a combination of exploring thematic areas within the boundaries of a specific HEI or TNE partnership. This would fluctuate as the project progressed. One of our colleagues, Emma Marku, highlighted the importance of avoiding the dreaded scope-creep (!) which became something of a motto for our Team for the duration. In order to keep us focussed and on-track, the Team agreed on some Learning Outcomes in the early meetings.

It is important to remember that this was a voluntary project and important to us to keep in mind colleagues' time, motivation, and interest levels. In terms of timelines, we had initially envisaged that Part 1 would finish soon after Christmas. With the delayed start and the organisation around arranging meetings with external contacts, it soon became clear that the project would take longer than expected. The programme was also not as clear-cut as 'Part 1 ends and Part 2 begins' and there was some inevitable and necessary overlap for continuity. It would be a very different experience to do an in-person tour in a 10-day period. Certainly, we could have condensed the VST into a shorter period, but that would have necessitated intensive engagement and participation from the team, which simply wouldn't have been feasible without some form of study leave, whilst all working full-time jobs. In the event, the group agreed we were flexible as to the length of the project (within reason!) and our timeline eventually looked like this:

- November 2021-December 2021: fortnightly team meetings
- December 2021-March 2022: Part 1 – fortnightly meetings with presentations
- March 2022: review and proposal for part 2
- March 2022-May 2022: Part 2 - research and writing report sections
- May 2022-July 2022: editing and compiling report with AUA
- July 2022: soft launch and promo at AUA Annual Conference & Exhibition
- August 2022: final version released

The first phase of the project was to educate ourselves. Since Team members all had different roles and experiences, we all had differing levels of knowledge of Greek Higher Education and Greek-UK partnerships, so this was an opportunity for us all to learn. We held fortnightly meetings in a 2-hour time-slot and invited speakers to give presentations and offer Q&As.

Ahead of the transition into Part 2, we put some considerable thought into the report itself and our expectations for the finished product. This would help to shape Part 2 to a large extent, and to give us clarity on how to proceed. We presented several suggestions to the group, taking inspiration from previous Tours and Reports, and considering which elements we preferred. The Team agreed on a structure which we thought would allow us to write in line with our Learning Outcomes and also with our own personal/professional interests. We decided to convert our Learning Outcomes into questions, the answers to which would form the main text of our report, and to supplement this with what became known as 'Spotlight on...' sections, whereby we would be able to shine a spotlight onto a particular area of interest or importance. The principle behind this structure was to provide meaningful learning opportunities and to maintain the Team's engagement in the project, whilst allowing us to be flexible and adapt to changes as we went along.

The second phase, then, began with Team members selecting which sections they wished to take the lead on writing. We were very open to collaborative working and colleagues writing together, if they wished. In order to produce some of the sections, further meetings, presentations, and/or discussions were required and these were arranged on a more individual basis. All members could join if they wished, but it was not a requirement. In order to galvanise the Team and to maintain frequent contact, we increased the frequency of the VST meetings to weekly, and shortened them to an hour. We did not necessarily need a weekly meeting, but as we have all learned from working remotely, it is much more convenient to have a meeting scheduled and not require it, than it is to require a meeting and not be able to find a suitable time for all colleagues. As a result, some of these meetings became a casual drop-in to offer the chance for a quick catch-up, a bit of team-building, and to see how members were progressing.

Once the majority of written drafts were collected, we worked with Simon Moore at the AUA on the production of the Report. This involved several helpful calls and exchanges from initial discussion, through to suggested layouts and formatting, draft versions, and the final digital product. Simon was particularly skilled at managing our expectations, whilst providing practical suggestions, being as flexible as possible, and maintaining the feeling of this being 'our' work. With hindsight, it would have been helpful to involve Simon in the process sooner, and to have invited him to a couple of the early meetings. This would have enabled us to have had a better understanding, at an earlier stage, of the type of report we wanted to produce and therefore to be able to hold that more clearly in the Team's collective mind as we progressed through the project.

