



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



Εθνική Αρχή
Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης
Hellenic Authority
for Higher Education

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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. 36681/04-08-2023 Έκθεση Πιστοποίησης της Επιτροπής Εξωτερικής Αξιολόγησης & Πιστοποίησης του ΠΜΣ Γενετική του Ανθρώπου – Γενετική Συμβουλευτική 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

Γενετική του Ανθρώπου – Γενετική Συμβουλευτική του Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλίας

συμμορφώνεται ικανοποιητικά 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:**

Human Genetics – Genetics Counselling

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 **Human Genetics – Genetics Counselling** 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 **Human Genetics – Genetics Counselling** 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 Human Genetics – Genetics Counselling 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 was 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. Human Genetics – Genetics Counselling – 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. Aspasia Tsezou, 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.

On Wednesday, 12 July 2023, from 15:00 to 16:00, the EEAP met with the teaching staff of the postgraduate study program, Assist. Prof. I. Papathanasiou, Prof. K. Dimas, Prof. Ch. Balis, Prof. M. Tzetis, Prof. G. Samolada and Prof. G. Karadima 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, L. Anastasopoulou, V. Konteles, A. Goutas, G. Vogiatzi, A. Papapostolou, P. Chatzopoulou and V. Zoubourtikoudi to discuss about their experience and their career path. After, at 18:30, the EEAP met with employers and social partners of the PSP, F. Lina. Finally, after

debriefing among AP member s in private, at 20:00 the EEAP had a closure meeting with the Director of the PSP Prof. A. Tsezou, 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 Program of Studies of the Department of Medicine of the University of Thessaly "Human Genetics - Genetic Counselling" has been re-established in the academic year 2018-2019. It aims to provide high-level education and specialization in the constantly evolving field of Human Genetics, as well as the acquisition of expertise in the diagnosis of genetic diseases. The programme, after evaluation, admits graduates of the national or recognized higher education institutions of foreign countries, graduates of the Faculties of Medicine, Life Sciences, Natural Sciences and graduates of former TEI Departments of related cognitive subject. The duration of the MSc is one year (two semesters and includes the compulsory conduction of a thesis. The courses correspond to sixty (60) credit hours (ECTS). The PSP awards a Diploma of Postgraduate Studies (M.Sc.) with the title: "Human Genetics - Genetic Counselling" (MSc in Human Genetics - Genetic Counselling).

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Postgraduate Study Program (PSP) of the Department of Medicine of the School of Health Sciences (DM-SHS), University of Thessaly (UTH) entitled "Human Genetics-Genetic Counselling (HG-GC)", of two 6-month duration runs at the School of Medicine.

The PSP HG-GC was founded in 2013 and it was first operated in 2013-2014. In 2018, took place the re-establishment of the Postgraduate Programs, therefore the Senate of the University of Thessaly approved the internal regulation of the PSP (Government Gazette No. F.3531 / τ Β' / 21/8/2018).

The scientific field in which PSP HG-GC specializes concerns Human Genetics and its purpose is to provide a high level of specialization and practice in conducting research in Human Genetics, so that the graduates acquire a strong scientific background, experience and know-how in modern issues of Genetics, aiming at a successful professional career in the private sector, public and academic sector.

The main objectives of the curriculum are the following:

- *Provision of high-level postgraduate studies*
- *Providing knowledge on modern developments in Human Genetics*
- *Development of technological and methodological approaches for the study of human genetic diseases*
- *Knowledge provision in the field of Genetic Counselling*
- *Creating scientists with the required skills for successful careers in the private, public and academic sectors*
- *Preparation for postgraduate studies at doctoral level.*

The subject of the courses is rationally distributed and is in accordance with what is provided by the ECTS system, as the PSP HG-GC is one academic year of full-time study of 60 ECTS credits (attendance of lectures & workshop, assignments, and one individual essay).

