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Evolution of Regular Public Funding for the Operating Expenditures of Greek Higher Education Institutions: Temporal & Spatial Differentiations during the Period 2022-2026

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Abstract

This study investigates the temporal and spatial variations in the regular public grants allocated to Greek Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to cover their operating expenses over the period from 2022 to 2026. The data were derived from official annual ministerial decisions regarding the allocation of these grants (in euros) to the entire group of 23 public HEIs participating in this allocation framework. The total grant funding, broken down into objective and qualitative components, was analyzed through descriptive comparisons, annual shares, and variations between two periods: 2022-2024 (applying an 80:20 weighting for objective vs. qualitative criteria) and 2025-2026 (applying a 70:30 weighting). The average annual total funding per HEI was found to increase from €5.044 million to €5.631 million. Funding based on the qualitative characteristics of HEIs increased from €1.009 million to €1.689 million, while funding based on quantitative criteria decreased from €4.035 million to €3.942 million. Total funding levels across the two periods were strongly correlated (r = .981). Specifically, regional HEIs recorded an average increase in total funding of €.686 million, compared to €.479 million for central/metropolitan HEIs, resulting in an observed difference of €.207 million. The average annual share of regional HEIs in the total funding allocation rose from 53.584% to 54.412%. Spatial variations coexisted with significant differences among institutions within each category. Variations in funding allocations reflected the growth of the national budget, revised weighting factors, and the redistribution of funds among HEIs. The findings regarding the geographical classification of HEIs outline the defined institutional groups and the observation period, with group averages providing a partial description of the variation in the institutions' funding trajectories.

Keywords

Regular Public Funding, Operating Expenditures, Greek Higher Education Institutions, Temporal & Spatial Differentiations

1. Introduction

Public funding of higher education functions as a mechanism for resource allocation and, simultaneously, as an instrument of institutional governance. Funding rules shape university priorities, strategic planning, and organizational arrangements governing academic activity, research, and accountability. Within this context, traditional allocation systems based on historical appropriations and input measures have gradually given way to mixed models in which coverage of operating needs is combined with indicators of quality and achievement. This shift reflects an effort to link public resources to measurable objectives while also reshaping administrative and organizational choices within HEIs (Morris et al., 2023; Teixeira et al., 2022).

Performance-based funding theory rests on balancing two requirements: provision of a stable financial base that supports operational continuity of universities and creation of incentives aimed at improving academic and research performance. Empirical literature, however, reports heterogeneous outcomes. Effectiveness of such systems depends on funding intensity, stability of criteria, validity of indicators, and organizational capacity of institutions. At the same time, stronger emphasis on quantifiable performance may encourage strategic adaptation to selected metrics and may affect institutions unevenly when they operate from different initial conditions (Matveeva, 2025; Ortagus et al., 2020; Shin et al., 2024).

Spatial considerations add a critical dimension to analysis of higher education funding. Universities operate within uneven economic, demographic, and research environments and differ in size, infrastructure, geographic dispersion, and access to human and scientific capital. Funding mechanisms based on excellence or performance may reinforce already advantaged regions and reproduce cumulative advantages (Fitjar, 2025; Koenig et al., 2017). Accordingly, evaluation of a funding model should consider efficiency, quality, and spatial distribution of resources in parallel.

In Greece, the contemporary system for allocating regular public funding was established by Law 4653/2020, *Hellenic Authority for Higher Education. Special Accounts for Research Funds of HEIs, Research and Technological Bodies, and Other Provisions* (Government Gazette A' 12/24.1.2020). Funding was structured into objective and qualitative components, with Hellenic Authority for Higher Education assuming an advisory role in allocation procedures. During 2022-2024, a weighting scheme of 80% based on objective criteria and 20% based on qualitative criteria was applied. Law 5094/2024, *Strengthening Public Universities—Framework for Operation of Non-Profit Branches of Foreign Universities and*

Other Provisions (Government Gazette A' 39/13.3.2024), revised this distribution to 70% and 30%, respectively, for 2025-2026. This change increased the contribution of qualitative performance indicators to annual funding allocations (Vikas, 2023).

Available research in Greece has focused primarily on architecture of qualitative criteria and on efficiency with which HEIs convert financial and human-resource inputs into research outputs. Empirical evidence concerning changes in regular public funding before and after revision of weighting criteria remains limited, particularly regarding potential differences between central/metropolitan and regional institutions. More specifically, further clarification is required as to whether greater emphasis on qualitative criteria affects only composition of funding or also alters relative funding positions of individual institutions (Efthalitsidou et al., 2025).

This study examines regular public funding for operating expenditures across 23 Greek HEIs during 2022-2026. Analysis follows two principal dimensions: temporal comparison between 2022-2024 and 2025-2026, and spatial comparison between regional and central/metropolitan institutions. Total funding, funding based on objective criteria, and funding based on qualitative criteria are examined separately. Through this analytical structure, the study evaluates relationships among institutional change, temporal development, and spatial distribution of public resources within the Greek higher education system.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Public Grant Funding

Public grant funding constitutes an institutionally structured mechanism of fiscal intervention through which public authorities redistribute financial resources to organizations, activities, and sectors associated with defined social, developmental, or strategic priorities. Its function extends beyond a simple transfer of financial appropriations, as it incorporates normative choices concerning funding recipients, intended outcomes, and criteria used to assess public benefit. From this perspective, grants operate as instruments for correcting market imperfections, supporting services of public interest, and redirecting economic or organizational activity toward areas of greater social value (Schwartz & Clements, 1999). Such support may take a direct form through monetary transfers or an indirect form through tax concessions, subsidized interest rates, and preferential regulatory arrangements. This diversity enhances flexibility of public grant funding as a policy instrument while increasing demands associated with accurate recording, comparability, and assessment of its actual effects (Ricketts, 1985).

Effectiveness of public grant funding depends substantially on institutional architecture governing its design and on administrative capacity to connect allocated resources with clearly specified and assessable objectives. Transparency of allocation conditions, objectivity of criteria, monitoring of fund utilization, and systematic feedback within funding mechanisms constitute critical conditions for con-

verting public support into operational capacity, innovation, and measurable public value. Brüggemann and Proeger (2017) indicate that grants can act as catalysts for productive and technological transformation when embedded within a coherent strategic framework and accompanied by effective evaluation mechanisms. Similarly, Heyl et al. (2022) emphasize that limited strategic targeting and weak institutional oversight may generate distortions, inefficient resource allocation, and persistence of practices associated with limited social returns.

Greek experience with utilization of European funding resources further demonstrates that fiscal absorption, when separated from administrative capacity and substantive outcome evaluation, does not automatically translate into sustainable competitiveness or institutional advancement. At a normative level, quality of a public grant system is assessed according to distributive fairness, efficient resource utilization, procedural transparency, and consistency of funding choices with broader strategic objectives (Nejabat et al., 2022). These dimensions form an institutional foundation for accountability and shape social and administrative legitimacy of public intervention. Absence of clearly defined allocation rules and systematic oversight mechanisms may facilitate clientelist relationships, political influence, and dependence of funded organizations on contingent administrative decisions, thereby constraining institutional autonomy and credibility (Papathanassopoulos, 2013). Within Greek higher education in particular, effective utilization of public grants requires a transition beyond an absorption-oriented rationale toward systematic assessment of their added value.

2.2. Public Funding for Greek HEIs

In higher education, public funding supports continuity of educational, research, and administrative functions while simultaneously influencing institutional strategic planning and priorities. State funding covers operating expenditure, infrastructure, human resources, and academic activities, thereby supporting provision of public-interest services and equitable access to university education. Contemporary funding systems increasingly adopt mixed models in which core funding is combined with criteria related to quality, performance, and strategic development. Through this linkage, public funding addresses universities' recurring operational needs while also creating incentives to enhance academic quality, research activity, external engagement, and administrative effectiveness (Greben et al., 2024; Jongbloed, 2004).

Institutional evolution of regular public funding for Greek HEIs reflects a gradual transition from an administratively determined, historically based funding system toward a standardized algorithmic model incorporating operational characteristics, actual institutional needs, and qualitative performance. For analytical consistency, this development can be divided into three periods corresponding to institutional preparation of the model, implementation of its initial weighting structure, and subsequent recalibration (**Table 1**).

During the first period, funding of Greek HEIs evolved from a system based on

Table 1. Table type styles.

Period	Legislative framework	Institutional developments
Institutional development of the system up to 2021	Law 1268/1982; Law 3374/2005; Law 3549/2007; Law 4009/2011; Law 4076/2012; Law 4485/2017; Law 4653/2020	Gradual transition from annual, administratively determined budgets towards quality assurance, strategic planning and the alignment of funding with measurable institutional characteristics. Article 16 of Law 4653/2020 established a mixed system for allocating regular grants, with 80% based on objective criteria and 20% on quality and achievement criteria, with HAHE responsible for submitting recommendations.
Period before the change in weightings: 2022-2024	MD 154781/Z1/2021; MD 36331/Z1/2022; MD 75165/Z1/2022; MD 38124/Z1/2023; Law 4957/2022	Operational implementation of the 20% - 80% weighting scheme. Allocation under the objective component was linked to the size, academic structure, geographical dispersion, human resources and operating needs of HEIs. Allocation under the quality component was based on indicators relating to academic activities, research, engagement with society and the labour market, internationalisation and the quality of the university environment.
Period after the change in weightings: 2025-2026	Law 5094/2024; MD 58959/Z1/2024; MD 89040/Z1/2025	Article 93 of Law 5094/2024 reduced the weighting of the objective component from 80% to 70% and increased that of the quality component from 20% to 30%. It also clarified that the allocation mechanism applies to operating expenditure under the Ordinary Budget, excluding resources from the Public Investment Programme.

Notes. HAHE = Hellenic Authority for Higher Education; MD = Ministerial Decision. Full titles and publication details of the instruments are provided in the legislative and regulatory sources. Developments during 2022-2024 and 2025-2026 correspond to the change in the relative weightings of objective and quality criteria and follow the design of the empirical analysis. Official instruments are published in the Government Gazette, while implementing decisions specify the criteria for annual allocation.

annual financial planning and centralized administrative approval toward an institutional framework in which evaluation, quality assurance, and strategic planning progressively acquired greater significance. Law 1268/1982 established a distinction between Regular Budget and Public Investment Programme, without introducing a unified allocation algorithm across institutions. Establishment of quality assurance through Law 3374/2005, introduction of four-year academic and development programmes through Law 3549/2007, and provision for performance agreements and objective indicators under Law 4009/2011 gradually created institutional conditions for linking public funding with strategic planning and evaluation.

Practical scope of these reforms varied over time, as successive revisions of regulatory framework affected governance bodies, financial responsibilities, and implementation of performance-based arrangements. Institutional maturation of this process was consolidated through Law 4653/2020, which transformed Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency in Higher Education (HQA) into Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) and incorporated quality assurance directly into allocation mechanism governing regular public funding.