Although there were distinct and clear advantages to holding the Tour online, it was also important to the Team to try to capture some of the elements that we considered 'lost' when comparing a virtual Study Tour to an in-person one. We were not able to take advantage of networking together in quite the same way, or of experiencing an evening of Greek cuisine, or of sightseeing during some down-time, or even the chance to take photos to include in this report, for example (not to mention not seeing the sun!!) Helen and I tried to some extent to inject some of those elements, such as providing recipes for the Team to try at home, and links to Greek culture quizzes and activities online. I think these gestures were appreciated by the Team as a light diversion, but could never be considered equivalent to the real thing!

In due course, as the Report took shape, our attentions turned towards the AUA Annual Conference. David Law had kindly secured a session for the Team to present some of the key features and findings of our project, which we hope also serves as a promotional tool for the Study Tour, and may motivate other AUA colleagues to consider participating in future Tours. The whole experience has been enlightening, entertaining and enjoyable and we would genuinely recommend it!

AUA Behaviours

Virtual Study Tour Members agreed that participation in this tour was a valuable professional and personal development opportunity, and enabled us to develop the following AUA Professional Behaviours:

Engaging with the wider context: Enhancing your contribution to the organisation through an understanding of the bigger picture and showing commitment to organisational values.

Working together: Working collaboratively with others in order to achieve objectives. Recognising and valuing the different contributions people bring to this process.

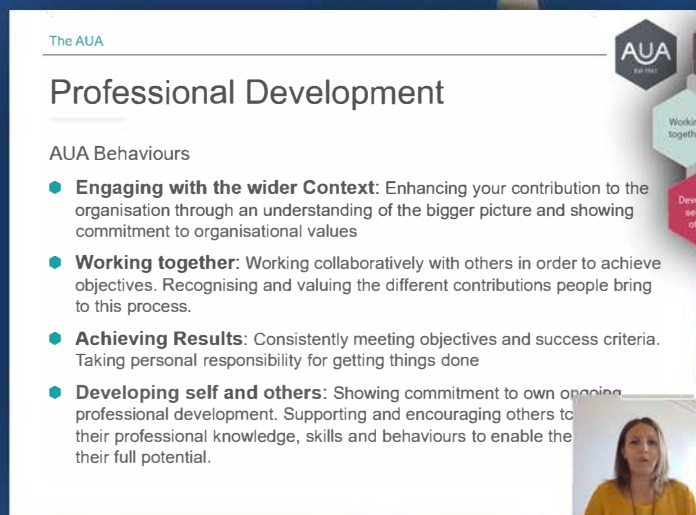
Achieving results: Consistently meeting objectives and success criteria. Taking personal responsibility for getting things done

Developing self and others: Showing commitment to own ongoing professional development. Supporting and encouraging others to develop their professional knowledge, skills and behaviours to enable them to reach their full potential.

The tour allowed us to network and meet colleagues from other institutions, work together to agree the objectives for our own personal development and then each be able to contribute to the final output, in this case, this report. The structure of this particular tour allowed each member to choose a focus of interest that they could explore throughout and the virtual nature of the tour challenged us to think about new ways of working, be more creative in approach and to try things that we may wish to later implement into our own roles or team.

Often we may find ourselves working in silos, thinking about what we do in our own department or university and how we can make improvements to how we work without taking a moment to look elsewhere. This tour allowed participants the opportunity to learn and appreciate different perspectives. We should remember that we don't always have to learn from the UK Higher Education sector alone, we should be raising our own intercultural awareness and understanding to enable us to be more successful in our everyday work.

You may be interested in this video, prepared for the AUA Conference, which speaks further on the AUA Behaviours:



The AUA

Professional Development

AUA Behaviours

- **Engaging with the wider Context:** Enhancing your contribution to the organisation through an understanding of the bigger picture and showing commitment to organisational values
- **Working together:** Working collaboratively with others in order to achieve objectives. Recognising and valuing the different contributions people bring to this process.
- **Achieving Results:** Consistently meeting objectives and success criteria. Taking personal responsibility for getting things done
- **Developing self and others:** Showing commitment to own ongoing professional development. Supporting and encouraging others to their professional knowledge, skills and behaviours to enable the their full potential.