Teaching facilities

The total number of credits (ECTS) required for the obtained of the Master of Science (MSc) degree is 60 ECTS. Under academic year 2022-2023 were selected 12 students for the PSP HG-GC. The annual intakes capacity is a maximum of 28 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). The PSP HG-GC shows that 21 university teachers are involved in teaching at PSP HG-GC.

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.

Quality Policy of the Department of Medicine for Postgraduate Study Program

The Quality Policy of the Department of Medicine for the PSP HG-GC is 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 basic principles governing the Quality Policy of the Department of Medicine (as published in website of the Department) and with which the Quality Policy of the PSP HG-GC is harmonized are:

- *the provision of education at higher education level*
- *dedication to the progress of science and the transmission of knowledge*
- *to defend academic freedom in teaching and research*
- *the protection of free expression and the circulation of ideas*
- *the academic integration of students*
- *the creation and maintenance of infrastructures that will promote teaching*

and research process

- the emphasis on objects that have been identified as cutting-edge objects*
- the promotion of interdisciplinarity.*
- commitment to meritocratic selection and development procedures for all staff*
- support the extroversion of teachers, students, and administrators*
- interaction with institutions and society*

Implementation of the policy

The PSP HG-GC is committed to offer the students high quality education and to promote knowledge and research in the areas related to its subjects.

The PSP HG-GC is committed to fulfilling the educational and research purpose with ethical rules that serve the needs of society and contribute to the formation of a free academic environment, the conduct of high-level research, the assurance that the teaching staff has the highest possible level for teaching and research as well as the formation of a culture of collaborations with educational and research institutions domestic and foreign.

The PSP HG-GC of the Department of Medicine is committed to the implementation of a quality policy, which supports the academic profile and orientation of its Curriculum, sets, implements and monitors of quality goals, determines the means, actions, and the ways of achieving them, and to applies the appropriate internal and external quality procedures with the ultimate goal of continuous improvement.

The implementation of quality procedures shall ensure:

- 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.*

To maintain the level of educational provision and maintain a supportive and effective learning environment for students the PSP HG-GC follows procedures that ensure its quality operation as:

- a) regular periodic review with the participation of students and other stakeholders and*
- b) procedures for reforming the Curriculum, where required.*

The Quality Policy of the School of Medicine for PSP HG-GC is available on the website of the Department and on the website of the PSP HG-GC, and is communicated to all involved

partners (faculty members, administrative staff, students and stakeholders)

<http://www.med.uth.gr/pmsgenetiki/>.

II. Analysis

The Quality assurance policy of the academic unit shows to be in line with the quality assurance policy of the Institution and is formulated in the form of a public statement, focused on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study programmes offered by the academic unit.

The PSP HG-GC provides on website the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications but only in Greek.

Is not accessible if the academic unit has established research collaborations particularly linked to PSP HG-GC level with external academic stakeholder.

III. Conclusions

The panel considered that the academic unit (Department of Medicine) is in line with the Quality assurance policy and quality goal setting of the institution for the postgraduate study programme.

The PSP HG-GC provides on website the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications only in Greek, should be available in English also. Nevertheless, In the context of the promotion of the PSP, an English version of website is planned.

It is missing or not accessible if the academic unit has established research collaborations particularly linked to PSP HG-GC level with external academic stakeholder.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Quality Policy for PSP HG-GC is available on the PSP's website only in Greek, needs also to be available in English, so the information will be clearly and completely displayed for all foreign interested partners/companies etc.
- The department and PSP HG-GC need to make easily accessible to find if the academic unit has established research collaborations particularly linked to PSP HG-GC level with external academic stakeholder.
- Under academic year 2022-2023 were selected 12 students for the PSP HG-GC. However, is not clear how many active and graduate students are training today in the PSP HG-GC.
- The EEAP encourages further the faculty and the director of PSP 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 Postgraduate Study Programme "Human Genetics-Genetic Counselling (HG-GC)" was founded in 2013 and it was first operated in 2013-2014. In 2018, took place the re-establishment of the Postgraduate Programmes, therefore the Senate of the UTh approved the internal regulation of the PSP (Government Gazette No. F.3531 / τ Β' / 21/8/2018).