The 2022-2024 period constitutes the first coherent and recurrent implementation of the contemporary algorithmic funding system. Annual regulatory decisions operationalized the general provision of Article 16 of Law 4653/2020 and specified individual indicators, variables, and weighting coefficients used to cal-

culate funding allocated to each HEI. Eighty percent of available funds were directed toward differentiated operating requirements associated with institutional size, number of academic departments and active students, duration and laboratory intensity of study programmes, geographic dispersion, human resources, and non-discretionary operating obligations. Remaining 20% was linked to indicators of quality and achievement through thematic areas concerning improvement of academic functions, research activity, engagement with society and productive sectors, internationalization, and quality of university environment. This process established Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) as a key institutional intermediary between state funding policy and documented characteristics and performance of HEIs. Law 4957/2022 simultaneously reorganized governance and financial planning arrangements through Governing Councils, Executive Director, and multiannual development plans, while preserving the 20% - 80% funding structure.

The 2025-2026 period marks a distinct recalibration of funding architecture, as institutional weight assigned to qualitative performance increased from 20% to 30%, while contribution of objective criteria declined correspondingly from 80% to 70%. This adjustment was introduced by Article 93 of Law 5094/2024 and further specified for financial years 2025 and 2026 through corresponding ministerial decisions. Revised weighting preserved the fundamental role of operational characteristics of HEIs while assigning greater financial significance to performance, achievements, and strategic orientation. This institutional change provides the analytical basis for distinguishing between "before" and "after" periods adopted in the present study.

Analytical scope is confined to regular public funding for operating expenditures distributed through this specific algorithm. Resources provided through the Public Investment Programme, student housing allowance, student meals, academic textbooks, extraordinary appropriations, and salaries of permanent HEI personnel are governed by separate fiscal mechanisms and remain outside the funding base examined in this study. This delimitation ensures that temporal and spatial comparisons refer to an institutionally uniform and methodologically comparable funding measure.

2.3. Regular Public Funding for Greek HEIs

Regular public grants constitute the recurring institutional core of state funding for public HEIs and support the continuity of their academic, administrative and operational activities. Unlike appropriations earmarked for investment projects, competitive research programmes or individual student benefits, regular grants provide annual funding for general operating purposes, giving institutions a relatively predictable fiscal basis for meeting their ongoing needs. In international literature, this support is understood as a form of core public funding or a core operating grant, usually provided as an institutional block grant and allocated through combinations of historical data, funding formulas, input and outcome indicators,

and performance agreements. Adequate and predictable funding is considered essential for medium-term planning, the maintenance of teaching and research capacity, and the financial sustainability of universities. At the same time, the design of the allocation mechanism influences institutions' strategic priorities, as funding criteria also serve to direct organisational behaviour towards specified public policy objectives (OECD, 2025).

In Greece, the current system for allocating regular public grants was established under Article 16 of Law 4653/2020 (Law 4653, 2020, Government Gazette, Series A, No. 12/24.1.2020). Total annual funding was structured into two complementary components. Allocation under the first component is based on objective criteria reflecting the size, academic structure and differing operating requirements of each institution, including the number of departments and students, the duration and estimated cost of study programmes, the intensity of laboratory use, geographical dispersion, human resources and non-discretionary operating needs. Funding under the second component is linked to quality and achievement criteria relating to the continuous improvement of academic functions, research activity, engagement with society and the labour market, internationalisation and the quality of the university environment. During 2022-2024, objective criteria accounted for 80% of the allocation and quality criteria for 20%. Article 93 of Law 5094/2024 (Law 5094, 2024, Government Gazette, Series A, No. 39/13.3.2024) changed these proportions to 70% and 30%, respectively, with the revised weightings applied to the allocations for 2025 and 2026. This change increased the relative weight assigned to quality and achievements in funding allocation while retaining the primary role of objective operational characteristics. International experience indicates that mixed systems can improve transparency, strategic focus and accountability, while their effectiveness depends on data validity, the suitability of indicators and the avoidance of incentives that favour numerical performance at the expense of substantive quality (Claeys-Kulik & Estermann, 2015).

Defining the scope of regular grants is of methodological importance, as the funds allocated through the formula constitute a distinct part of the broader public funding of HEIs. Allocation under Article 16 covers operating expenditure under the Ordinary Budget, while the Public Investment Programme is explicitly excluded. This study also excludes the student housing allowance from its empirical scope. This allowance constitutes a separate financial benefit for eligible students and is awarded through a dedicated procedure based on individual income, asset, housing and academic requirements. Accordingly, entitlement to this benefit depends on the recipient's eligibility rather than the coefficient assigned to the relevant HEI based on objective or quality criteria. Similarly, payroll appropriations for permanent staff—Teaching and Research Staff, Special Educational Staff, Laboratory Teaching Staff, Special Technical Laboratory Staff, administrative staff and other permanent employees—constitute separate personnel expenditure and are administered through the central fiscal and payroll system, which includes the Single Payment Authority. Excluding these categories from the analysis prevents institutional

operating resources from being combined with social benefits and individual payroll expenditure of a different institutional nature. Consequently, this study examines exclusively the total regular grant for operating expenditure and its two components—allocation based on objective criteria and allocation based on quality criteria—during 2022-2024 and 2025-2026.

2.4. Theoretical Framework

This study draws on *New Public Management* to examine the allocation of regular public funding to Greek HEIs. Within this framework, public resource allocation is linked to efficiency, accountability and the measurement of organisational outcomes (Barr & McClellan, 2018; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004). Funding criteria therefore serve both an allocative function and a means of directing institutional priorities towards public policy objectives.

Performance-based funding provides a mechanism through which these principles are applied in higher education. Linking part of the grant to predefined indicators of quality and achievement can strengthen universities' strategic focus and support continuous improvement (Adam, 2020). Multidimensional evaluation systems extend this approach by connecting funding with academic quality, external engagement and institutional development (Camilleri, 2021).

Within the Greek mixed funding system, objective criteria reflect institutional characteristics and operating requirements, while quality criteria connect part of the allocation to evaluated activities and achievements. Changes in the relative weightings of these components may therefore alter the composition of funding and its distribution among institutions. Differences in geographical location, size, academic structure, the dispersion of academic units and infrastructure provide a basis for examining whether funding patterns vary between institutional groups.

Accordingly, the proposed conceptual framework connects the design of public funding criteria with two complementary dimensions of analysis: changes in funding over time and differences between regional and central/metropolitan HEIs. Regular public funding for operating expenditure constitutes the main research construct and is examined through three interrelated dimensions: total funding, funding based on objective criteria and funding based on quality criteria.

2.5. Research Questions

Guided by this theoretical framework, the study examines regular public funding for operating expenditure across 23 Greek HEIs during 2022-2026. Geographical category serves as the grouping variable, distinguishing regional from central/metropolitan institutions, while funding period provides the basis for comparison over time. During 2022-2024, objective and quality criteria were weighted at 80% and 20%, respectively. During 2025-2026, the corresponding weightings were 70% and 30%, increasing the relative contribution of quality criteria to grant allocation. For each HEI, mean annual funding is calculated separately for the two periods across

all three funding dimensions. Three change indicators are also constructed, each defined as mean funding for 2025-2026 minus the corresponding mean for 2022-2024. These measures allow the study to examine geographical differences in funding levels, spatial differences in funding changes and changes over time across all institutions.

The comparisons are descriptive and refer to the complete population of HEIs participating in the common allocation formula during the observed period. On this basis, the following research questions are addressed separately for total funding and funding based on objective and quality criteria:

RQ1: What differences in mean regular public funding are observed between regional and central/metropolitan HEIs before and after the change in the weightings of the criteria?

RQ2: How do changes in regular public funding from 2022-2024 to 2025-2026 compare between regional and central/metropolitan HEIs?

RQ3: What changes in mean regular public funding are observed between 2022-2024 and 2025-2026 across the 23 HEIs?

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study's institutional frame comprised the 25 public HEIs operating in Greece during the period examined. Of these, 23 HEIs formed the complete analytical population, as they were included on a consistent and comparable basis in the formula for allocating annual regular public grants for operating expenditure. Both Hellenic Open University (HOU) and Athens School of Fine Arts (ASFA) were excluded from the analysis, as the annual reports of the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education explicitly state that, owing to their distinctive institutional profiles, these institutions were not included in the common allocation formula applied to the other 23 HEIs. Specifically, funding for ASFA was determined separately by the Ministry of Education, while HOU remained outside the allocation process. The dataset contains 115 institution-year observations, with each HEI followed across five fiscal years. The analytical target is the distribution and evolution of approved allocations within this defined institutional population and period.

Data collection and verification took place in two successive phases, in May 2025 and May 2026. During the first phase, data were collected for the financial years 2022-2025; during the second, the dataset was updated with figures for 2026, and the entire five-year period was rechecked.

This study relied exclusively on official, published and freely accessible administrative documents. These included the funding allocation recommendations for 2022-2026 issued by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE, 2022a, 2022b, 2023a, 2024a, 2025a), its reports (HAHE, 2023b, 2024b, 2025b), decisions issued by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (MERA, 2022, 2023), decisions issued by the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports (MERAS, 2024, 2025), and the final decisions on the allocation and release of the relevant

appropriations published through the "Diavgeia" Programme. These sources were distinguished according to their administrative role. HAHE recommendations documented the allocation methodology and proposed institutional coefficients, while ministerial decisions specifying the criteria established the regulatory framework. Annual ministerial allocation decisions provided the basis for identifying approved grant amounts. Funding measure concerns annual allocations for operating expenditure; actual cash disbursements constitute a separate stage of budget execution.

For each HEI and year, the total regular public grant and the respective amounts allocated based on objective and quality criteria were recorded. Data accuracy was checked by cross-referencing sources, verifying that the two components summed to each institution's total allocation, and comparing the aggregate allocation for the 23 HEIs with the total annual appropriation specified in the official decisions. Covering 23 institutions over five consecutive financial years, the final dataset was complete, with no missing values in the variables used in the statistical analysis. A year-by-year source register in **Appendix B** identifies the document supplying the monetary values, their administrative status, the decision number and date, the Diavgeia identifier (ADA), and their link.

The analytical target is the observed distribution of funding across these 23 HEIs during 2022-2026. Annual institutional allocations are components of a common funding envelope. At a fixed annual total, an increase in one institution's allocation is accompanied by a reduction in the combined allocation to the remaining institutions. Accordingly, funding differences are interpreted within each year's joint allocation structure. Geographical and temporal comparisons describe the observed institutional population and period, with emphasis on the magnitude and distribution of funding changes.