Thanks and acknowledgements

Since the Tour was ongoing, Team members were necessarily able to contribute more, or less, depending on the time of year, workload, and personal circumstances, but certainly everyone played their part and the project was genuinely a Team effort. Thanks and acknowledgement must go to Phil Rowsby and Laura Johnstone of Heriot-Watt University, who departed the Tour before its culmination, due to other priorities. We are grateful in particular to Maria Tsakali of the British Council Greece for her availability and assistance, and to Prof. Vangelis Tsiligiris for his knowledge and openness. We are also naturally indebted to all guests and external speakers who generously gave their time to join meetings with our Team, to Simon Moore and Jordan Paterson of the AUA for their help and expertise, and to our friends and colleagues for their support.

Meet the team!



Samantha Heffernan

Teaching & Learning Services Coordinator
CLS Paris, Queen Mary University of London
(Virtual Study Tour Co-coordinator)

My professional life so far has been predominantly in International Higher Education, which has given me a strong understanding of the challenges and requirements of International students, and also the institution and the wider sector itself. More recently, my role coordinating a suite of UK postgraduate Law programmes delivered in France has developed my understanding of, and and profoundly deepened my interest in,

Transnational Education (TNE). My particular professional interests are currently the student experience within the TNE context, and specifically within that, the experience of pre-arrival and transition into a TNE programme. I'm also interested in the concept of Third Space Professionals, and of TNE as Third Space education provision.

Despite nearly 14 years' experience in a university setting, it has only been in the past few years that I have realised the personal value of creating a strong professional identity. As such, I achieved Associate Fellowship (HEA) status in November 2019 and joined the AUA in February 2021. I made an agreement with myself to participate in as many opportunities as possible when I joined the AUA, and I think the Study Tours are one of the highlights offered. As I was reading about some of the Study Tours from previous years, I felt envious that I'd missed out on those opportunities, and they seemed to align with many of my professional motivations, so it was obvious to me that I'd apply to participate in the next one! Even better when they announced it would focus on Greece, a country I'm repeatedly drawn to, not least for the sunshine, the food, and that particular shade of Aegean blue...



Helen Duell

Quality Standards Manager
University of Salford
(Virtual Study Tour Co-coordinator)

I have been working in academic quality assurance and enhancement for the last eleven years, and my current role is as a Quality Standards Manager at the University of Salford. My key responsibility is to provide leadership, and inform the development, of effective operational strategies to manage and embed quality and enhancement activities across taught provision, drawing on best practice from across the HE sector

templates and supporting documentation. In 2017 I successfully applied for Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (D1). I have also recently completed a Masters by Research in Higher Education. As part of my role at EHU I have been increasingly involved in partnership activity, and I wanted to join the VST to develop my knowledge of TNE more generally as well as to meet other colleagues within the sector and to gain further experience in managing projects. I have also enjoyed holidays in Greece and its islands and was excited to learn more about the culture and HE landscape. My favourite Greek food has got to be souvlaki!

Outside of my professional life most of my time is either spent with my family (my husband, twin daughters and cockapoo) or long distance running. I also do a lot of voluntary work within my local community. Following the birth of my twin daughters in 2018 I became involved with the local Start Well Centre, firstly as a Start Well Parent Champion. I was then asked to represent my local area as a Parent Representative on the Start Well Advisory Board. I have really enjoyed my time so far as a Board member, ensuring that the opinions and voices of parents in my local area are heard and feeding back to them the work going on by the Centre. At the October 2020 meeting of the Start Well Advisory Board I was nominated to become the Board Chair.



