



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



Εθνική Αρχή
Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης
Hellenic Authority
for Higher Education

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Αθήνα, 22/09/2023

Αρ. πρωτ.: 37290

ΑΠΟΦΑΣΗ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ

Το Συμβούλιο Αξιολόγησης και Πιστοποίησης της Εθνικής Αρχής Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης (ΕΘΑΑΕ)

Έχοντας υπόψη:

1. Τις διατάξεις του Ν. 4653/2020 (ΦΕΚ 12/Α'/24-01-2020) «Εθνική Αρχή Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης. Ειδικοί Λογαριασμοί Κονδυλίων Έρευνας Ανώτατων Εκπαιδευτικών Ιδρυμάτων, Ερευνητικών και Τεχνολογικών Φορέων και άλλες Διατάξεις», όπως ισχύει.
2. Την υπ' αριθμ. 18135/Ζ1/7-2-2020 Απόφαση της Υπουργού Παιδείας και Θρησκευμάτων (ΦΕΚ 94/τεύχος ΥΟΔΔ/7-2-2020), περί διορισμού του Προέδρου του Ανώτατου Συμβουλίου της Εθνικής Αρχής Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης (ΕΘΑΑΕ).
3. Την υπ' αριθμ. 15650/23-04-2020 Απόφαση του Προέδρου της ΕΘΑΑΕ (ΦΕΚ 329/τ.' ΥΟΔΔ/04-05-2020) «Ορισμός των μελών του Συμβουλίου Αξιολόγησης και Πιστοποίησης (ΣΑΠ) της Εθνικής Αρχής Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης (ΕΘΑΑΕ)».
4. Την υπ' αριθμ. 36659/02-08-2023 Έκθεση Πιστοποίησης της Επιτροπής Εξωτερικής Αξιολόγησης & Πιστοποίησης του ΠΜΣ Βιολογία της Αναπαραγωγής – Βιοδείκτες στη Μαιευτική και Γυναικολογία – Περιγεννητική Ιατρική του Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλίας.
5. Την 32η/14-09-2023 συνεδρίαση του Συμβουλίου Αξιολόγησης και Πιστοποίησης, θέμα 4 «Έγκριση εκθέσεων πιστοποίησης ΠΠΣ και ΠΜΣ – Χορήγηση πιστοποίησης».

ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΕΙ ΟΤΙ

το Πρόγραμμα Μεταπτυχιακών Σπουδών

**Βιολογία της Αναπαραγωγής – Βιοδείκτες στη Μαιευτική και Γυναικολογία –
Περιγεννητική Ιατρική του Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλίας**

συμμορφώνεται πλήρως με τις αρχές του Προτύπου Ποιότητας για την Πιστοποίηση των Προγραμμάτων Μεταπτυχιακών Σπουδών της ΕΘΑΑΕ και τις Αρχές και Κατευθυντήριες Οδηγίες για τη Διασφάλιση Ποιότητας στον Ευρωπαϊκό Χώρο Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης (ESG), για το επίπεδο σπουδών 7 του Εθνικού και Ευρωπαϊκού Πλαισίου Προσόντων.

Η διάρκεια ισχύος της πιστοποίησης ορίζεται για πέντε έτη, από 14-09-2023 έως 13-09-2028.

Ο Πρόεδρος της ΕΘΑΑΕ

Καθηγητής Περικλής Α. Μήτκας





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Accreditation Report
for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:
Biology of Reproduction – Biomarkers in Obstetrics and
Gynaecology – Perinatal Medicine

Department: Medicine
Institution: University of Thessaly
Date: 10 July 2023

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Postgraduate Study Programme of **Biology of Reproduction – Biomarkers in Obstetrics and Gynaecology – Perinatal Medicine** of the **University of Thessaly** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the postgraduate study programme of **Biology of Reproduction – Biomarkers in Obstetrics and Gynaecology – Perinatal Medicine** of the **University of Thessaly** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Prof. Efthimios Mitsiadis (Chair)**
Universität Zürich, Switzerland
- 2. Prof. Emeritus Nikolaos Venizelos**
School of Medical Sciences, Örebro University, Sweden
- 3. Prof. Panagiotis Karanis**
Uniklinik Köln, Universität zu Köln, Germany
- 4. Assoc. Prof. Stefanos Volianitis**
Aalborg University, Denmark
- 5. Mr. Sotirios Mavromatis (student)**
University of Patras, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) formed an external and independent panel of experts to assess the compliance of the study postgraduate programme of Biology of Reproduction – Biomarkers in Obstetrics and Gynaecology – Perinatal Medicine of the University of Thessaly (UTh) in accordance with the HAHE Quality Assurance requirements (laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020). The assessment was conducted through document reviews plus onsite and online interviews. The method used was an evidence-based process centred on a sampling of the Department's activities and it was aimed at evaluating the fulfilment of the HAHE requirements of the relevant Quality Standard of the Postgraduate Study Programme and commenting on its compliance, effectiveness, and applicability for the scope of the requirements. The information provided by the Department was assumed to be factually correct. The entire evaluation and accreditation exercise were carried out remotely using the Zoom platform.