3.2. Study Population and Geographical Classification

The study covers the 23 public HEIs participating in the common allocation framework for regular operating grants during 2022-2026. Geographical classification was operationalised using the distribution of undergraduate departments represented in the national admissions decision for the 2022-2023 academic year (Ministerial Decision Φ. 253.1/55071/A5, Government Gazette B' 2370/15.05.2022). This published list provides a fixed and verifiable reference for institutional membership and departmental location. Each department was counted once and assigned to the location of its administrative seat; separate admission tracks and branches belonging to the same department were consolidated. Independently admitting schools equivalent to departments were counted on the same basis. Postgraduate-only departments, general supporting departments and continuing education centres were outside this undergraduate reference frame.

For each institution, the regional department share was calculated as the number of reference departments located outside both the Region of Attica and the Regional Unit of Thessaloniki, divided by its total number of reference departments.

Institutions with a regional department share greater than 50% were classified as regional, whereas those with a share of 50% or less were classified as central/metropolitan. This rule was applied uniformly to all institutions, including those operating across multiple cities. The resulting classification comprises 11 central/metropolitan HEIs, coded as 1, and 12 regional HEIs, coded as 0. Table in **Appendix B** reports the departmental counts, regional shares and resulting categories.

The International Hellenic University was classified as regional because 16 of its 30 reference undergraduate departments were located outside the metropolitan reference areas, yielding a regional department share of 53.33%. Its Nursing Department was counted once at its Thessaloniki seat, with its Didymoteicho branch consolidated into the same department. Geographical categories were held constant throughout 2022-2026 to maintain consistent group membership across the funding comparisons. Consequently, subsequent institutional restructuring, including the 2024 transfer of departments from IHU to DUTH, did not alter these baseline categories. The classification captures institutional geography through departmental locations and does not measure the proportion of students, staff or expenditure situated in each area. The geographical comparisons therefore describe funding patterns between groups defined by their baseline departmental distribution.

Of the 23 HEIs, 11 were classified as central/metropolitan institutions, representing 47.8% of the sample, while 12 were classified as regional institutions, representing 52.2%. Especially (Table 2):

- 11 Central/metropolitan HEIs included Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the Agricultural University of Athens, the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, the National Technical University of Athens, the Athens University of Economics and Business, the University of West Attica, the University of Macedonia, the University of Piraeus, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Harokopio University and the School of Pedagogical and Technological Education.
- 12 Regional HEIs included Democritus University of Thrace, the International Hellenic University, the Hellenic Mediterranean University, the Ionian University, the University of the Aegean, the University of Western Macedonia, the University of Thessaly, the University of Ioannina, the University of Crete, the University of Patras, the University of the Peloponnese and the Technical University of Crete.

3.3. Variables

This empirical investigation was based on administrative and financial data concerning annual regular public funding for the operating expenditure of 23 Greek HEIs during 2022-2026. Each HEI constituted a unit of analysis, with each row of the dataset corresponding to one institution and each raw funding variable recording the actual grant amount allocated in the respective year. Unlike studies using questionnaires and multi-item scales, this study derived its variables from

Table 2. Baseline departmental counts and geographical classification of HEIs.

HEI	Reference departments	Departments outside metropolitan areas	Regional department share (%)	Category code
AUTH	41	1	2.44	1
AUA	9	3	33.33	1
DUTH	20	20	100.00	0
IHU	30	16	53.33	0
NKUA	41	5	12.20	1
NTUA	9	0	.00	1
HMU	11	11	100.00	0
IU	10	10	100.00	0
AUEB	8	0	.00	1
UAEGEAN	18	18	100.00	0
UNIWA	26	0	.00	1
UOWM	22	22	100.00	0
UTH	35	35	100.00	0
UOI	23	23	100.00	0
UOC	17	17	100.00	0
UOM	8	0	.00	1
UPAT	35	35	100.00	0
UNIPI	10	0	.00	1
UOP	22	22	100.00	0
PANTEION	9	0	.00	1
TUC	5	5	100.00	0
HUA	4	0	.00	1
ASPETE	3	0	.00	1

Notes. 1 = Central/Metropolitan; 0 = Regional. Metropolitan reference areas comprise the Region of Attica and the Regional Unit of Thessaloniki. Counts refer to departments represented in Ministerial Decision Φ.253.1/55071/A5, Government Gazette B' 2370/15.05.2022, after consolidating admission tracks and branches within their parent departments. These are baseline reference counts, not annual departmental totals. IHU's departmental structure was cross-checked against its 2022-2023 study guide. Regional shares were calculated by the authors.

the processing of continuous financial measures expressed in euros. Regular Public Funding for Operating Expenditure was the main research construct, examined through three interrelated funding dimensions: (a) total regular public funding, (b) funding allocated based on objective criteria and (c) funding allocated based

on quality criteria. Raw data comprised the annual values of these three dimensions for each year from 2022 to 2026.

To align the data with the change in the institutional allocation system, the study period was divided into two intervals. Under the 2022-2024 allocation system, objective and quality criteria were weighted at 80% and 20%, respectively, and this period was operationally designated Before. Corresponding weightings for 2025-2026 were 70% and 30%, and this period was designated After. Before and After were used solely to distinguish the two institutional periods and do not, in themselves, imply a causal interpretation of changes in funding. Based on this distinction, six mean funding variables were initially constructed. For each HEI, arithmetic means of annual amounts were calculated separately for 2022-2024 and 2025-2026 for total funding, funding based on objective criteria and funding based on quality criteria. Mean annual values were considered necessary because the first period comprised three years, whereas the second comprised two. Three change indicators were then constructed. For each funding dimension, change was calculated as mean funding for 2025-2026 minus mean funding for 2022-2024. Positive indicator values denoted an increase in mean annual public funding during the second period, whereas negative values denoted a decrease. This procedure produced six period-mean variables and three change indicators for the descriptive examination of geographical and temporal differences in funding. All monetary variables were retained in euros and treated as continuous ratio-scale measures. Calculations used the full monetary amounts, while the main tables present values in millions of euros for readability. Geographical category was included as a binary grouping variable, coded as 0 = Regional HEI and 1 = Central/Metropolitan HEI, according to the classification specified in Section 3.2. Comparisons describe funding levels and changes across these institutional groups and between the two periods within the observed population of 23 HEIs.

Table 3 presents dimensions, variables and calculation procedures.

3.4. Data Analysis

Analysis followed the methodological framework developed in the doctoral dissertation from which the present study draws, adapted to the structure of a descriptive population framework. Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics, version 30.0. The dataset covered regular public grants for the operating expenditure of 23 Greek public HEIs over the period 2022-2026 and distinguished total funding from its objective- and quality-based components. Institutional allocations are linked through a common annual national funding envelope, while repeated annual observations refer to the same institutions. Descriptive analysis included minimum and maximum values, arithmetic means, standard deviations, annual changes, and cumulative changes between 2022 and 2026. All calculations were performed using the original amounts in euros, while tables present monetary values in millions or thousands of euros to facilitate interpretation.

For the comparative analysis, mean annual funding was calculated for each

Table 3. Construction, operational definitions, and measurement of study variables.

Construct	Variable	Operational definition	Score calculation
Total Regular Public Grant	Mean PG Total Before	Mean annual total regular public grant during 2022-2024	(Total 2022 + Total 2023 + Total 2024)/3
	Mean PG Total After	Mean annual total regular public grant during 2025-2026	(Total 2025 + Total 2026)/2
Objective-Criteria Grant	Mean PG—Objective Criteria Before	Mean annual grant allocated according to objective criteria during 2022-2024	(Objective PG 2022 + Objective PG 2023 + Objective PG 2024)/3
	Mean PG—Objective Criteria After	Mean annual grant allocated according to objective criteria during 2025-2026	(Objective PG 2025 + Objective PG 2026)/2
Quality-Criteria Grant	Mean PG—Quality Criteria Before	Mean annual grant allocated according to quality criteria during 2022-2024	(Quality PG 2022 + Quality PG 2023 + Quality PG 2024)/3
	Mean PG—Quality Criteria After	Mean annual grant allocated according to quality criteria during 2025-2026	(Quality PG 2025 + Quality PG 2026)/2
Total Grant Change	Difference PG Total	Change of mean total regular public grant between the two periods	Mean PG Total After − Mean PG Total Before
Objective-Criteria Grant Change	Difference PG—Objective Criteria	Change of mean objective-criteria grant between the two periods	Mean PG—Objective Criteria After − Mean PG—Objective Criteria Before
Quality-Criteria Grant Change	Difference PG—Quality Criteria	Change of mean quality-criteria grant between the two periods	Mean PG—Quality Criteria After − Mean PG—Quality Criteria Before

Notes. PG = public grant. The period 2022-2024 corresponds to the allocation of 80% of the annual national funding envelope for the 23 HEIs through objective criteria and 20% through quality criteria. The period 2025-2026 corresponds to the 70% objective-30% quality weighting. Positive difference scores indicate higher mean funding during 2025-2026, whereas negative values indicate lower mean funding. All calculations were performed using the original amounts in euros. Funding amounts are measured on a continuous ratio scale, and change variables are expressed as signed differences in euros. The geographical category was used separately as a nominal grouping variable and was coded as 0 = Regional HEI and 1 = Central/Metropolitan HEI.

institution and funding component for two periods: 2022-2024 and 2025-2026. The use of annual means provided a common basis for comparison between periods of different durations. Three change indicators were then calculated as the difference between mean funding in 2025-2026 and mean funding in 2022-2024, corresponding to total, objective-based, and quality-based funding. Positive values represented funding growth during the second period, while negative values represented a reduction. Geographical comparisons report the mean allocation per institution within each category, together with dispersion and the difference between regional and central/metropolitan means. Institutional shares and their changes provide a complementary account of redistribution within the national funding envelope.

Means, standard deviations, absolute differences, percentage changes and standardized differences summarize the magnitude and direction of the observed patterns. Standard deviations retain the conventional denominator of n − 1 and serve as descriptive measures of dispersion. Geographical standardized differences were calculated by dividing the regional-minus-central/metropolitan mean difference

by the pooled within-group standard deviation. Standardized temporal changes were calculated by dividing the mean within-institution change by the standard deviation of those changes. These quantities describe the observed population and carry no sampling-based interpretation. Pearson correlations summarize linear associations between institutional funding measures, including the relationship between mean funding levels in the two periods. Correlations involving total funding and its components are interpreted considering their arithmetic relationship. Conclusions concern the observed institutions and years, while comparisons between the two weighting periods describe temporal changes without identifying a causal effect of the weighting revision (Field, 2024).

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Findings

Examining regular public funding at the aggregate level provides an initial overview of funding trends for Greek HEIs during 2022-2026. Analysis covers the total amount allocated annually to the 23 institutions for operating expenditure, together with its distribution between funding based on objective criteria and funding based on quality criteria. Annual changes and the cumulative change between the first and final years of the study period are also presented in Table 4. All monetary amounts reported below are expressed in millions of euros.