David Law

Academic Director: Global Partnerships
Keele University

My membership of AUA began when I was appointed to be the Principal Editor of Perspectives in 2012, a responsibility that I then held for eight years. I am also a member of the AUA's team of consultants.

Currently, for AUA, I am Chair of the International HE Network. Our work in this network is mainly to organise annual Study Tours. I went with an AUA group to Netherlands and Belgium in 2015 and, after the pandemic disrupted everyone's plans, we took the Study Tour online. I led the 'visit' to UK TNE in China and am very pleased to be part of the second virtual study tour.

My current professional role is Academic Director: Global Partnerships at Keele University. As with many job titles, this contains a bit of 'puff'. I do not "direct" anyone. I am attached to the VC's Office and I report to the COO. This role grew out of a consultancy I had for Keele. I was advising on why the University's market share of international student recruitment was going down at a time when the UK was recruiting ever more students from other countries. This originated, I concluded, through some lack of understanding, relative to other universities, of how to connect partnership building with on-campus international recruitment.

Outside Keele and AUA, I am the Deputy Chair of the BAC (British Accreditation Council) and I also work with the TNE Hub.

On the personal side: I was a scholarship boy who grew up in London with very few ambitions but a love of learning. I never wanted to find a career and was very pleased when 'it found me'. (Although I did have a great vacation job as Mr Whippy – not what you are thinking: I sold ice cream in South East London). I was very fortunate to have a full grant for five years of university study (three at Sussex and then a two-year Masters at Glasgow). I am from a generation that had the benefit of free tuition. University of Glasgow offered me a temporary lectureship and before that ended a Keele Professor called my dissertation supervisor to try to find someone at short notice to teach Russian History. I thought I was going to stay for a year, but it ended up as twenty-five!

After Keele I went to the University of Hull to be the Academic Registrar. At Keele I had made some recruitment trips to Asian countries, but it was at Hull that I first became involved in planning an international strategy. For slightly odd reasons the International Office at Hull was part of my responsibility span. My international work was then continued at Warwick where I was first Academic Registrar and then International Director. Edge Hill University followed. I was PVC with responsibility for external relations and "students" (mostly recruitment and partnerships).

I feel firmly rooted in HE after more than fifty years. I tried retirement but it didn't suit me. Roughly half my working life has been in academic roles and half in Professional Services. I find that really helpful in what I do now.

Members of our Study Tour team were asked to consider how AUA's Professional Behaviours (PB) have been reflected in the work of this team. As individuals, we are committed to development and engagement. That explains why we do what we do. For the group, I see the PB ethos as influential (even if we are not word perfect on how the PBs are set out).

I particularly like the way that Working Together is set out. It is not just a collaborative effort to achieve objectives – that describes an outcome. The process needs recognition of the different contributions that are made by all members of a team. This cannot happen without mutual respect, acceptance of difference, and genuine appreciation for the value that is added by each colleague.



Jackie Clifton

Taught Postgraduate Programmes Coordinator
Lancaster University

I manage two Masters programmes in the Management School at Lancaster University and have always had a keen interest in the internationalisation of Higher Education as well as transnational education, and was fortunate enough to study this as part of my AUA PgCert.

Having participated in recruitment fairs in Athens several times as an additional 'perk' to the day job, my interest in Greek HE was sparked from these and so when the next Virtual Study Tour was based on HE in Greece, I jumped at the chance to join the team! Greece holds a special place in my heart aside from the work connections so I was keen to learn more and with like-minded AUA members! One of my motivations aligns the AUA behaviour 'engaging with the wider context' and I knew working with the rest of the team would help me achieve this.

Since visiting Athens a few years back, I have now had the chance to visit Thessaloniki and a few more islands and my interest seems to keep growing so I expect this to be a long-term exploration of Greece, and now I can add HE into this!