On July 7, 2023 the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) received from HAHE the Accreditation support material from the HAHE Cloud Link <https://docs.ethaae.gr/s/msyj6oPmQKH3as4>, which contained the following:

1. Biology of Reproduction – Biomarkers in Obstetrics and Gynaecology – Perinatal Medicine of the University – University of Thessaly, consisting of the documents:
 - A0. Contents
 - A1. Proposal of Academic Accreditation
 - A2. Quality Policy of Postgraduate Study Programme
 - A3. Quality Objectives of the Academic Unit for the Postgraduate programmes
 - A4. Senate Decision on the Establishment of PSP
 - A5. Study Guide
 - A6. Course Outline
 - A7. List of names of teaching staff
 - A8. Report of the internal evaluation
 - A9. Evaluation from students
 - A10. Regulation on complaints handling
 - A11. Operating rules of the academic adviser institution
 - A12. Internal rules of procedure of PSP
 - A13. Research ethics regulations
 - A14. Study Regulations
 - A15. Diploma Annex
 - A16. Summary report on teaching staff allowances
 - A17. Data reports from the Integrated System National Quality Information System (NQIS) for all of the previous academic years
 - A18. External evaluation of the postgraduate programme
 - A19. Other documentation material

2. HAHE Material containing the following:

ACRONYMS

European Qualification Framework

M13A PMS Mapping Grid

Guidelines for Accreditation

Guidelines for the Members of the EAAP

Standards for Quality Accreditation of Postgraduate Study Programmes

Template Postgraduate Programme Accreditation Report

On Friday 7 July 2023, an orientation meeting via Zoom was organized by HAHE's Director General Dr. Christina Besta addressing the procedures to be followed during the virtual site visit and subsequent report drafting. During this meeting, a thorough presentation was made on the quality assurance (QA) mission and guidelines of the accreditation process were given.

In view of getting to know each other and establishing a *modus operandi* regarding the exercise of accreditation, the EEAP members met remotely on Monday 10 July 2023, from 15:00 to 16:00 (Athens time).

On the same day, the EEAP Review of the PSP study program started formally via Zoom at 16:00 (Athens time). In the first part of this virtual meeting (16:00-17:00), the Head of the Medicine Prof. T. Karachalios gave an overview of the School's and PSP's origins, evolution and current status. Thereafter different aspects of compliance with the accreditation principles (A1-A10) were presented by OMEA members A. Vasilaki (Assist. Prof of Pharmacology) and E. Alexopoulos (As. Prof of Pediatrics – Pediatric Pulmonology) with the presence and supporting data from MODIP representatives Prof. D. Bogdanos, Prof. N. Strimpakos, Ms. E. Tsironi, plus MODIP staff Ms. E. Delisizi and Mr. A. Rouvolis. Finally, the director of the Postgraduate study programme Prof. Alexandros Daponte, briefly presented the postgraduate programme to the EAAP. Finally, at 17:00 to 17:30 the EEAP members had an on-line tour of classrooms, lecture halls, libraries, research laboratories, clinics, and other facilities.

The following day, Tuesday July 11, 2023, from 15:00 to 16:00, the EEAP met with the teaching staff of the postgraduate study program, Prof. A. Daponte, Prof. D. Bogdanos, Prof. I. Grivea, Prof. S. Sotiriou, Prof. G. Anifandis, Prof. C. Messini, Prof. M. Samara, Prof. M. Satra, Prof. D. Papoutsis and Prof. G. Valasoulis to discuss about the professional development opportunities, mobility, the teaching methods etc. Later, at 16:00 the EEAP met with students of the PSP to discuss about their satisfaction and their study experience. At 17:30, the EEAP met with PSP graduates, M. Klimatsouda, I. Magaliou, C. Donoudis, S. Kriara, Dr. A. Ziogas, K. Zacharis, E. Papageorgiou and Mrs. E. Chrysafopoulou to discuss about their experience and their career path. After, at 18:30,

the EEAP met with employers and social partners of the PSP, T. Talaris, D. Papoutsis and I. Papoulidis. Finally, after debriefing among AP members in private, at 20:00 the EEAP had a closure meeting with the Director of the PSP A. Daponte, the Head of the Department, Prof. T. Karachalios, in presence of MODIP, OMEA members and the Steering Committee and discussed their major findings and recommendations.

During the following days (July 14 – 16 2023), the AP members had meeting for the completion of the draft of the Accreditation Report.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The postgraduate programme "Biology of Development - Biomarkers in Obstetrics and Gynaecology - Perinatal Medicine" of the Department of Medicine of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the University of Thessaly was re-established in the academic year 2018-2019. The aim of the MSc is to provide a high level of specialization, which includes both theoretical training and laboratory experience, as well as practice in conducting research in the fields of Reproductive Biology, Biomarkers in Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Perinatal Medicine to graduates of Medical, Biological, and other Schools of Health in order to achieve a successful professional career in the private and public sector. The curriculum is structured in two (2) academic semesters, which include twelve (12) courses, an internship, and a thesis. The minimum duration for completing the programme is 1 year (2 semesters). The total number of credits (ECTS) required for the award of the Diploma of Postgraduate Studies (M.Sc.) is sixty (60) ECTS.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Postgraduate Study Program (PSP) of the Department of Medicine of the School of Health Sciences (DM-SHS) of the University of Thessaly (UTh) entitled "Biology of Reproduction", for specialization and practice on Biology of Reproduction, of two 6-month duration runs at the Faculty of Medicine since 2004. It was re-established in 2018 under the title **Reproductive Biology, Biomarkers in Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Perinatal Medicine (RB-BOG-PM)** (Gazette of Reestablishment Issue B' 2552/02.07.2018)

The PSP RB-BOG-PM provides the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education:

- 1) *Subject, Purpose, and Learning Outcomes*
- 2) *Cognitive Objects and Specialization*
- 3) *Duration and Conditions for Obtaining a Master's Degree*
- 4) *Categories of Candidates in the PSP.*
- 5) *Tuition and Free Tuition of PSP*

<https://www.med.uth.gr/msc.rbb-obg/en/>

The minimum duration for the completion of the program is one year (2 semesters). The program includes 12 courses, practical training, and dissertation. In order to obtain the Postgraduate Diploma of Specialization, the students are required to:

- a) Compulsorily attend and be successfully examined in all courses (lectures and workshops) of totally 44 ECTS.
- b) Carry out a special practical laboratory practice in IVF of 8 ECTS
- c) Complete a postgraduate thesis of 8 ECTS.