Total regular public funding increased from €104.89 in 2022 to €116.12 in 2023

Table 4. Aggregate development and percentage change of regular public grants, 2022-2026.

Funding component	Total regular public grant	Objective criteria	Quality criteria
2022 (€)	104,893,668	83,914,935	20,978,733
2023 (€)	116120000.10	92,896,000	23224000.10
Δ2022-2023	10.70%	10.70%	10.70%
2024 (€)	127,030,000	101,624,000	25,406,000
Δ2023-2024	9.40%	9.40%	9.40%
2025 (€)	127,030,000	88,921,000	38,109,000
Δ2024-2025	.00%	−12.50%	50.00%
2026 (€)	132,000,000	92,400,000	39,600,000
Δ2025-2026	3.91%	3.91%	3.91%
Δ2022-2026	25.84%	10.11%	88.76%

Notes. Monetary values are expressed in euros. Δ denotes the percentage change between the indicated years. During 2022-2024, 80% of the annual regular public grant was allocated according to objective criteria and 20% according to quality criteria. During 2025-2026, the corresponding weighting was 70% and 30%. Minor differences in decimal totals arise from the precision of the original allocation data.

(+10.70%) and €127.03 in 2024 (+9.40%). The same level of €127.03 was maintained in 2025, followed by an increase to €132.00 in 2026 (+3.91%). Across the full study period, total funding rose by €27.11, corresponding to a cumulative increase of 25.84% in appropriations for the operating expenditure of the 23 Greek HEIs.

Funding allocated according to objective criteria increased from €83.91 in 2022 to €92.90 in 2023 (+10.70%) and €101.62 in 2024 (+9.40%). The revision of the allocation weighting from 80% to 70% in 2025 was closed with a reduction to €88.92, equivalent to €12.70 or 12.50%. The amount subsequently increased to €92.40 in 2026 (+3.91%), resulting in an overall increase of €8.49, or 10.11%, between 2022 and 2026. Funding allocated according to quality criteria followed a stronger upward trajectory. It increased from €20.98 in 2022 to €23.22 in 2023 (+10.70%) and €25.41 in 2024 (+9.40%). Following the increase in its weighting from 20% to 30%, the quality component rose to €38.11 in 2025 (+50.00%) and €39.60 in 2026 (+3.91%). The cumulative increase over 2022-2026 reached €18.62, equivalent to 88.76%. The comparison between 2024 and 2025 captures the redistribution in funding composition particularly clearly. Total appropriations remained at €127.03, while funding based on objective criteria moved from €101.62 to €88.92 and funding based on quality criteria from €25.41 to €38.11. The corresponding €12.70 movement across the two components reflects a reallocation of the existing funding envelope toward quality-based criteria. Overall, the period 2022-2026 was characterized by a 25.84% expansion in total regular public funding and a pronounced strengthening of the quality-based component, which increased by 88.76%.

Analysis at the institutional level extends the aggregate assessment of funding trends by tracing the way in which available appropriations and criterion weightings were reflected across individual HEIs. The comparison between 2022 and 2026, while intermediate annual movements are incorporated where they contribute to the identification of distinctive institutional funding trajectories (**Table 5**).

Total regular public funding was higher in 2026 for 22 of the 23 HEIs, with substantial variation in the magnitude of change across institutions. The largest relative increases were recorded at Democritus University of Thrace (+84.19%), the University of the Peloponnese (+50.87%), the Hellenic Mediterranean University (+44.22%), Hakopian University (+40.76%), and the Ionian University (+40.35%). Four of these institutions belong to the regional category, indicating a pronounced concentration of the strongest funding gains among regional HEIs. Within the central/metropolitan group, notable increases were observed at Hakopian University, the University of Piraeus (+34.68%), the National Technical University of Athens (+31.87%), and the University of Macedonia (+30.62%). The International Hellenic University followed a distinct trajectory, with total funding declining by 12.94% over the period.

Funding allocated through objective criteria increased across 19 institutions, while reductions were recorded at the International Hellenic University, the

Table 5. Longitudinal development of regular public grants by HEI, 2022-2026.

HEI	Geographic category	Total PG 2022 (€ million)	Total PG 2026 (€ million)	ΔTotal PG (%)	ΔObjective PG (%)	ΔQuality PG (%)
AUTH	Central/Metropolitan	14.02	15.62	11.45	−1.31	49.31
AUA	Central/Metropolitan	2.45	3.17	29.52	11.32	124.90
DUTH	Regional	4.63	8.53	84.19	60.92	195.02
IHU	Regional	7.05	6.14	−12.94	−18.16	9.64
NKUA	Central/Metropolitan	12.87	16.19	25.82	11.79	61.28
NTUA	Central/Metropolitan	4.09	5.39	31.87	6.78	105.80
HMU	Regional	2.61	3.77	44.22	21.53	184.78
IU	Regional	1.92	2.69	40.35	19.82	205.38
AUEB	Central/Metropolitan	2.18	2.80	28.39	3.32	124.93
UAEGEAN	Regional	3.92	5.31	35.35	19.12	99.58
UNIWA	Central/Metropolitan	6.46	7.46	15.55	1.31	116.04
UOWM	Regional	4.12	5.62	36.50	16.55	181.00
UTH	Regional	7.24	9.88	36.45	17.48	133.40
UOI	Regional	5.30	7.29	37.67	12.72	171.75
UOC	Regional	4.29	5.31	23.75	9.88	64.84
UOM	Central/Metropolitan	1.82	2.38	30.62	18.21	75.28
UPATRAS	Regional	8.99	9.79	8.90	−2.74	50.97
UNIPI	Central/Metropolitan	2.20	2.96	34.68	19.85	106.58
UOP	Regional	3.72	5.61	50.87	29.86	211.60
PANTEION	Central/Metropolitan	2.07	2.16	4.51	−1.40	28.63
TUC	Regional	1.40	1.89	35.36	14.32	129.14
HUA	Central/Metropolitan	.83	1.17	40.76	16.86	141.42
ASPETE	Central/Metropolitan	.74	.88	18.31	6.62	165.72

Notes. Monetary amounts are expressed in millions of euros. Δ represents the percentage change between 2022 and 2026. Objective PG refers to the portion allocated according to objective criteria, while Quality PG refers to the portion allocated according to quality criteria. The complete annual funding amounts for 2022-2026 are presented in **Appendix A**. PG = public grant.

University of Patras, Panteion University, and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The quality-based component displayed a markedly stronger upward trajectory across the entire sample, with relative changes ranging from 9.64% at the International Hellenic University to 211.60% at the University of the Peloponnese. Several of the largest increases in quality-based funding were concentrated among regional institutions, while central/metropolitan HEIs also exhibited substantial gains. The emerging pattern points to heterogeneous institutional funding trajectories and provides an initial indication of spatial differentiation between regional and central/metropolitan HEIs. Interpretation of these changes requires consid-

eration of each institution's initial funding base, particularly where large relative increases originate from comparatively lower starting allocations. The inferential analyses that follow evaluate whether the observed institutional variation corresponds to a systematic geographical pattern across the two HEI categories.

Table 6 presents the main descriptive statistics for regular public funding allocated to the operating expenditure of the 23 Greek HEIs during 2022-2026. The analysis reports minimum and maximum allocations, arithmetic means, and standard deviations for total funding and its objective- and quality-based components. All monetary amounts reported below are expressed in millions of euros.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of annual regular public grant allocations, 2022-2026.

Panel A. Total regular public grant

Year	*N*	Minimum	Maximum	*M*	*SD*
2022	23	.74	14.02	4.56	3.54
2023	23	.81	15.04	5.05	3.78
2024	23	.95	15.61	5.52	4.02
2025	23	.87	15.73	5.52	4.10
2026	23	.88	16.19	5.74	4.12

Panel B. Public grant allocated according to objective criteria

Year	Weight	*N*	Minimum	Maximum	*M*	*SD*
2022	80%	23	.67	10.48	3.65	2.64
2023	80%	23	.75	11.44	4.04	2.86
2024	80%	23	.83	11.52	4.42	3.07
2025	70%	23	.74	10.18	3.87	2.67
2026	70%	23	.73	10.34	4.02	2.73

Panel C. Public grant allocated according to quality criteria

Year	Weight	*N*	Minimum	Maximum	*M*	*SD*
2022	20%	23	.05	3.65	.91	.95
2023	20%	23	.06	4.00	1.01	.99
2024	20%	23	.09	4.24	1.10	1.01
2025	30%	23	.13	5.79	1.66	1.48
2026	30%	23	.14	5.88	1.72	1.44

Notes. $N = 23$. HEIs. All monetary amounts are expressed in millions of euros. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. During 2022-2024, objective and quality criteria accounted for 80% and 20% of the annual regular public grant, respectively. From 2025 onward, the corresponding weights were 70% and 30%. HEI = Higher Education Institution.

Mean total regular public funding per HEI increased from 4.56 in 2022 ($SD = 3.54$) to 5.05 in 2023 ($SD = 3.78$) and 5.52 in 2024 ($SD = 4.02$). The mean remained

at 5.52 in 2025 (SD = 4.10) and reached 5.74 in 2026 (SD = 4.12). Across the study period, average funding therefore increased by 1.18 per institution, consistent with the rise in aggregate appropriations from 104.89 to 132.00. The range of institutional allocations also widened, from .74 - 14.02 in 2022 to .88 - 16.19 in 2026. Standard deviations between 3.54 and 4.12 reflect persistent dispersion in the distribution of regular public funding across HEIs.

The objective-based component followed a more moderate trajectory. During 2022-2024, when objective criteria accounted for 80% of the allocation, mean funding increased from 3.65 in 2022 (SD = 2.64) to 4.04 in 2023 (SD = 2.86) and 4.42 in 2024 (SD = 3.07). Following the revision of the weighting to 70%, the corresponding mean was 3.87 in 2025 (SD = 2.67) and 4.02 in 2026 (SD = 2.73). Accordingly, the 2026 mean remained above its 2022 level, while the highest value for this component was recorded in 2024. Institutional dispersion remained substantial throughout the period, with standard deviations ranging from 2.64 to 3.07.

A more pronounced development emerged in funding allocated according to quality criteria. Mean quality-based funding increased from .91 in 2022 (SD = .95) to 1.01 in 2023 (SD = .99) and 1.10 in 2024 (SD = 1.01). The increase in the weighting of quality criteria from 20% to 30% was accompanied by a rise in mean funding to 1.66 in 2025 (SD = 1.48) and 1.72 in 2026 (SD = 1.44). Between 2022 and 2026, the mean allocation increased by .81 per institution, while the observed range expanded from .05 - 3.65 to .14 - 5.88. The increase in the standard deviation from .95 to 1.44 indicates greater absolute dispersion in quality-based allocations as this component assumed a larger role within the overall funding structure.