Alison Felce

Head of Accreditation and Consultancy
The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

I have worked at the QAA for nearly five years. My current role is Head of Accreditation and Consultancy responsible for QAA's international portfolio including International Quality Review, the design and delivery of international projects, programme accreditation and capacity building activity. I continue to play an active role in designing and delivering training including programmes delivered fully online to quality agencies in Thailand, Ukraine and Morocco in 2020, 2021 and 2022 and a number of online

webinars on quality assurance and digital pedagogies.

I am responsible for the design and delivery of QAA's Accreditation and Consultancy portfolio. Our international work is primarily within the Far East, South and South East Asia, Middle East, West Africa and East Europe/ West Asia. We engage with governments and regulatory bodies to conduct research, design and deliver training in quality assurance and quality frameworks, and with HEIs, to carry out Transnational Education Review, on behalf of the UKHE sector. We have a programme of International Quality Review to offer QAA Institutional Accreditation to provide recognition that an HEI can meet international quality standards. In my previous roles I have designed and delivered courses for TNE delivery, chaired international validations and accreditations and set up collaborative partnerships with overseas HEIs, including with partners in Europe. I also have experience of developing a range of collaborative partnerships and strategic approaches to work-based learning and adaptations to quality processes.

My particular areas of interest and contribution to the VST are around quality assurance, quality frameworks and quality standards for all aspects of TNE, particularly its enhancement. This includes relationships with government and regulatory bodies to develop cross-border cooperation, broaden understanding of respective approaches to QA and accreditation, seeking to minimise the "QA burden" on UK TNE providers.

My main reasons for joining the VST were to bring my experience to the team and to gain a view of higher education in Greece that can help inform our broader international work at QAA.



Emma Marku

Internationalisation Officer
University of Kent

As an Internationalisation Officer at the University of Kent, I work closely with colleagues to identify, explore and develop new internationalisation opportunities. I support the management and coordination of the curriculum and delivery of International Programmes' Short Courses, Internationalisation at Home and Virtual Mobility/Exchange ventures and staff training.

After having participated in the first virtual AUA Study Tour, I joined the second virtual study tour, this time focusing on Greece. My reasons for doing so were two-fold. First, to experience the development of the AUA virtual study tours as I believe they have a place to continue, even when travel restrictions may have been ease following the pandemic. Second, most of my work experience has been focused on looking outside Europe, and this Study Tour, will allow me the opportunity to develop my own knowledge in a European context.

The tour allows you to network and meet colleagues from other institutions, work together to agree the objectives for your own personal development and then each being able to contribute to the final output, in this case an overview of Greek Higher Education and a series of spotlight features where we can review and reflect on our learnings and how that may then apply to our own local contexts.

If anyone is wondering whether participating in a future study tour is worth it, I would thoroughly recommend. We can always learn from others to help develop ourselves and our teams, and we don't always have to learn from the UK Higher Education sector alone, we should be raising our own intercultural awareness and understanding to enable us to be more successful in our everyday work.



Janine Melvin

Work Related Learning and International Mobility Coordinator
Liverpool John Moores

I am a Work Related Learning and International Mobility Coordinator at Liverpool John Moores University. Working with Humanities & Social Science (HSS) students and academic staff, the Go Abroad Team, Careers and Enterprise colleagues, graduates, employers, charities and local community groups.

This work is all with the aim of helping students to increase their employability through internationalisation, work-related and work-based learning. HSS Students are studying a range of subjects including English Literature, History, Media, Culture & Communication, Sociology and International Relations and Politics.



Fabrizio Trifiro

Head of Quality Benchmark Services
Ecctis

I am Head of Quality Benchmark Services at Ecctis, the agency that manages the national qualifications recognition function on behalf of the UK government. At Ecctis, I oversee services aimed at supporting international understanding and recognition of international qualifications. I have led the development and overseen the implementation of the TNE Quality Benchmark scheme, aimed at improving the international recognition ecosystem for TNE provision.

Prior to joining Ecctis, I worked for the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education for over 10 years, where I led on the programme of in-country TNE reviews, as well as international strategic engagement with counterpart agencies overseas and their networks, and the international students experience. I led the initial development of the current QE-TNE scheme working closely with UUKi and GuildHE.