The scientific field in which PSP HG-GC specializes concerns Human Genetics and its purpose is to provide a high level of specialization and practice in conducting research in Human Genetics, so that the graduates acquire a strong scientific background, experience and know-how in modern issues of Genetics, aiming at a successful professional career in the private sector, public and academic sector.

The main goals of the curriculum are:

- *Provision of high-level postgraduate studies*
- *Providing knowledge on modern developments in Human Genetics*
- *Development of technological and methodological approaches for the study of human genetic diseases*
- *Knowledge provision in the field of Genetic Counselling*
- *Creating scientists with the required skills for successful careers in the private, public and academic sectors*
- *Preparation for postgraduate studies at doctoral level.*

The purpose of the PSP HG-GC is to create specialized scientific personnel at a theoretical and technological level in the field of Human Genetics. Specifically, the PSP HG-GC aims at the high specialization of its graduates, preparing them for successful careers in research, health services and/or staffing strategic sectors of Public Administration, Universities and Research Institutes, private and public Centers and Laboratories, to meet the educational, research and development needs of the home country.

The PSP HG-GC is fully connected to the labour market, since, as statistics show, a considerable number of graduates of the PSP HG-GC have found work in private diagnostic laboratories of Genetics in the country. In addition, the conduct of laboratory diploma theses has contributed to the transfer of innovative technologies to the students of the PSP HG-GC.

The expected learning outcomes of the PSP HG-GC of the School of Medicine are determined based on the European and National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and the Dublin Descriptors, for level 7.

Programme Structure

The program includes nine (9) courses (Molecular Genetics, Genetic Basis of Monogenic Diseases, Cancer Genetics, Research Methodology, Biostatistics, Genetic Basis of Multifactorial Diseases, Laboratory of Molecular Genetics laboratory a practical training), and a dissertation total 60 ECTS. To obtain the Postgraduate Diploma of Specialization, the students are required to:

- 1) Compulsorily attend in all courses and to be successfully examined (lectures and workshops) of totally 48 ECTS.

- 2) A practical laboratory in molecular genetics of 4 ECTS
- 3) Complete a postgraduate thesis of 8 ECTS.

The subject of the courses is rationally distributed and is in accordance with what is provided by the ECTS system, as the PSP HG-GC is one academic year of full-time study of 60 ECTS credits (attendance of lectures & workshop, assignments, and one individual essay).

The Outlines of Course of the PSP HG-GC are designed in accordance with the requirements set by the single qualifications framework and are systematically updated and enriched according to the needs that arise.

Teaching of the PSP HG-GC is provided by highly specialized scientists in the field and health professionals who can transfer empirical data from their professional field.

II. Analysis

So far, the PSP HG-GC has not conducted enough actions of extroversion and interconnection with society (workshops, informative events), something that could be done in collaboration with the other academic units.

At the meeting with students and graduates of PSP HG-GC, the Panel was discussed their experience about the postgraduate program and their career path. They expressed themselves to be satisfied with their studies, department and department facilities, the student involvement in quality assurance and commitment to the program.

The PSP HG-GC are to a certain degree, but not sufficient linking the teaching and research of the own laboratories, often by giving students review theme for their thesis work. The provided practical work experience to students is limited.

In contrast, to the design of PSP HG-GC it was not found any clearly described Institutional or departmental strategy in provided documents or web-site.

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 satisfactory described.

The structure, content and organisation of courses, and the teaching methods performs 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 on the field of PSP HG-GC).

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

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Requirement of encouragements for greater participation of HG-GC postgraduate students in research – training programmes of the school of Medicine of the UTh.
- Development of more collaborations in the field of PSP HG-GC with other institutions and laboratories in Greece and abroad.
- Information promotion actions in various ways on social networks or well-known career websites visited Health professionals/graduates could be used to promote the PSP HG-GC.
- There is a lack of a structured and clearly described of Institutional or departmental strategy in provided documents and webpage.