Descriptive statistics identify two concurrent developments during 2022-2026. A gradual increase in mean regular public funding per HEI and a substantial strengthening of the quality-based component following the revision of allocation weights. The persistence of relatively large standard deviations across all funding categories also reflects marked heterogeneity in the scale of annual allocations among Greek HEIs.

4.2. Institutional Shares of Regular Public Funding

4.2.1. Methods Addition

Institutional shares were calculated to examine changes in the distribution of regular public funding after accounting for variation in the aggregate funding envelope. For each HEI and year, total funding was divided by the corresponding annual total for the 23 institutions. Separate shares were calculated within the objective-based and quality-based funding envelopes, using each component's aggregate allocation as the denominator. Annual shares were expressed as percentages, and changes were reported in percentage points. Period comparisons used the arithmetic mean of annual shares for 2022-2024 and 2025-2026, giving each year equal weight within its respective period. Geographical group shares were calculated by summing up the shares of the 11 central/metropolitan or 12 regional institutions.

Let F denote an institution's total allocation, O is its objective-based allocation, Q is its quality-based allocation, and N is the total funding envelope for the 23 HEIs. In the expressions below, i identifies the institution and t identifies the year. Component totals across all 23 HEIs carry only the year subscript. Institutional shares were defined as follows:

$$s_{it} = \frac{F_{it}}{N_t}, o_{it} = \frac{O_{it}}{O_t}, q_{it} = \frac{Q_{it}}{Q_t}$$

Changes in institutional funding were further decomposed using a sequential accounting comparison. First, the national envelope was changed from its initial to its final value while holding initial institutional shares constant. Second, the aggregate component weights were changed while retaining initial shares within the two components. Third, component shares were changed to their final observed values. The three terms sum exactly to the observed funding change, with the allocation of interaction terms determined by this sequence. This decomposition was applied to 2022-2026 and to the 2024-2025 transition.

In the expressions below, 0 and 1 denote the initial and final years, respectively, and w denotes the quality component's share of the aggregate envelope. Observed aggregate component weights were used to preserve the funding identity exactly, including small rounding differences in the recorded amounts. B measures budget expansion at unchanged initial shares, W measures the change associated arithmetically with component weights, and R measures redistribution within the components at final weights. W and R each sum to zero across the 23 institutions. Their sum expresses redistribution relative to a benchmark that preserves each institution's initial share of the total envelope.

$$B_i = \left(N_1 - N_0\right) s_{i0}$$

$$W_i = N_1 \left(w_1 - w_0\right)\left(q_{i0} - o_{i0}\right)$$

$$R_i = N_1 \left[\left(1 - w_1\right)\left(o_{i1} - o_{i0}\right) + w_1 \left(q_{i1} - q_{i0}\right)\right]$$

$$F_{i1} - F_{i0} = B_i + W_i + R_i$$

4.2.2. Institutional Redistribution of Regular Public Funding

Total regular public funding increased from €104.894 million in 2022 to €132.000 million in 2026, an increase of €27.106 million or 25.84%. Over the same period, 15 HEIs increased their share of the national funding envelope and eight recorded a reduction (Table 7). Seven institutions combined higher funding amounts with lower national shares: AUTH, NKUA, UNIWA, UOC, UPAT, PANTEION and ASPETE. For example, AUTH received an additional €1.605 million, while its share declined from 13.362% to 11.834%, a change of −1.528 percentage points. These results distinguish nominal funding growth from changes in the relative allocation of resources among institutions. The largest increase in total funding share was recorded by DUTH, from 4.414% in 2022 to 6.461% in 2026 (+2.047 percentage points). Further gains were recorded by UOP (+.705), UTH (+.582), UOI (+.474) and HMU (+.364). The largest declines occurred at IHU (−2.070

Table 7. Annual institutional shares of total regular public grants.

HEI	2022 (%)	2023 (%)	2024 (%)	2025 (%)	2026 (%)	Δ2022-2026 (pp)	ΔPeriod (pp)
AUTH	13.362	12.948	11.836	12.386	11.834	−1.528	−.605
AUA	2.334	2.326	2.322	2.591	2.402	+.068	+.169
DUTH	4.414	4.968	4.778	6.827	6.461	+2.047	+1.924
IHU	6.718	6.480	6.432	4.701	4.648	−2.070	−1.869
NKUA	12.270	11.842	12.286	12.365	12.268	−.002	+.184
NTUA	3.900	4.094	3.988	3.462	4.087	+.187	−.220
HMU	2.490	2.686	2.752	2.855	2.854	+.364	+.212
IU	1.826	1.942	1.996	1.957	2.037	+.211	+.075
AUEB	2.076	2.028	2.022	2.022	2.118	+.042	+.028
UAEGEAN	3.738	3.762	3.876	3.839	4.020	+.282	+.138
UNIWA	6.156	5.972	5.534	5.609	5.652	−.504	−.257
UOWM	3.924	3.878	4.104	4.148	4.256	+.332	+.233
UTH	6.906	7.386	7.288	7.582	7.488	+.582	+.342
UOI	5.048	5.146	5.380	5.014	5.522	+.474	+.077
UOC	4.088	4.094	4.272	4.087	4.020	−.068	−.098
UOM	1.738	1.778	1.882	1.823	1.804	+.066	+.014
UPAT	8.568	8.110	8.384	7.825	7.414	−1.154	−.734
UNIPI	2.094	2.130	2.150	2.110	2.241	+.147	+.051
UOP	3.546	3.760	3.964	4.017	4.251	+.705	+.377
PANTEION	1.972	1.784	1.782	1.642	1.638	−.334	−.206
TUC	1.332	1.346	1.370	1.567	1.433	+.101	+.151
HUA	.792	.840	.852	.888	.886	+.094	+.059
ASPETE	.708	.700	.750	.683	.666	−.042	−.045
All HEIs	**100.000**	**100.000**	**100.000**	**100.000**	**100.000**	**.000**	**.000**
Central/Metro	**47.402**	**46.442**	**45.404**	**45.581**	**45.596**	**−1.806**	**−.827**
Regional	**52.598**	**53.558**	**54.596**	**54.419**	**54.404**	**+1.806**	**+.827**

Notes. Annual shares are percentages of the total national envelope for the 23 HEIs. Δ2022-2026 = share in 2026 minus share in 2022. ΔPeriod = mean annual share in 2025-2026 minus mean annual share in 2022-2024. Changes are in percentage points (pp) and use unrounded shares. Central/Metro includes 11 institutions and Regional includes 12, retaining IHU in the regional group. Group rows sum institutional shares. Rounding may affect displayed totals. HEI abbreviations follow **Appendix A**.

percentage points), AUTH (−1.528), UPAT (−1.154) and UNIWA (−.504). NKUA's share remained close to its initial level, moving from 12.270% to 12.268%. Across geographical groups, the regional share rose from 52.598% to 54.404%, while the central/metropolitan share declined from 47.402% to 45.596%. The regional group's

mean annual share increased from 53.584% in 2022-2024 to 54.412% in 2025-2026, corresponding to +.827 percentage points when calculated from unrounded values.

Changes within the separate funding components clarify the redistribution underlying these aggregate patterns (Table 8 and Table 9). Regional HEIs increased their share of the objective-based envelope from 54.160% to 55.904%, a gain of

Table 8. Annual institutional shares of funding allocated according to objective criteria.

HEI	2022 (%)	2023 (%)	2024 (%)	2025 (%)	2026 (%)	Δ2022-2026 (pp)	ΔPeriod (pp)
AUTH	12.490	12.310	11.340	11.450	11.194	−1.296	−.725
AUA	2.450	2.340	2.370	2.570	2.477	+.027	+.137
DUTH	4.560	5.170	4.830	6.950	6.664	+2.104	+1.954
IHU	6.820	6.710	6.780	5.100	5.069	−1.751	−1.686
NKUA	10.990	10.500	11.190	11.150	11.158	+.168	+.261
NTUA	3.640	3.720	3.560	3.090	3.530	−.110	−.330
HMU	2.680	2.910	2.920	2.990	2.958	+.278	+.137
IU	2.030	2.070	2.110	2.140	2.209	+.179	+.105
AUEB	2.060	2.010	1.930	1.920	1.933	−.127	−.074
UAEGEAN	3.730	3.740	3.910	3.950	4.035	+.305	+.199
UNIWA	6.740	6.460	6.020	6.260	6.201	−.539	−.176
UOWM	4.310	4.270	4.410	4.670	4.562	+.252	+.286
UTH	7.220	7.640	7.470	7.660	7.703	+.483	+.238
UOI	5.320	5.220	5.420	5.080	5.446	+.126	−.057
UOC	3.820	3.910	4.100	3.910	3.812	−.008	−.082
UOM	1.700	1.760	1.850	1.820	1.825	+.125	+.052
UPAT	8.390	8.180	8.470	7.660	7.411	−.979	−.811
UNIPI	2.170	2.130	2.140	2.140	2.362	+.192	+.104
UOP	3.920	4.160	4.330	4.530	4.623	+.703	+.440
PANTEION	1.980	1.820	1.830	1.780	1.773	−.207	−.100
TUC	1.360	1.350	1.350	1.510	1.412	+.052	+.108
HUA	.800	.810	.820	.840	.849	+.049	+.035
ASPETE	.820	.810	.850	.830	.794	−.026	−.015
All HEIs	**100.000**	**100.000**	**100.000**	**100.000**	**100.000**	**.000**	**.000**
Central/Metro	**45.840**	**44.670**	**43.900**	**43.850**	**44.096**	**−1.744**	**−.830**
Regional	**54.160**	**55.330**	**56.100**	**56.150**	**55.904**	**+1.744**	**+.830**

Notes. Annual shares are percentages of the national objective-based envelope for the 23 HEIs. Δ2022-2026 = share in 2026 minus share in 2022. ΔPeriod = mean annual share in 2025-2026 minus mean annual share in 2022-2024. Changes are in percentage points (pp) and use unrounded shares.

Table 9. Annual institutional shares of funding allocated according to quality criteria.