Teaching facilities

The total number of credits (ECTS) required for the obtained of the Master of Science (MSc) degree is 60 ECTS. The language of the dissertation is Greek or English.

Under academic year 2022-2023 were selected 18 students for the PSP RB-BOG-PM. Today the PSP trains 16 active students and 190 graduate students.

The Department of Medicine of UTh presents to have a capacity of a total of 115 university teachers (56 professors, 28 associate professors, 30 assistant professors and one lecturer). 33 of these university teachers are actively involved in teaching at PSP RB-BOG-PM.

The lectures take place in lecture halls/rooms of the Department of Medicine of the University of Thessaly and in clinical subjects the lectures take place in lecture halls/rooms at the University Hospital of Larissa

The Institution and the Department provides support or counselling services to students.

The PSP RB-BOG-PM of department also offers an information program to students about “*Guides and Regulations 2022-23*”. It is clearly stated on the PSP RB-BOG-PM website in both Greek and English. <https://www.med.uth.gr/msc.rbb-obg/en/odigoi-kanonismoi/>

Quality Policy of the Department of Medicine for PSP RB-BOG-PM

The Quality Policy of the Department of Medicine for the PSP RB-BOG-PM is fully harmonized with the quality assurance policy of the Institution (Decision of the Rector's Council, meeting 168/12-10-2021) and the Quality Policy of the Department of Medicine of the School of Health Sciences for the Undergraduate Program Studies.

The Department of Medicine published and disseminated the PSP RB-BOG-PM policy, to all involved members, so that all academic and administrative staff as well as all students are

informed and take responsibility for quality assurance of PSP in accordance with their assigned role.

In particular, for the PSP RB-BOG-PM, The Department of Medicine is committed to offering its students high-quality education to advance knowledge and research in the areas related to the program's academic subjects. The offered PSP RB-BOG-PM is committed to fulfilling its educational and research purpose with codes of ethics that serve the needs of society and contribute to the formation of a free academic environment, to conduct high-level research, to guarantee that teachers are qualified at the highest possible level for teaching and research, and to seek to promote an academic culture through cooperation with educational and research institutions nationally and abroad.

The Department of Medicine is also committed to the implementation of the PSP's quality policy, which supports the academic profile and programme orientation. Establishes and implements controls, so that the quality objectives are met, determines the means, measures and ways to achieve them. The Department shall further apply the specified internal and external quality methods with the ultimate goal of continuously improving them.

A prerequisite for the implementation of the PSP quality policy is the implementation of quality procedures that ensure the following:

- 1) continuous improvement of the quality of the Study Program, the educational, research and administrative work
- 2) the appropriateness of the structure and organization of the PSP Curriculum
- 3) the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and National Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
- 4) the interconnection of teaching with research, integrating the needs of the labour market
- 5) the creation of a PSP Alumni Network to strengthen the profile of the Programs and their imprint on the Market and Society,
- 6) the promotion of the quality and efficiency of the teaching work,
- 7) highlighting the quality and quantity of the teachers' research work
- 8) the appropriateness of the teaching staff's qualifications
- 9) the provision of modern, quality and digitally developed services
- 10) the performance of the annual internal evaluation of the PSP, within the framework of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) with the cooperation of the OMEA of the Department of Medicine and the MODIP of the Institution.

The Quality Policy of the Department of Medicine for PSP of RB-BOG-PM is available on the website of the Department and on the website of the PSP

(<https://www.med.uth.gr/msc.rbb-obg/el/>), and is communicated to all involved parties (faculty, administrative staff, and students)

Research collaboration with external stakeholder

The Institution and the Department of Medicine, exhibit having established several research collaborations (which are linked to the PSP level), with the following external academic stakeholders:

- *Department of Medicine, University of Thrace*

- *Department of Medicine, University of Ioannina*
- *Department of Nursing, University of Western Macedonia*
- *Department of Medicine, University of Athens*
- *Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts General Hospital*
- *Department of Medicine, University of Thessaloniki*

I. Analysis

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

The PSP RB-BOG-PM provides clearly stated also on the PSP website in both Greek and English the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education <https://www.med.uth.gr/msc.rbb-obg/en/>

The QP statement of the Department of Medicine includes commitments that implement a quality policy in order to promote the academic profile, the orientation of the postgraduate study programme RB-BOG-PM, and the purpose and field of study.

The Department of Medicine of UTh demonstrates a good capacity of actively involved teachers with adequate qualifications for the PSP RB-BOG-PM.

Conclusions

The panel considers that the academic unit (Department of Medicine) fulfil the requirements and commitments required for the implementation of the adequate education quality policy in accordance with HAHEs regulation and is fully in line with the department's quality assurance policy and the quality objectives for postgraduate study programmes.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The panel encourages all staff involved - academic and administrative - in the department to continue to do their utmost to ensure the continued quality education provided in this PSP and to disseminate also to other similar PSPs of the institution.
- The panel recommends a description of the assurance of quality control and constant striving as necessary to maintain and improve the quality of education, since it is well known that the improvement of quality is a continuous process.
- The panel encourages further the faculty and the director of PSP RB-BOG-PM to extended more in-depth the PSP thesis. A Master's of Science thesis is usually 20-30 ECTS.

PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

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

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

In addition, the design of PSP must consider:

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP RB-BOG-PM was established by the 12097/12.06.2018 by Senate Decision. For its establishment, all the basic requirements of the standards defined in article 44 of Law 4485/2017 were followed by MODIP that ensure its quality. The Sustainability, Feasibility Report, the detailed report on logistical infrastructure, budget, and the documented recommendation of the Director of the Program to the competent bodies, the Assembly of the Department, the Postgraduate Studies Committee and the Senate of the University ensure the minimum conditions for its smooth operation. Scientists from the field of Health and Health professionals also contributed with their knowledge and experience, while the periodic Reviews of the PSP RB-BOG-PM take into account the experience of the labour market and the opinion of students and graduates.

The PSP is addressed to graduates of Departments of Medicine, and Health Sciences (Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, Midwifery, Nursing) of domestic or equivalent institutions abroad, as well as graduates of Departments of Schools of Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Biochemistry, Biotechnology, Molecular Biology, Pharmacy) and graduates of Technological Educational Institutes of a related subject.

The objective of PSP RB-BOG-PM is to provide a high level of specialization, which includes both theoretical training and laboratory experience, as well as practice in conducting research in the fields of Reproductive Biology, Biomarkers in Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Perinatal Medicine to graduates of Medical, Biological and other Health Schools, in order to successful professional careers in the private and public sectors. Graduates will be prepared for postgraduate studies at doctoral level.

The PSP RB-BOG-PM aims to better exploit the potential of graduates of the above-mentioned Schools and to promote the cooperation of Professors of clinical and key fields, through the co-supervision of postgraduate students of this program.

The PSP RB-BOG-PM can be considered innovative both in terms of content, since there is no corresponding specialization program in Greece, and the objectives, which, in addition to the conventional academic prestige of international scope, also focuses on eminently practical social issues such as the use of biomarkers in the application of precision medicine, in the prevention, diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of gynaecological and obstetric diseases.

Interconnection with society and labour market

The aim of the PSP RB-BOG-PM is that the postgraduate students to become familiar with laboratory techniques used for the measurement of Biomarkers in Obstetrics and Gynaecology but also to practice in all techniques of Assisted Reproduction as well as in Prenatal Testing, Genetic Counselling and Perinatal Medicine. Graduates will meet the needs of specialized personnel by creating their own careers in research institutes, private laboratories, pharmaceutical companies, teaching centres or Universities.

Expected Results

The successful operation of the PSP RB-BOG-PM is expected to retain competent scientists and potential future researchers in home country. The graduates of the program are expected to contribute to the improvement of health services and the development of the economy in the country.

The trainees will acquire special knowledge in a subject with multifaceted social implications and applications, which is estimated to contribute decisively to their immediate absorption by public and private health institutions.

The national economy in general from the reduction of student migration for postgraduate studies and the provision of appropriately trained scientific personnel for staffing fertility centres and prenatal and pre-implantation testing, biomarker measurement laboratories and perinatal medicine centres.

Programme Structure

The program includes 12 courses, practical training, and dissertation. In order to obtain the Postgraduate Diploma of Specialization, the students are required to:

- 1) Compulsorily attend and be successfully examined in all courses (lectures and workshops) of totally 44 ECTS.
- 2) Carry out a special practical laboratory practice in IVF of 8 ECTS
- 3) Complete a postgraduate thesis of 8 ECTS.

The Outlines of Course are designed in accordance with the requirements set by the single qualifications' framework (Appendix, Course Outlines), and are systematically updated and enriched according to the needs that arise.

Teaching is supported by highly specialized scientists in the field and health professionals who can transfer empirical data from their professional field.

II. Analysis

The Institution and the department workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) for level 7, to support student mobility between higher education institutions, as most of the countries in the European Higher Education Area. It is a central tool in the Bologna Process, which aims to make national education systems more comparable internationally.

Meeting with students and graduates (from different disciplines) of the PSP RB-BOG-PM, discussed their experience of their postgraduate studies and their career path, were expressed himself to be very satisfied from their study experience and Department / Institution facilities, student input in quality assurance and involvement in the programme.

The Panel found the that the PSP RB-BOG-PM are linking the teaching and research, by giving many students theme for their thesis work, and provide work experience to students.

III. Conclusions

The Department of medicine develop the PSPs following a defined procedure. The academic profile and orientation of the programme, the research character, the scientific objectives, specific subject areas, and specializations are well described.

The structure, content and organisation of courses, and the teaching methods are well oriented towards deepening knowledge and acquiring the corresponding skills of PSP (e.g., course on research methodology, participation in research projects, thesis with a research component etc.).

The expected learning outcomes are determined based on the European and National Qualifications Framework (EQF, NQF), and the Dublin Descriptors for level 7.

During the implementation of the programme, the degree of achievement of the expected learning outcomes and the feedback of the learning process are assessed with the appropriate tools.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The department and PSP need to make easily accessible to find the Institutional and the departmental strategy.
- For each learning outcome that is designed and made public, it is necessary that its evaluation criteria are also designed and made public.

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

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

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

The student-centred learning and teaching process

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

In addition

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The postgraduate programme "Biology of Reproduction - Biomarkers in Obstetrics and Gynaecology - Perinatal Medicine" is a two-academic semesters programme. It addresses mainly graduate students of medicine, nursing, midwifery or other

departments of the faculty of health sciences. In total its curriculum consists of 14 courses, one of which is the internship, and the dissertation, which are divided into the academic year (7 courses per semester). The internship takes place in the winter semester, while dissertation in the spring one.