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 (PSP) "Human Genetics - Genetic Counselling" has a duration of one year divided to two academic semesters. This PSP is addressed to

graduates of health sciences. The curriculum provides a total of 10 courses, which are distributed in the two semesters (5 per semester). The dissertation is carried out during the spring semester and can be either a bibliographic or a research project, depending on the student's choice.

According to the posted Study Guide, the majority of the courses include mainly theoretical lectures, while some of them contain additional laboratory exercises. Moreover, the content of some courses includes research projects, which are assigned to the students during the semester. It is worth mentioning that in courses related to Genetic Counselling, the course is conducted in a more interactive way, where current issues of bioethics in the field of genetics are analysed through discussion.

The assessment of the courses from the teachers' point of view is mainly done with closed-ended questions such as multiple-choice questions. The examination period takes place at the end of each academic semester. The grade for each course depends both on performance in the exams and any assignments during the semester.

The University provides students with a system of courses' and teachers' evaluation at the end of each academic semester. This system is in form of questionnaires, where students rate the understanding of the course, its content etc. Through this system, students can also express any complaints or dissatisfactions that they have either regarding the course or the teaching staff.

II. Analysis

The curriculum of this PSP focuses on Human Genetics and its courses cover a wide range of contemporary achievements in the field of Molecular Genetics, while providing knowledge about Genetic Counselling of various diseases.

The students' general understanding of the courses is quite satisfactory. This is surely achieved not only by the teaching staff, who according to the students is always available and willing to respond to any of their questions, but also by the flexible teaching methods. Specifically, in addition to the classical method of theoretical lectures, some courses (for example Research Methodology) include assignments, which encourage the development of critical and scientific way of thinking. In parallel, courses such as those on Genetic Counselling are conducted through interactive lectures, where students are actively involved in discussions, thus gaining a better understanding of the concept and rules of bioethics. It is worth mentioning that all courses can be conducted both in person and by electronic media, providing the possibility of attendance even to students who are off-campus or at work. In fact, as mentioned by many students, this is one of the reasons for choosing this postgraduate programme among others.

Regarding laboratory experience, the master's curriculum includes laboratory exercises and a compulsory thesis. However, the acquisition of laboratory experience requires both face-to-face attendance at courses and conducting a research thesis. As a consequence, graduates who attended online this PSP do not gain the same level of laboratory experience as those who attended lectures in-person and conducted a research thesis.

Finally, as far as the assessment of the courses is concerned, the grade of each course depends both on the performance in the final exams and on the various assignments. Thus, the assessment of the courses is quite objective.

III. Conclusions

The present PSP has a good quality curriculum, encompassing a wide range of modern areas in genetics. Overall, the curriculum is in line with the principles of the HAHE.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Extend the duration of the PSP from 2 semesters to 3, in order to provide more time for the conduction of the thesis.
- More compulsory inter-disciplinary courses, so that all students can gain an equal level of laboratory experience.
- Encouragement for research-type thesis that could even be performed at partner Universities or Institutes.

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 HG-GC 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 functioning in 2013 and is the only one within Greece offering the degree of Genetics (one more exists at the Kapodistrian University of Athens Medical school, but has not yet received the accreditation). Members of this PSP are composed by faculty members of the UTh and by invited recognised faculty from other Greek Institutions. The original number of applicants is high, but applicants' number is restricted upon the selection procedure. Candidates are selected with well-defined and established criteria. The selection of the applicants is based on the studies scores, recommendation letters and upon interview of the candidates by an academic committee. All these procedures are clearly described to the required supporting documents. These documents contain information for the student rights and obligations, and monitoring of their progression. Research ethics regulation, regulation of studies, internship, mobility and student assignments are also provided. A web site with all this information exists, but sadly there is not an English version.