HEI	2022 (%)	2023 (%)	2024 (%)	2025 (%)	2026 (%)	Δ2022-2026 (pp)	ΔPeriod (pp)
AUTH	16.850	15.500	13.820	14.570	13.328	−3.522	−1.441
AUA	1.870	2.270	2.130	2.640	2.228	+.358	+.344
DUTH	3.830	4.160	4.570	6.540	5.986	+2.156	+2.076
IHU	6.310	5.560	5.040	3.770	3.665	−2.645	−1.919
NKUA	17.390	17.210	16.670	15.200	14.858	−2.532	−2.061
NTUA	4.940	5.590	5.700	4.330	5.386	+.446	−.552
HMU	1.730	1.790	2.080	2.540	2.610	+.880	+.708
IU	1.010	1.430	1.540	1.530	1.634	+.624	+.255
AUEB	2.140	2.100	2.390	2.260	2.550	+.410	+.195
UAEGEAN	3.770	3.850	3.740	3.580	3.986	+.216	−.004
UNIWA	3.820	4.020	3.590	4.090	4.372	+.552	+.421
UOWM	2.380	2.310	2.880	2.930	3.543	+1.163	+.713
UTH	5.650	6.370	6.560	7.400	6.986	+1.336	+1.000
UOI	3.960	4.850	5.220	4.860	5.701	+1.741	+.604
UOC	5.160	4.830	4.960	4.500	4.506	−.654	−.480
UOM	1.890	1.850	2.010	1.830	1.755	−.135	−.124
UPAT	9.280	7.830	8.040	8.210	7.422	−1.858	−.567
UNIPI	1.790	2.130	2.190	2.040	1.959	+.169	−.037
UOP	2.050	2.160	2.500	2.820	3.384	+1.334	+.865
PANTEION	1.940	1.640	1.590	1.320	1.322	−.618	−.402
TUC	1.220	1.330	1.450	1.700	1.481	+.261	+.257
HUA	.760	.960	.980	1.000	.972	+.212	+.086
ASPETE	.260	.260	.350	.340	.366	+.106	+.063
All HEIs	**100.000**	**100.000**	**100.000**	**100.000**	**100.000**	**.000**	**.000**
Central/Metro	**53.650**	**53.530**	**51.420**	**49.620**	**49.096**	**−4.554**	**−3.509**
Regional	**46.350**	**46.470**	**48.580**	**50.380**	**50.904**	**+4.554**	**+3.509**

Notes. Annual shares are percentages of the national quality-based envelope for the 23 HEIs. Δ2022-2026 = share in 2026 minus share in 2022. ΔPeriod = mean annual share in 2025-2026 minus mean annual share in 2022-2024. Changes are percentage points (pp) and use unrounded shares.

1.744 percentage points. Their share of the quality-based envelope increased from 46.350% to 50.904%, a gain of 4.554 percentage points. At institutional level, DUTH's shares rose from 4.560% to 6.664% within the objective component and from 3.830% to 5.986% within the quality component. IHU's corresponding shares declined from 6.820% to 5.069% and from 6.310% to 3.665%. AUTH recorded declines from 12.490% to 11.194% in the objective component and from 16.850% to

13.328% in the quality component.

The accounting decomposition separates the contribution of national budget growth from changes in component weights and institutional component shares (Table 10). For AUTH, growth in the national envelope contributed €3.622 million

Table 10. Accounting decomposition of institutional funding changes during 2022-2026.

HEI	Observed change	Budget expansion B	Weight change W	Within-component redistribution R
AUTH	+1.6053	+3.6219	+.5755	−2.5922
AUA	+.7228	+.6327	−.0766	+.1667
DUTH	+3.8980	+1.1965	−.0964	+2.7979
IHU	−.9117	+1.8210	−.0673	−2.6653
NKUA	+3.3233	+3.3259	+.8448	−.8474
NTUA	+1.3037	+1.0571	+.1716	+.0750
HMU	+1.1549	+.6749	−.1254	+.6054
IU	+.7728	+.4950	−.1346	+.4125
AUEB	+.6183	+.5627	+.0106	+.0450
UAEGEAN	+1.3859	+1.0132	+.0053	+.3674
UNIWA	+1.0038	+1.6687	−.3854	−.2794
UOWM	+1.5023	+1.0637	−.2548	+.6934
UTH	+2.6401	+1.8720	−.2072	+.9753
UOI	+1.9947	+1.3683	−.1795	+.8059
UOC	+1.0186	+1.1081	+.1769	−.2664
UOM	+.5582	+.4711	+.0251	+.0620
UPAT	+.7996	+2.3225	+.1175	−1.6404
UNIPI	+.7618	+.5676	−.0502	+.2443
UOP	+1.8922	+.9612	−.2468	+1.1778
PANTEION	+.0933	+.5345	−.0053	−.4360
TUC	+.4940	+.3611	−.0185	+.1514
HUA	+.3386	+.2147	−.0053	+.1292
ASPETE	+.1359	+.1919	−.0739	+.0180
All HEIs	**+27.1063**	**+27.1063**	**.0000**	**.0000**
Central/Metro	**+10.4650**	**+12.8489**	**+1.0309**	**−3.4148**
Regional	**+16.6413**	**+14.2574**	**−1.0309**	**+3.4148**

Notes. Amounts are in € million. Observed change = $B + W + R$. The decomposition changes the national envelope first, aggregate component weights second, and institutional shares within the components third. All terms use unrounded amounts. $W + R$ expresses redistribution relative to unchanged initial shares of the total envelope. W and R each sum to zero across all HEIs. The comparison is an accounting attribution conditional on the stated sequence. Displayed values may differ slightly from their sums because of rounding.

and the change in weights contributed €.576 million, while redistribution within the components contributed −€2.592 million, yielding the observed increase of €1.605 million. For DUTH, the corresponding terms were €1.196 million, −€.096 million and €2.798 million, producing an overall increase of €3.898 million. For IHU, a budget contribution of €1.821 million was accompanied by −€.067 million from the change in weights and −€2.665 million from redistribution within the components, producing a decline of €.912 million. Across all institutions, the budget-expansion term summed to €27.106 million, while each redistribution term summed to zero. The observed increase in the aggregate budget therefore coexisted with distinct changes in the allocation received by individual institutions.

The 2024-2025 comparison provides a direct examination of redistribution under a constant national envelope of €127.030 million (Table 11). During this transition, €12.703 million moved from the objective-based component to the quality-based component as their aggregate weights changed from 80:20 to 70:30. Institutional funding changes consequently reflected the combined contribution of revised weights and changes in shares within each component. DUTH's total share increased by 2.049 percentage points and IHU's declined by 1.731 percentage points. For NKUA, the weighting term contributed €.696 million and the within-component term contributed −€.596 million, yielding a net increase of €.100 million. Regional HEIs' combined share moved from 54.596% to 54.419% during this transition, placing their longer-period increase alongside a small reduction in the year of the weighting revision.

Table 11. Accounting decomposition of institutional funding changes during 2024-2025.

HEI	Observed change	Budget expansion B	Weight change W	Within-component redistribution R
AUTH	+.6987	.0000	+.3150	+.3836
AUA	+.3417	.0000	−.0305	+.3722
DUTH	+2.6028	.0000	−.0330	+2.6359
IHU	−2.1989	.0000	−.2210	−1.9779
NKUA	+.1004	.0000	+.6961	−.5958
NTUA	−.6682	.0000	+.2718	−.9400
HMU	+.1308	.0000	−.1067	+.2375
IU	−.0495	.0000	−.0724	+.0229
AUEB	.0000	.0000	+.0584	−.0584
UAEGEAN	−.0470	.0000	−.0216	−.0254
UNIWA	+.0953	.0000	−.3087	+.4040
UOWM	+.0559	.0000	−.1944	+.2502
UTH	+.3735	.0000	−.1156	+.4891

Continued

UOI	−.4649	.0000	−.0254	−.4395
UOC	−.2350	.0000	+.1092	−.3443
UOM	−.0749	.0000	+.0203	−.0953
UPAT	−.7101	.0000	−.0546	−.6555
UNIPI	−.0508	.0000	+.0064	−.0572
UOP	+.0673	.0000	−.2325	+.2998
PANTEION	−.1778	.0000	−.0305	−.1474
TUC	+.2502	.0000	+.0127	+.2375
HUA	+.0457	.0000	+.0203	+.0254
ASPETE	−.0851	.0000	−.0635	−.0216
All HEIs	**.0000**	**.0000**	**.0000**	**.0000**
Central/Metro	**+.2248**	**.0000**	**+.9553**	**−.7304**
Regional	**−.2248**	**.0000**	**−.9553**	**+.7304**

Notes. Amounts are in € million. Observed change = $B + W + R$. The decomposition changes the national envelope first, aggregate component weights second, and institutional shares within the components third. All terms use unrounded amounts. $W + R$ expresses redistribution relative to unchanged initial shares of the total envelope. W and R each sum to zero across all HEIs. The comparison is an accounting attribution conditional on the stated sequence. Displayed values may differ slightly from their sums because of rounding.

4.3. Geographical and Temporal Comparisons

Regional HEIs recorded higher mean total allocations per institution in both periods (Table 12). The regional-minus-central/metropolitan difference increased from €.298 million in 2022-2024 to €.505 million in 2025-2026. Objective-based allocations followed the same geographical ordering, with differences of €.499 million and €.608 million, respectively. Quality-based allocations were

Table 12. Descriptive geographical differences in mean regular public grants between regional and central/metropolitan HEIs.

Public grants component and period	Regional HEIs, *M* (*SD*)	Central/Metropolitan HEIs, *M* (*SD*)	Mean difference	Standardized *d*
Total PG, 2022-2024	5.19 (2.43)	4.89 (4.99)	.298	.08
Total PG, 2025-2026	5.87 (2.56)	5.37 (5.46)	.505	.12
Objective-criteria PG, 2022-2024	4.27 (1.96)	3.78 (3.68)	.499	.17
Objective-criteria PG, 2025-2026	4.23 (1.79)	3.62 (3.51)	.608	.22
Quality-criteria PG, 2022-2024	.91 (.50)	1.11 (1.35)	−.201	−.20
Quality-criteria PG, 2025-2026	1.64 (.80)	1.74 (1.99)	−.103	−.07

Notes. Monetary amounts are expressed in € million. Regional HEIs: $N = 12$; central/metropolitan HEIs: $N = 11$. Differences are regional minus central/metropolitan. Standardized differences use the pooled within-group standard deviation and are interpreted descriptively.

higher among central/metropolitan HEIs, although the mean geographical difference narrowed from €.201 million to €.103 million. Absolute standardized differences ranged from .07 to .22, indicating that differences between category means were modest relative to within-category dispersion.

Mean total allocations increased by €.686 million among regional HEIs and €.479 million among central/metropolitan HEIs. The resulting difference in mean increases was €.207 million. Objective-based allocations declined in both categories, with mean reductions of €.041 million and €.151 million, respectively. Quality-based allocations increased by €.727 million among regional institutions and €.630 million among central/metropolitan institutions. These comparisons describe geographical differences in the observed changes, with considerable variation among institutions within each category (Table 13).