The courses are mainly conducted through theoretical lectures, while it is worth mentioning that some of them contain laboratory exercises. The internship takes place in an obstetrics or gynaecology or IVF laboratory and helps to familiarise students with the daily routine of a laboratory or surgery. The thesis can either be research-associated or literature-based and the choice is up to the student.

According to the curriculum guide, the predominant method of course assessment is close questions, of the multiple-choice type. In some courses, however, students are examined with short-answer questions. The exams period is at the end of each semester and the degree of each course is mainly based on the performance in these final exams.

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

The teaching staff takes into account the diversity of the postgraduate students, who come from different Schools of Health and have different knowledge backgrounds. The lectures and their content are quite understandable to the student population, and the lecturers do not hesitate to solve any questions.

II. Analysis

The curriculum of this postgraduate course includes a wide range of courses covering current and topical issues in the field of Reproductive Biology, Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Perinatal Medicine. Consequently, the theoretical training of the students at the end of the Master's degree is quite satisfactory, since they will have expanded and specialised their knowledge in this field. As for the acquisition of practical experience, the curriculum includes various laboratory exercises in the context of specific courses, internship and thesis. Through the combination of all of these, following this Master's degree, the student may have gained a satisfactory degree of experience in both the professional and research areas of this particular field. At this point it is worth mentioning that the majority of the students are mainly from medical or nursing or midwifery schools, and this laboratory experience provided by the postgraduate programme is useful enough, as it prepares the students for the future.

Despite the heterogeneity of the students, who come from different departments and have different backgrounds, the comprehension of the courses is generally satisfactory. As the students stated, the teaching staff has adapted the content of their courses to this broad audience, and they are always available to respond to any questions and queries.

The courses' and teachers' evaluation system are widespread among students. It is noteworthy that 70-80% of students participate in the internal evaluation process

and express any dissatisfaction. In fact, student complaints arising from this internal evaluation are discussed among professors with the aim of improving the quality of the programme.

III. Conclusions

The curriculum of the postgraduate programme "Biology of Reproduction - Biomarkers in Obstetrics and Gynaecology - Perinatal Medicine" is mostly in line with the standards of the HAHE, as it is of high quality. Graduates are provided with strong knowledge and experience in both the professional and research fields.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- More assessments during the semester rather than just one at the end. More forms of assessment, except multiple choice. Any assignments during the semester that encourage critical thinking could be a good idea.
- Longer duration of the postgraduate thesis. Extend the length of study to 3 semesters, with the last one including mainly the thesis, without many courses, so that students can devote themselves fully to it.
- Encouragement for research thesis, as this would help to develop more contacts and relationships with other universities or institutes.
- Implementation of the academic advisor.

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

Student admission for the PSP BR-BOG-PM is restricted to 28 per year, with a mean number of 20 students/year. Eligible for admission are graduates of medical schools, biologists and allied health professions (nurses etc).

This PSP started its function in 2018 and offers the degree of “Biology of Reproduction – Biorhythms in Obstetrics and Genecology – Perinatal Medicine”. 35 members of this PSP are composed mainly by faculty members of the UTh and by invited recognised faculty from other Greek institutions or establishments. Candidates’ number is restricted upon a well-defined selection procedure. The selection of the applicants is based on the studies scores, recommendation letters, followed by candidates’ interviews by an established academic committee. These procedures are clearly described to the required supporting documents, which also contain information for the student rights and obligations, and ways allowing to monitor their progression. Research ethics regulation, regulation of studies, internship, mobility and student assignments are also provided. A web site with all this information exists, both in Greek and English versions.

There is a big ratio of non-medical graduates (e.g., nurses) who apply to the PSP. Similarly, the ration of women/men is excessively disbalanced. Many applicants have a part time / full time job, and they attend the PSP as an extra activity. This problem is tackled by having

some flexible attendance requirements. A hybrid method of teaching applies, live and remote, which is helpful. The proportion of medical graduates is good.

The duration of the PSP is one year (two semesters, 60 ETCS in total) with 12 courses and the practical laboratory exercise for the elaboration of the dissertation. Students are evaluated at the end of each semester. Students are also obliged to write a dissertation, which can be either research based or a literature survey. Usually, the students do not require more time to finish. Members of the PSP show understanding and flexibility for students that are actively working. The PSP requires student fees (3.000/year). The PSP diploma allows to the students to get a job in the public or private domain (research institutes, private laboratories, pharmaceutical companies etc) with specific requirements, or to further develop by acquiring a PhD degree.

There is excellent communication between the students and members of the PSP, who are constantly available in helping the students and provide the necessary information. Progress of the students of the PSP is followed closely by the faculty members.

For the graduation, literature-based knowledge is acquired, and practical training modules are available.

The meeting of the panel with current and past students of the PSP left a very positive impression of the utility of this PSP. All subjects were very enthusiastic and positive concerning their experience and knowledge received. Several past students are excelling abroad in the medical schools in Germany and Switzerland and indicated the big importance of this PSP. This also applies to other students or graduates working in different domains and places within Greece. Several current and past students requested more practical training courses. Concerning the quality and number of courses, students pointed out that courses are well-structured and easy to follow. Similarly, all students and faculty members emphasised that the PSP is rewarding, greatly helping to their development.

The mobility of the students is not satisfactory, even though Erasmus+ and other mobility platforms are available.

The degree certificate template is provided electronically to the students upon completion of PSP in both languages Greek and English.

II. Analysis

This PSP provides an important and interesting basis for further studies in the obstetrics/gynaecology/reproduction field. The PSP fulfils an important need for education and training of allied health professions, medical professionals and biologists.