There is not a stable ratio of medical to non-medical graduates who apply to the PSP. Most of the candidates have either a part time or a full-time job and they attend the PSP as an

extra activity, and therefore the PSP is adapted accordingly. 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, 30 ETCS each) with 9 courses and 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 Euros/year). The PSP diploma allows to the students to get a job 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. This was clear by all discussions that whenever the students need some help, this is immediately available. Progress of the students of the PSP is followed closely by the faculty members.

For the graduation, literature-based knowledge is acquired and in some fewer cases part of the graduation includes a tiny practical training module. It is obvious that students following the courses by remote mode are not able to have the practical training.

The meeting of the panel members with several current and past students of the PSP left a very positive impression of the utility of this precise PSP (HG-GC). All of them were enthusiastic and positive concerning their experience and knowledge received. One of the current students follows the PSP while he is in the army service, taking advantage of the remote learning option. This also applies to other students or graduates having a work in different places within Greece. It is worth noting that some concerns brought up by the current and past students requesting more practical training courses. Concerning the quality and number of courses, students pointed out that courses are/were clear and allow them to follow easily the courses. Similarly, all students mentioned that the PSP is rewarding. This was also emphasised by the faculty members.

The panel noticed that the mobility of the students is not satisfactory. Erasmus+ platforms are available, as well as other opportunities for student mobility, but are not used as should be.

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

II. Analysis

As the only PSP in genetics within Greece, this programme provides an important and interesting basis for further studies in the field. It is clear that this PSP fulfils an important need for education and training of medical professionals and biologists. The covid-19 pandemic highlighted the importance and need for training graduates in the field of genetics, covered by the PSP.

The panel was slightly worried at the length of studies (2 semesters) of the PSP. Genetics is a field with increasing importance and it will be beneficial to the students and society a stronger PSP education by adding a 3rd semester based mostly in practical courses.

The panel estimates that students' mobility is not satisfactory and should be an effort to use the Erasmus+ platform or other opportunities of student mobility and exchange within Greece. Actually, there are some opportunities that should be explored (e.g., Athens).

One question that needs to be addressed is the teaching mode for the PSP. Online teaching may be beneficial for some students who work, but it is less desirable in general for students requiring hand-on experience. The PSP faculty members will need to carefully rethink and reorganise the programme, looking for the right balance between theoretical and practical courses.

Another issue is that most students of the PSP have full or part time jobs. This plays a significant role in the content (e.g., practical courses) and length of studies, and in the availability of the students for close interaction with the faculty members.

The existence of a web page providing information in Greek and not in English as well, is a point of concern.

III. Conclusions

This is a PSP on the important and timeless biomedical field of genetic. The length of the studies should be reconsidered, as well as the incorporation of a dynamic 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

- The panel suggests that to the requirements for graduation is the incorporation of a dissertation thesis based to an experimental work on one of the topics offered by the faculty. This will contribute to the increase of the number of published scientific articles, which serve for the visibility of the Institution.
- The panel encourages the invitation for lecturing to several word leaders in the field (many Greeks living abroad or in Greece satisfy the criteria of excellence).
- The panel urges the creation of a web page in English.
- The panel recommends the increase of the students' mobility via Erasmus+ or other similar platforms.
- The panel suggest the strengthening of the PSP by incorporating one more semester, which will be laboratory research oriented.
- 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 21 members, between them seven members from the UTh medical school, eight members of the collaborating medical school of the Kapodistrian University of Athens, and another small number of additional members from hospitals and private establishments in Greece. Although information on faculty members' accomplishments was not individually provided, the panel believes that they are of high quality and suitable to participate in this PSP.

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 as in all academic Greek institutions (APELLA). Individual performance of all staff members is available. A list of the teaching staff is also provided.

The panel met with a subset of the faculty during the evaluation, and received a very positive feedback about the PSP. The panel was informed that a formal body or the whole

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 the faculty enjoy being part of the PSP. It was also clear that there is a constant contact with the attending students during the course work.

Faculty advancement and career prospects are not very relevant for PSP. However, participation in the PSP enhances the professional CV and helps to the development of the faculty.