Across all 23 HEIs, mean annual total funding increased from €5.044 million to €5.631 million, corresponding to an increase of €.587 million, or 11.64%, between the two periods (Table 14). Mean objective-based funding declined by €.094 million, or 2.32%. Mean quality-based funding increased by €.681 million, or 67.46%. Descriptive correlations between period means were .981 for total funding, .980 for objective-based funding and .981 for quality-based funding, indicating strong linear continuity in institutional allocation levels. These temporal patterns reflect the combined evolution of the national envelope, component weights and institutional allocation shares examined in Section 4.1.

Table 13. Descriptive geographical differences in regular public funding changes, regional & central/metropolitan HEIs.

Funding change	Regional HEIs, *M* (*SD*)	Central/Metropolitan HEIs, *M* (*SD*)	Mean difference	Standardized difference, *d*
Total funding change	.686 (1.042)	.479 (.535)	.207	.25
Objective-criteria funding change	−.041 (.772)	−.151 (.280)	.109	.19
Quality-criteria funding change	.727 (.412)	.630 (.649)	.098	.18

Notes. N = 23. HEIs: 12 regional and 11 central/metropolitan. Monetary amounts are expressed in € million. Changes equal mean annual allocations for 2025-2026 minus those for 2022-2024. Geographical differences are regional minus central/metropolitan. Calculations use unrounded amounts.

Table 14. Comparisons of changes in mean regular public funding, 2022-2024 & 2025-2026.

Funding component	2022-2024, *M* (*SD*)	2025-2026, *M* (*SD*)	Mean paired Difference	Change (%)	Standardized change, d_z
Total regular public funding	5.044 (3.778)	5.631 (4.109)	−.587	11.64	.71
Objective-criteria funding	4.035 (2.852)	3.942 (2.699)	.094	−2.32	−.16
Quality-criteria funding	1.009 (.980)	1.689 (1.455)	−.681	67.46	1.29

Notes. Monetary amounts are expressed in € million. Changes equal 2025-2026 minus 2022-2024. Percentage changes compare the two-population period means. Standardized changes divide the mean within-institution change by its standard deviation and are interpreted descriptively.

4.4. Key Findings

Regular public funding for Greek HEIs followed an overall upward trajectory during 2022-2026, while the composition of funding shifted markedly toward quality-based allocation. Total funding increased by 25.84%, whereas the quality component rose by 88.76%. The shift between funding components became particularly visible between 2024 and 2025, when total appropriation remained unchanged and €12.70 million moved from the objective-based to the quality-based component.

Institutional funding levels were strongly correlated across the two periods. HEIs receiving larger allocations during 2022-2024 generally also received larger allocations during 2025-2026, as reflected in the strong correlations for total, objective-based, and quality-based funding (r = .980 - .981). Differences in mean funding levels and mean funding changes between regional and central/metropolitan HEIs were small in standardized terms. These descriptive comparisons address RQ1 and RQ2 for the observed institutions and periods.

The principal temporal change concerned quality-based funding. Mean total funding increased from €5.04 million in 2022-2024 to €5.63 million in 2025-2026 (standardized mean change (d^z = .71)). Mean quality-based funding increased from €1.01 million to €1.69 million (standardized mean change (d^z = 1.29)), while the objective-based component recorded a modest decrease. In relation to RQ3, these changes identify the expansion of quality-based funding as the main feature of the observed temporal pattern. Overall, the findings describe a funding system characterized by higher aggregate resources, strong positive correlations between institutional funding levels across the two periods, and a pronounced shift in funding composition toward quality-based criteria. These conclusions refer to the 23 HEIs and the 2022-2026 period covered by the study.

5. Discussion

Changes over time in regular public funding for Greek HEIs reflect a gradual increase in funding based on quality and achievements. Moving from weightings of 80% for objective criteria and 20% for quality criteria to 70% and 30% respectively, primarily altered the internal composition of funding, assigning greater financial weight to academic performance, research, internationalisation and institutions' engagement with society. This development forms part of the international shift towards mixed funding systems, in which core support for operating needs is combined with allocation mechanisms linked to outcomes and strategic objectives (Frølich et al., 2010; Jongbloed & Vossensteyn, 2001). Teixeira et al. (2022) argue that the spread of performance-based funding in European higher education is changing the relationships between funding, competition and institutional strategy. Funding indicators serve as administrative signals through which governments direct universities' priorities. Similarly, drawing on institutional theory, Morris et al. (2023) show that government funding decisions influence university policies, administrative decisions and organisational practices. From this perspective, the

increased weighting of quality criteria in Greece reflects a broader shift in public funding from financing inputs towards strategic incentives and accountability. This direction is also reflected in Vikas (2023), who presents the Greek quality component as a mechanism linking funding to continuous academic improvement and HEI performance. International research nevertheless emphasises that the substantive benefits of expanding performance-based funding depend on institutional design and consistent implementation. Tabatadze (2023) and Matveeva (2025) show that linking resources to performance indicators produces varying effects, depending on funding adequacy, the stability of criteria, organisational capacity and the duration of implementation. Similarly, Shin et al. (2024) find that the outcomes of these policies vary considerably across systems and institutions. Changes in funding weightings therefore primarily reflect a change in allocation design, while assessing their academic outcomes requires a longer time horizon. Relative stability in funding between the two periods examined suggests that the adjustment of weightings affected the composition of resources more than institutions' underlying rankings. Structural characteristics of HEIs, such as size, academic composition, the intensity of laboratory use and operating needs, continue to determine allocation to a considerable extent. This finding is consistent with the argument advanced by Madsen (2025) and Ortagus et al. (2023) that performance-based funding systems are incorporated into existing organisational structures and have uneven effects on institutions with different starting points and capacities to adapt. Greek experience thus indicates the consolidation of a funding model that places greater emphasis on evaluation while retaining strong elements of institutional continuity. Efthalitsidou et al. (2025) document differences in the ability of Greek HEIs to convert available resources into research outcomes, indicating the importance of institutional capacity. Changes in funding overtime therefore need to be assessed alongside actual indicators of academic quality, research efficiency and institutional sustainability. International experience with the revision or abandonment of similar policies reinforces the need for continuous evaluation of the funding model and its adjustment to the actual outcomes of implementation (Li & Hu, 2025; Ortagus et al., 2020).

Geographical comparisons showed a larger mean increase in total operating grants among regional HEIs than among central/metropolitan institutions. Between the two comparison periods, the respective increases were €.686 million and €.479 million per institution, producing a regional-minus-central difference of €.207 million. This difference corresponded to approximately .25 pooled standard deviations, while the standard deviations of institutional changes were €1.042 million and €.535 million in the two groups, respectively. Regional HEIs also increased their mean annual share of the funding envelope by .827 percentage points. Together, these findings document a shift towards the regional group at the aggregate level, alongside considerable variation in individual institutional trajectories. Interpretation concerns absolute allocations and institutional shares, which provide different information from funding relative to student numbers, staffing, in-

frastructure or operating costs. The comparisons therefore describe the geographical distribution of recorded allocations without establishing funding equivalence, the adequacy of resources or an independent effect of geographical location. International literature has documented that competitive funding, and excellence policies may concentrate resources in already strong university and regional structures. Koenig et al. (2017) associate funding for excellence with increased regional concentration, while Fitjar (2025) shows that more developed European regions often attract a larger share of public resources for research and development. This development may be explained by the mixed design of the Greek funding system. Allocation continues to rely primarily on objective criteria reflecting the structure and operating requirements of each HEI, limiting the capacity of performance indicators to serve as the sole mechanism for concentrating resources. Goldstein and Drucker (2006) note that the spatial role of universities is influenced by their size, distance from economic centres and the nature of their academic activities. Similarly, Teixeira et al. (2014) view the geographical structure of higher education as the outcome of long-term institutional, demographic and political processes. Marked heterogeneity among regional HEIs supports this interpretation. Within this category, institutions with particularly favourable funding trajectories were identified alongside others with considerably weaker trajectories. Misra and Pugh (2023) argue that universities in non-central regions differ according to their institutional capacity and the quality of their ties with the local environment. Similarly, Medina-Bueno et al. (2024) and Zenkienė and Leišytė (2024) emphasise the role of organisational capacity, leadership, strategic partnerships and participation in regional innovation ecosystems. Funding trends therefore need to be examined at the institutional level rather than exclusively through a binary centre-periphery distinction. Krieger (2024) documents that the regional effects of university funding programmes vary according to the type of support and the characteristics of the recipient region. Millward (2023) also emphasises the need to incorporate universities' social and regional missions into the design of funding incentives, so that national performance indicators can operate alongside objectives for spatial cohesion. Consequently, spatial trends in regular public funding for Greek HEIs are characterised more by institutional diversity than by a consistent pattern of funding advantage for either the centre or the periphery. Geographical category remains analytically useful, while a fuller assessment of distributive justice requires its consideration alongside each institution's size, geographical dispersion, infrastructure, human resources and regional mission.

Findings from the Greek case indicate that the recent reform of regular public funding primarily affected its evolution over time and internal composition through the increased weighting of quality criteria, without establishing a stable spatial pattern of advantage for either central/metropolitan or regional HEIs. This development is consistent with the multidimensional nature of the Greek allocation system, in which academic improvement, research activity, internationalisation, engagement with society and the quality of the university environment are gradually

incorporated into the funding process (Vikas, 2023). At the same time, persistent substantial differences among individual institutions suggest that geographical location alone cannot explain their funding trajectories, as factors such as size, academic profile, infrastructure, human resources and organisational capacity to use available resources also play a role. This observation is supported by recent findings on Greek universities, which document differences in their capacity to convert financial and human inputs into research outcomes (Efthalitsidou et al., 2025). Consequently, assessment of the Greek funding model needs to extend beyond comparing allocated amounts to examine their contribution to academic quality, research efficiency, institutional sustainability and the balanced development of HEIs.

6. Conclusion

Regular public grants for Greek HEIs during 2022-2026 increased in aggregate and shifted in composition towards the quality-based component. Comparisons of period means showed growth in total and quality-based allocations and a smaller decline in objective-based allocations. Regional HEIs recorded a larger average increase in total grants than central/metropolitan HEIs and an increase in their mean annual share of the funding envelope. These group-level changes coexisted with heterogeneous institutional trajectories and strong positive correlations between institutional funding levels across the two periods. The study's contribution lies in distinguishing changes in the national envelope and statutory component weights from redistribution among institutions, while documenting geographical differences within the observed population. Assessment of funding adequacy and distributive fairness additionally requires information on institutional scale, operating requirements and the costs associated with geographical dispersion.

These findings indicate the need to maintain a balance between funding that covers core operating requirements and funding linked to quality and achievements. Strengthening the quality component can provide an incentive for strategic development, but requires clear, stable and verifiable indicators to limit institutions' short-term adaptation to the requirements of the funding formula. Government bodies need to monitor not only resource allocation but also the extent to which resources are converted into academic quality, research output, internationalisation and social value. At the same time, the observed differences in average funding between geographical categories should be considered alongside the specific operating needs of regional HEIs and institutions operating across multiple locations. Funding design can be improved through more systematic consideration of the costs of geographical dispersion, infrastructure maintenance, distance from major urban centers and institutions' regional missions. For university administrations, the increased weighting of quality criteria requires the development of reliable information systems, internal evaluation mechanisms and multi-year strategic planning.