The length of studies of this PSP is generally considered satisfactory from the panel. Reproduction and perinatal medicine are fields of big importance. The acquired knowledge is beneficial to the students and in general to the society.

The panel realised that students' mobility is not satisfactory. An effort should be produced to more actively use Erasmus+ and other existing mobility platforms within Greece or abroad.

Concerning the teaching mode for the PSP, the online teaching is less desirable in general for students requiring hand-on experience.

An issue is that many students of the PSP have full or part time jobs. This plays a significant role in the length of studies and the availability of the students when close interactions between students and faculty members are necessary.

The existence of a web page providing information in both Greek and English is a very positive sign.

III. Conclusions

This is a well-organized and designed PSP on the fields of Reproduction, Obstetrics, Gynecology and Perinatal Medicine. The length of the studies is satisfactory, as well as the practical training.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Invitation for lecturing to several word leaders in the field (from abroad or from Greece).
- The panel recommends the increase of the students' mobility via Erasmus+ or other similar platforms.
- The panel suggests the creation of a library of topics, where the candidates could choose their topic of interest. This library should be provided in the web page.
- Organisation of an informative day where the various stakeholders could explain the possibilities of mobility, job opportunities etc.

PRINCIPLE 5: TEACHING STAFF OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The faculty of the PSP consists of 35 members, most of them from the University of Thessaly (UTH) medical school, and a small number of additional members from hospitals, other institutions and private establishments within Greece. Information on faculty members' accomplishments was not individually provided during the meeting. However, information can be found in the web page of the UTh that shows the high quality and suitability of the faculty to participate in this PSP. The list of the teaching staff is provided. Individual performance of all staff members is also available.

Employment regulations and obligations of the teaching staff are clearly stated and provided in the corresponding official documents. There is a policy of staff support and development.

During the evaluation, the panel received very positive feedback about this PSP and the left with the impression that faculty members enjoy being part of the PSP. The panel was informed that the faculty meets regularly to discuss issues relating to the PSP, implement

the PSP and evaluate the students. It was clear to the panel members that there is a constant contact with the attending students during the course work.

Faculty advancement and career prospects based to the PSP are not very relevant, but staff participation in the PSP enhances their professional CV.

II. Analysis

The faculty body covers many aspects of these specific fields. There is a core group that administers the PSP.

III. Conclusions

The present PSP is a very important programme for the education and training of the students.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The panel recommends that all faculty of the PSP meet once per semester to discuss issues related to the aims, progress and problems of the programme.

PRINICPLE 6: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

According to the Internal Quality Assurance System of the University of Thessaly, each proposal for the Establishment of a Master's Program is submitted. 1. Detailed feasibility and viability report detailing the infrastructure that will be used to conduct the Courses; 2— certification by the President that the infrastructure is sufficiently adequate for the Master's Study Program; 3. The feasibility and viability report describes the administrative and other staff that will support the implementation of the PSP Study Program.

The EAAP has found that the Biology Reproduction-Biomarkers in Obstetrics and Gynaecology-Perinatal Medicine-(BR-BOG-PM) PSP at UTh is hosted in the Campus of the University Hospital of Larissa, Faculty of the Health Sciences, School of Medicine of the UTh. The Department has at its disposal auditoriums and classrooms for the delivery of courses, a library, and computer laboratories for teaching laboratory courses. The postgraduate students can be informed

about the services provided through the School of Medicine and the UTh websites. The teaching staff includes teaching and research faculty members of the School of Medicine of UTh as well as other universities, laboratory teaching staff of the School of Medicine of UoA, administrative staff of the Faculty of Medicine, and external collaborators who have undertaken teaching work in the BR-BOG-PM PSP. The BR-BOG-PM website (<https://masters.minedu.gov.gr/Masters/viewMaster/en/1613>) is available.

II. Analysis

Teaching spaces

The Program will operate in the facilities of the Department of Medicine of the University of Thessaly in one (1) building, with a total area of 25,254.38 sq. m. on a land area of 90,000 sq. m. and within the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Clinic and its Laboratories, which are also available for the operation of the Postgraduate Study Program. They will be covered by classrooms, seminars with modern equipment, and the laboratories mentioned above. Corresponding PSP has been operating successfully since the academic year 2006-2007 in the above premises.

For the operation of the PSP, the existing logistical infrastructure of the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Clinic (including the Assisted Reproduction Unit and its corresponding Department of the Mother-Child Laboratory) of the Department of Medicine at the University Hospital of Larissa and the School of Medicine of the UTh will be used.

The teaching needs of PSP classrooms will cover them, seminars with modern equipment, and the laboratories mentioned above. Corresponding PSP has been operating successfully since the academic year 2006-2007 in the above premises.

If the need arises, the courses-workshops of the PSP can take place in the premises of the new building of the School of Medicine of the UTh.

Digital tools through the IT department and the Information Center of the UTh.

In addition, all postgraduate students are allowed to have at their disposal modern systems provided by the IT Department and the University's Information Center.

These include:

- Electronic address, access to the University's network securely through a virtual connection (Virtual Private Network - VPN),
- Wireless network and Internet access
- Software Acquisition Office 365 SPSS Microsoft Azure (Formerly Imagine)
- Issuance of an academic identity card, which also functions as a "student pass", through the Electronic Service for Obtaining an Academic Identity Card.
- Student care services free meals, using the codes of their institutional account through the Kapodistrian University of Athens online platform (<https://merimna.uth.gr>).