Recently I have been supporting the Office for Students in England in engaging internationally to facilitate cross-border cooperation in the oversight of English TNE.

I have published widely on the quality assurance of TNE and the importance of cross-border cooperation to reach internationally shared solutions to the quality assurance and recognition challenges associated with TNE. On this topic I led the development of the Toolkit for Quality Assurance Agencies: Cooperation in Cross-Border Higher Education, aimed at addressing regulatory gaps and overlaps in the quality assurance of TNE.

I currently sit on the Board of Directors of the International Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (INQAAHE), and am a reviewer for a number of international quality assurance bodies. I am Chief Advisor to the International Association of Education Hub, having played a key role in its establishment.

Guest Contributors

Professor Dinos Arcoumanis

Chairman of Academic Board at Metropolitan College

Dinos is the Chair of the Academic Board at Metropolitan College and also holds positions as: a Professor Emeritus and Former Vice President of City, University of London; a Corresponding Member, Academy of Athens; and Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering. He is also a former Ambassador of Greece for Energy Policy.

Dimitris Diamantis

Principal of Metropolitan College

Dimitris has been the Principal at Metropolitan College, Greece, since January 2009. Dimitris was educated at Panteios University of Economics And Political Sciences Athens. With a background in political science, he has worked for 38 years in various positions in the industry including project management, strategic management and Education Management.

Dr Penny Masoura

Dean of Quality & Academic Standards and Deputy Director (Academic) Piraeus Campus, Metropolitan College

Penny has worked in various roles at Metropolitan College since joining the institution in September 2015. She began as a programme leader of the BA (Honours) Early Childhood Studies and Education before progressing into the role of Deputy Director (Academic) at the Piraeus Campus in 2018 and then as the College's Dean of Quality and Academic Standards in March 2021.

Pete Richards

Executive Director – UK and Europe (Education), Sannam S4

The Sannam S4 Group delivers a range of services to the global Higher Education sector, designed to drive international student recruitment volumes, ease recruitment and enrolment processes and to foster cross-border transnational education (TNE) partnerships. Pete's role requires strategic leadership of Sannam S4's education division across Europe, delivering against ambitious growth targets and supporting the business's existing (and expanding) partner network.



Alastair Ross

Head of Operations (Europe), University of Kent

Alastair Ross is Head of Operations (Europe) at the University of Kent and responsible for the university's operations on the European continent, including the Brussels School of International Studies and the Paris School of Arts and Culture. He is also a trustee of the Fondation Franco-Britannique, which supports the disadvantaged and disabled through training, education, and protected work at nine sites across France. Prior to joining the university, he was an officer in the British Army and served on operations in Bosnia, Iraq/Kuwait, Albania, Congo-Brazzaville, Indonesia, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone.

Maria Tsakali

Head of Education, British Council Greece

Maria has a long working experience and expertise in the higher education sector. Maria leads the education portfolio in Greece and specialises on the development of educational programmes and services with priority focus on mobility and institutional collaborations in higher education and science. She also contributes to the education strategy and priorities for the EU region by working closely with regional and global teams. Maria is also Head of Office in Thessaloniki and Honorary Consul.

Dr Vangelis Tsiligiris

Founder and Co-Convenor of the TNE Hub

Vangelis is an Associate Professor at Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, and visiting professor at Birmingham City University. Vangelis has broad experience in European transnational education (TNE) and the internationalisation of higher education. His research has been published in international academic journals and he has conducted high-profile research consultancy projects for organisations such as the British Council, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, and Universities UK. He has been a policy advisor for the government of Malta and delivered executive education programmes about the internationalisation of HE to universities in Georgia and Greece. In 2016, Vangelis founded the TNE Hub, an international network of researchers and practitioners in Transnational Education. Today, TNE Hub has more than 500 members from 30 countries.

*Thank you
for reading!*