Future research should extend the time horizon of the analysis to assess whether

the 30% - 70% weighting scheme is maintained and what long-term effects it has on resource allocation and HEI performance. Incorporating additional years of data would allow temporary fluctuations to be distinguished from persistent funding trends and support the application of longitudinal econometric models. Spatial patterns could be examined through more detailed classifications that account for island regions, operation across multiple locations, distance from metropolitan centers, regional income and demographic dynamics. Funding could also be expressed per active student, department, staff member or unit of building floor area. Linking funding changes to actual outcome indicators, such as research efficiency, degree completion, internationalisation, graduate employment and universities' regional contribution, is also of particular interest.

Author Contributions

All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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Appendix A. Annual Regular Public Grants for the Operating Expenditure of Greek Higher Education Institutions, 2022-2026

Panel A. Total regular public grant for operating expenditure

HEI	Geographic category	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
AUTH	Central/Metropolitan	14,015,892	15035217.60	15035270.80	15733935.80	15,621,144
AUA	Central/Metropolitan	2,448,218	2700951.20	2949636.60	3291347.30	3,171,036
DUTH	Regional	4,630,008	5768841.60	6069493.40	8672338.10	8,527,992
IHU	Regional	7,046,757	7,524,576	8170569.60	5971680.30	6,135,096
NKUA	Central/Metropolitan	12,870,453	13750930.40	15606905.80	15707259.50	16,193,760
NTUA	Central/Metropolitan	4,090,853	4753952.80	5065956.40	4397778.60	5,394,576
HMU	Regional	2,611,852	3118983.20	3495865.60	3626706.50	3,766,752
IU	Regional	1,915,358	2255050.40	2535518.80	2485977.10	2,688,180
AUEB	Central/Metropolitan	2,177,593	2354913.60	2568546.60	2568546.60	2,795,892
UAEGEAN	Regional	3,920,925	4368434.40	4923682.80	4876681.70	5,306,796
UNIWA	Central/Metropolitan	6,457,255	6934686.40	7029840.20	7125112.70	7,461,036
UOWM	Regional	4,116,028	4503133.60	5213311.20	5269204.40	5,618,316
UTH	Regional	7,243,956	8576623.20	9257946.40	9631414.60	9,884,028
UOI	Regional	5,295,033	5975535.20	6,834,214	6369284.20	7,289,700
UOC	Regional	4,288,053	4753952.80	5426721.60	5191716.10	5,306,664
UOM	Central/Metropolitan	1,823,052	2064613.60	2390704.60	2315756.90	2,381,280
UPAT	Regional	8,987,289	9,417,332	10650195.20	9940097.50	9,786,876
UNIPI	Central/Metropolitan	2,196,473	2,473,356	2,731,145	2,680,333	2,958,252
UOP	Regional	3,719,529	4,366,112	5035469.20	5102795.10	5,611,716
PANTEION	Central/Metropolitan	2,068,503	2071580.80	2263674.60	2085832.60	2,161,764
TUC	Regional	1,397,184	1562975.20	1,740,311	1990560.10	1,891,164
HUA	Central/Metropolitan	830,757	975,408	1082295.60	1128026.40	1,169,388
ASPETE	Central/Metropolitan	742,647	812,840	952,725	867614.90	878,592
Total	—	**104,893,668**	**11,612,000**	**12,703,000**	**12,703,000**	**1,320,000**

Panel B. Grant allocated according to objective criteria

HEI	Geographic category	2022 (80%)	2023 (80%)	2024 (80%)	2025 (70%)	2026 (70%)
AUTH	Central/Metropolitan	10,480,975	11435497.60	11524161.60	10181454.50	10,343,256
AUA	Central/Metropolitan	2,055,916	2173766.40	2408488.80	2285269.70	2,288,748
DUTH	Regional	3,826,522	4802723.20	4908439.20	6180009.50	6,157,536
IHU	Regional	5,722,999	6233321.60	6890107.20	4,534,971	4,683,756
NKUA	Central/Metropolitan	9,222,251	9,754,080	11371725.60	9914691.50	10,309,992

Continued

NTUA	Central/Metropolitan	3,054,504	3455731.20	3617814.40	2747658.90	3,261,720
HMU	Regional	2,248,920	2703273.60	2967420.80	2658737.90	2,733,192
IU	Regional	1,703,473	1922947.20	2144266.40	1902909.40	2,041,116
AUEB	Central/Metropolitan	1,728,648	1867209.60	1961343.20	1707283.20	1,786,092
UAEGEAN	Regional	3,130,027	3474310.40	3973498.40	3512379.50	3,728,340
UNIWA	Central/Metropolitan	5,655,867	6001081.60	6117764.80	5566454.60	5,729,724
UOWM	Regional	3,616,734	3966659.20	4481618.40	4152610.70	4,215,288
UTH	Regional	6,058,658	7097254.40	7591312.80	6811348.60	7,117,572
UOI	Regional	4,464,275	4849171.20	5508020.80	4517186.80	5,032,104
UOC	Regional	3,205,550	3632233.60	4,166,584	3476811.10	3,522,288
UOM	Central/Metropolitan	1,426,554	1634969.60	1,880,044	1618362.20	1,686,300
UPAT	Regional	7,040,463	7598892.80	8607552.80	6811348.60	6,847,764
UNIPI	Central/Metropolitan	1,820,954	1978684.80	2174753.60	1902909.40	2,182,488
UOP	Regional	3,289,465	3864473.60	4400319.20	4028121.30	4,271,652
PANTEION	Central/Metropolitan	1,661,516	1690707.20	1859719.20	1582793.80	1,638,252
TUC	Regional	1,141,243	1,254,096	1,371,924	1342707.10	1,304,688
HUA	Central/Metropolitan	671,319	752457.60	833,316.80	746936.40	784,476
ASPETE	Central/Metropolitan	688,102	752457.60	863,804	738044.30	733,656
Total	—	**83,914,935**	**9,289,600**	**10,162,400**	**8,892,100**	**9,240,000**

Panel C. Grant allocated according to qualitative criteria

HEI	Geographic category	2022 (20%)	2023 (20%)	2024 (20%)	2025 (30%)	2026 (30%)
AUTH	Central/Metropolitan	3,534,917	3,599,720	3511109.20	5552481.30	5,277,888
AUA	Central/Metropolitan	392,302	527184.80	541147.80	1006077.60	882,288
DUTH	Regional	803,486	966118.40	1161054.2	2492328.60	2,370,456
IHU	Regional	1,323,758	1291254.40	1280462.4	1436709.30	1,451,340
NKUA	Central/Metropolitan	3,648,202	3996850.40	4235180.20	5,792,568	5,883,768
NTUA	Central/Metropolitan	1,036,349	1298221.60	1,448,142	1650119.70	2,132,856
HMU	Regional	362,932	415709.60	528444.80	967968.60	1,033,560
IU	Regional	211,885	332103.20	391252.40	583067.70	647,064
AUEB	Central/Metropolitan	448,945	487,704	607203.40	861263.40	1,009,800
UAEGEAN	Regional	790,898	894,124	950184.40	1364302.20	1,578,456
UNIWA	Central/Metropolitan	801,388	933604.80	912075.40	1558658.10	1,731,312
UOWM	Regional	499,294	536474.40	731692.80	1116593.70	1,403,028
UTH	Regional	1,185,298	1479368.80	1666633.60	2,820,066	2,766,456

Continued

UOI	Regional	830,758	1,126,364	1326193.20	1852097.40	2,257,596
UOC	Regional	1,082,503	1121719.20	1260137.60	1,714,905	1,784,376
UOM	Central/Metropolitan	396,498	429,644	510660.60	697394.70	694,980
UPAT	Regional	1,946,826	1818439.20	2042642.40	3128748.90	2,939,112
UNIPI	Central/Metropolitan	375,519	494671.20	556391.40	777423.60	775,764
UOP	Regional	430,064	501638.40	635,150	1074673.80	1,340,064
PANTEION	Central/Metropolitan	406,987	380873.60	403955.40	503038.80	523,512
TUC	Regional	255,941	308879.20	368,387	647,853	586,476
HUA	Central/Metropolitan	159,438	222950.40	248978.80	381,090	384,912
ASPETE	Central/Metropolitan	54,545	60382.40	88,921	129570.60	144,936
Total	—	**20,978,733**	**23224000.10**	**25,406,000**	**38,109,000**	**39,600,000**

Notes. For the empirical analysis, geographic category was coded as 1 = Central/Metropolitan HEI and 0 = Regional HEI. During 2022-2024, the annual allocation was weighted 80% according to objective criteria and 20% according to quality criteria. During 2025-2026, the corresponding weights were 70% and 30%. Amounts are reported to two decimal places using English-language number formatting. HEI = Higher Education Institution. **Abbreviations.** AUTH = Aristotle University of Thessaloniki; AUA = Agricultural University of Athens; DUTH = Democritus University of Thrace; IHU = International Hellenic University; NKUA = National and Kapodistrian University of Athens; NTUA = National Technical University of Athens; HMU = Hellenic Mediterranean University; IU = Ionian University; AUEB = Athens University of Economics and Business; UAEGEAN = University of the Aegean; UNIWA = University of West Attica; UOWM = University of Western Macedonia; UTH = University of Thessaly; UOI = University of Ioannina; UOC = University of Crete; UOM = University of Macedonia; UPAT = University of Patras; UNIPI = University of Piraeus; UOP = University of the Peloponnese; PANTEION = Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences; TUC = Technical University of Crete; HUA = Harokopio University of Athens; ASPETE = School of Pedagogical and Technological Education.

Appendix B. Source Register for Annual Regular Public Grant Allocations, 2022-2026

Financial year	Ministerial allocation decision	Diavgeia identifier—ADA	Direct Diavgeia link
2022	21360/ΓΔ2/24-02-2022	66ΜΦ46ΜΤΛΗ-ΑΚΜ	Decision for 2022
2023	27111/Β2/09-03-2023	98Η946ΜΤΛΗ-Γ6Ζ	Decision for 2023
2024	8854/Β2/26-01-2024	ΨΟ1Τ46ΝΚΠΔ-ΣΜΣ	Decision for 2024
2025	154544/Β2/24-12-2024	Ψ0ΚΑ46ΝΚΠΔ-216	Decision for 2025
2026	7058/Β2/22-01-2026	9ΑΛ646ΝΚΠΔ-7ΓΒ	Decision for 2026