Library

At the disposal of postgraduate students is the fully equipped Library, which provides all the services of a modern university library (constantly growing collection of various information materials, some of which are also available in electronic form, access to electronic catalogues and information sources, borrowing, lending, support for people with disabilities, information support and training through seminars aimed at first-year postgraduate students to acquire skills in using resources and services, study rooms, plagiarism prevention services) (Appendix A14.5)

Human resources

According to the Founding Official Gazette, a provision has been made for how the PSP covers administrative and technical needs. Depending on the requirements that arise, the PSP Coordinating Committee can recommend recruiting staff. Approval by the Departmental Assembly and all the prescribed procedures outlined in the Special Funds and Research Account Management Guide is required.

Other supporting or advisory services and Structures

- Access
- Informative material for students
- Social Networks
- PSP website
- Institution of the Academic Advisor
- Institution of the Student's advocate
- PSP committees as defined in the PSP Internal Regulations

III. Conclusions

Overall, the infrastructure and services offered by the BR-BOG-PM PSP are considered adequate. The postgraduate students are mainly informed about the provided facilities via the School of Medicine and UTh websites. Completing the construction and the regular update of the PSP's website could substantially contribute towards the success of the PSP. The teaching staff is considered adequate to conduct the educational process. The tuition utilization plan appears effective. However, it does not include any provision for PSP scholarship funding. It is particularly encouraging to offer further sources of financing. Overall, an essential PSP training in Reproduction Biology and Perinatal Medicine.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Improve the construction of the BR-BOG-PM PSP Greek and English website and update it regularly so that current or new substantially interested national and international students can be quickly and efficiently informed about the services offered by the PSP.
- Re-evaluate the number of teaching staff members participating in the PSP.
- Include further scholarship funding in the tuition utilization plan or clarify the source of this funding.

PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The competent body for the administration and management of the Foundation's internal quality assurance system is the Quality Assurance Unit (QAQ). At the level of the Academic Unit, the OMEA of the Department is responsible for implementing procedures for collecting, processing and quality assessment and processing of the data collected. OMEA, in the context of the Internal Evaluation Report it carries out annually, collects data for both Undergraduate and Postgraduate Study Programs. The Department's Annual Evaluation Report includes data such as key performance indicators, the profile of the student population, the course of study, success, and dropout rates. The Greek designed website of the BR-BOG-PM PSP is available in <https://www.med.uth.gr/msc.rbb-obg/el/>.

II. Analysis

The procedure is defined by the MODIP of the Foundation and is implemented at the Academic Unit level by the OMEA of the Department of Medicine.

A. Internal Evaluation Process

The procedure followed is as follows:

1. Data collection through the MODIP information system data transfer to the PSP information system
2. Data processing and analysis by the OMEA of the Department
3. Compilation of the Annual Evaluation Report of the School of Medicine - Evaluation of teaching and research work
4. Approval by the Department Assembly
5. Transmission of the Report to the MODIP of the Foundation
6. Sending by MODIP of the "Quality Indicator Reports" from ETHAAE to the Department
7. Consultation with the Assembly and the relevant Committees: OMEA, Coordinating Committee of each Master and Strategic Planning Committee of the Department.

A. Teacher evaluation process by students - Student participation (Appendix A9)

At the end of each teaching period or the end of the semester (depending on the structure of the BR-BOG-PM PSP Program), the students are invited through an electronic application developed by MODIP of the University of Thessaly to evaluate the courses/teaching units that have been taught.

More specifically, postgraduate students receive, in their Institutional account, a unique automated message, relevant instructions along with disposable links and unique codes for each course/teaching unit of the semester they attend, where they are asked to fill anonymously and remotely a relevant questionnaire.

The questionnaire is structured in the following sections (Teacher Course, Workshop and free field for developing comments).

The anonymity of the participants in the evaluation is fully guaranteed by MODIP and the relevant assurance is provided, as no identification data is kept and at the end of the process any correlation data is deleted.

To raise the awareness of Postgraduate students and to ensure their participation as much as possible, MODIP, when informing the Secretariats of the PSP, has a standardized, informative message with which it requests the Secretariats:

--To inform their Master's students about the procedure that will follow while urging them to participate and not to ignore the message they will receive.

- To make them aware by using all the means of communication at their disposal (e-class, Facebook, announcement on the website, personal touch) about the value of their participation in these procedures as their involvement contributes to improving the Quality of the services provided studies.

-To inform the course leader so that he, in turn, makes the fellow teachers aware of the procedure, since, if the teachers do not belong to the staff of the Institution and are external collaborators, they may not be familiar or aware of the procedure.

In addition, students upon completion of the course, submit an anonymous completed questionnaire to the Program Secretariat regarding the content of each class, the way it is taught and examined by the teacher, comments for its improvement and its evaluation with a given scale. The Coordinating Committee has drawn up these questionnaires, and the result of their processing is delivered to the lecturers for their improvement, independently and in addition to the provisions of the current regulations of the UTh.

Tools for data collection and analysis

The following tools are used to collect the data:

- MODIP information system
- Information system for the evaluation of the Courses by the students
- PSP information system, the ETHAAE information system from where the QUALITY INDICATORS REPORT is extracted
- Secretariat system-student log
- Ms teams (For student satisfaction research, for teaching material posting)
- E class for the Structure and Organization of the Course for posting teaching material
- Library Data Partial bibliometric data is given

III. Conclusions

Critical education and training of PSP students in reproduction and perinatal medicine related to modern medicine and molecular life sciences. Therefore, the offered PSP of BR-BOG-PM is an achievement of the faculty for graduate students, postdocs and senior staff to update their skills and competencies. From an academic point of view, increased awareness concerning research ethics and integrity is recommended. Information Management is the first and crucial step in the quality assurance process. Information management is essential to promote specific PSPs with clinical relevance.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Continue providing guides and information transparently and concisely in reproduction and perinatal medicine.
- Refrain from overloading all participants with unnecessary information; revise, re-check and update the systems in a simplified form.
- Update and upgrade regularly the English website.
- Promote further clinical education on reproduction and perinatal medicine to prevent and treat hereditary abnormalities at the preimplantation stage. Promote clinical education on the development of the foetus and the mother-child relation to ensure a healthy pregnancy and its related outcomes.

PRINCIPLE 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

Key information regarding the academic unit and the PSP (i.e., structure, mode of attendance, criteria for assessment, degree awarded, teaching staff's CVs) are available online. Specifically, the PSP Website, which is a dedicated segment in the Department's website, is the official medium where all visitors can be informed about the Programme.

The website contains structural (course outlines, learning outcomes, teachers, and their biographies), current (training seminars, events and activities), administrative (all forms required for various students' applications throughout their study), and referring information (links to other relevant and useful websites).

The academic unit's Policy for Quality Assurance is also available online.

A webmaster is appointed annually to manage and update the current activities content of the website. Course Outlines, teachers, etc. are updated on an annual basis before the start of each academic year.

The PSP website is another way of communicating with students, but mainly PSP graduates, as they are given the opportunity to be informed about events, educational seminars, and other activities.

II. Analysis

The information available online satisfies the requirements of Principle 8.

III. Conclusions

The institution publishes extensive information in a direct and accessible way.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

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

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

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

The above comprise the evaluation of:

- a) the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the PSP is up to date*
 - b) the changing needs of society*
 - c) the students' workload, progression and completion of the postgraduate studies*
 - d) the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students*
 - e) the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
 - f) the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the PSP in question*
- Postgraduate study programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date.*

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP in Reproductive Biology - Biomarkers in Obstetrics and Gynaecology - Perinatal Medicine has in place an Internal Quality Assurance System that audits and reviews the program on an Annual basis.

Specifically, the system consists of two parts:

- a. Regular internal review with the participation of students and other interested parties and
- b. Procedures for restructuring/updating/adjusting the PSP, as/when required.

A. Periodic Review Process

At the end of each academic year, the PSP Coordinating Committee:

- a. Evaluates the teaching and educational activities implemented.

b. Plans accordingly the adjustment of the educational and teaching related activities as required.

The decisions of the Coordinating Committee are forwarded to the Assembly of the School of Medicine for approval.

At the Institution level, MODIP monitors and utilizes the collected PSP data in order to reshape/adjust the Institution's strategic planning for the PSP.

B. Adjustment Process

If structural and structural changes are required in the PSP (for example, change of Courses, inclusion of Internship, change in the number of admitted students) then the PMS is reformed.

II. Analysis

The requirements of Principle 9 are satisfied.

III. Conclusions

Full compliance with Principle 9

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

PRINCIPLE 10: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

The postgraduate programme "Biology of Development - Biomarkers in Obstetrics and Gynaecology - Perinatal Medicine" has not been previously subjected to any external evaluation and accreditation process. The faculty members were forthcoming in conducting the accreditation process, as they answered the committee's numerous questions and provided the necessary paperwork. It is worth mentioning that all professors present in the process, as well as the postgraduate program's director, seemed to recognize the importance of accreditation and its contribution to the improvement of the postgraduate programme's quality. They were all very enthusiastic and respectful to the recommendations made by the panel.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The AP has no further recommendations in this principle.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- The present PSP is a very important programme for the education and training of the students.
- There is a functional, well-structured, and very informative web page. This web page exists in the English version.
- Existence of questionnaires about Staff performance.
- Follow up of the students' progression.
- Faculty highly respected/recognized in the field.
- Rate of student satisfaction high.
- Enthusiastic faculty.
- High interaction between students and faculty.

II. Areas of Weakness

- Only one semester for the preparation of the dissertation and only one method of course evaluation by the teaching staff.
- Low students' and faculty mobility.
- Library of topics does not exist.
- Several topics that could impact on this PSP are neglected (e.g., stem cells related).
- Many students with partial/full-time jobs affecting the functioning of the PSP.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Extension of the total number of semesters to 3 and incorporation of more methods of assessment, such as assignments during the semester.
- Extension more in-depth the PSP thesis. A Master's of Science thesis is usually 20-30 ECTS.
- On site courses for the majority of the students. Only 20-30% of the courses could be offered online.
- All faculty of the PSP should meet each semester to discuss issues related to the aims, progress and problems of the programme.
- Invite several eminent persons in the field (from abroad or from Greece) for lecturing.
- Increase of the students' mobility via Erasmus+ or other similar platforms.
- Creation of a library of research topics, where the candidates could choose their topic of interest. This library should be provided in the web page.
- Introduce several new topics of interest (e.g., stem cells).
- Organisation of an informative day where the various stakeholders could explain the possibilities of mobility, job opportunities etc.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **3 and 4.**

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

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

1. **Prof. Efthimios Mitsiadis** (Chair)
Universität Zürich, Switzerland
2. **Prof. Emeritus Nikolaos Venizelos**
School of Medical Sciences, Örebro University, Sweden
3. **Prof. Panagiotis Karanis**
Uniklinik Köln, Universität zu Köln, Germany
4. **Assoc. Prof. Stefanos Volianitis**
Aalborg University, Denmark
5. **Mr. Sotirios Mavromatis** (student)
University of Patras, Greece