II. Analysis

This is a diverse faculty body that can cover many aspects of the field. It is unclear to see how the non-local (peripheral) members can interfere in the development and modification of the PSP. Therefore, it is hard to see how they can design, implement and follow policies and procedures. There is a core group that administers the PSP. It is clear that a new generation of staff is needed.

III. Conclusions

The PSP is a very important for the education and training. This PSP is a pioneer in post-graduate education in genetics within Greece. The connection to the Kapodistrian University of Athens is an excellent initiative according to the opinion of the panel. However, the panel believes that more faculty members should be incorporated from other Greek Universities, expanding thus the topics of interest.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The panel recommends the creation of a faculty body that will meet once or twice per year to discuss progress and problems of the PSP.
- The panel recommends the addition of new faculty from other Greek Institutions.
- The panel recommends the participation in the PSP, upon Invitation, of world known geneticists (delivering live or remote courses).

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

Based on the information from the University of Thessaly, every proposal to establish a Master's Program has to submit:

- a. Analytical feasibility and viability report detailing the infrastructures used to conduct the courses;
- b. Certification by the President that the infrastructure is sufficiently adequate for the conduct Master's Degree Programme;
- c. The feasibility and viability report describes the administrative and other staff that will support the implementation of the Master's Program Studies. Based on the panel's findings, the PSP HG-GC (PSP in Medical Genetics-Genetic Counselling) is located in the medical faculty of the UTh. The clinics offer a wide range of services and training facilities. Postgraduate students can be informed about the provided services by the study guide (Appendix A5) and the HG-GC's secretariat or steering committee. The teaching staff

consists of faculty members of the school of medicine, faculty members of the department of medical genetics of UTh, laboratory of cytogenetics and molecular genetics, other Universities, emeritus professors and retired members of the school of medicine, scientists of recognized prestige, and either PhD holders or doctoral candidates with excellent technical experience.

b.

II. Analysis

Teaching Spaces

The teaching of the courses takes place in the facilities of the school of medicine of the UTh in one building, with a total area of 25,254.38 sq.m., on a land area of 90,000 sq.m., which is also available for the operation of the PGPs. The classrooms of the PMP courses that these carried out are: 1. Classrooms: four (4), with a capacity of sixty (60) students each. 2. Amphitheatres: two (2), with a capacity of one hundred (100) students each.

Auxiliary rooms and auditoriums that can be used are provided below from conditions at the University general hospital of Larissa, especially for clinical PES cognitive objects. Digital tools through the IT department and the Information Centre of the UTh: all graduate students are allowed to have at their disposal the modern systems provided by the department of mechanization and the centre of Informatics of the UTh.

Proposal Certification of the PSP "Human Genetics – Genetic Counselling" at the UTh.

This includes:

- Electronic address, access to the University's network securely via 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 electronic service for acquiring academic identity
- Student care services free meals, using its codes their institutional account, through its online platform of the UTh (<https://merimna.uth.gr>).
- Registering for courses and grades monitoring online application of the electronic secretariat of the UTh (<https://euniversity.uth.gr/unistudent/>).
- Access and management of their electronic mailbox through electronic mail (e-mail) of the UTh (<https://webmail.uth.gr>).
- Access to the course pages of the curriculum through the UTh-e-class platform (integrated electronics management system courses)
- MS teams

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, cross-lending, support for people with disabilities, information support and training through seminars aimed at first-year postgraduate students with the aim of acquiring skills in using resources and services, classrooms study, plagiarism prevention services).

Human resources

According to the Founding Official Gazette (Ιδρυτικό ΦΕΚ), a provision has been made for the mode the PSP covers the administrative and technical needs. Depending on the needs that arise, the PSP coordinating committee can recommend the recruitment of staff. Approval is required from: 1) the assembly of the department and all the prescribed procedures defined by the guide, and 2) the management of the special funds and research accounts.

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
- PMS committees as defined in the PMS Internal Regulations

III. Conclusions

A PSP in medical genetics is beneficial for the education and training of medical, biological and other graduates in the medical genetic diagnosis of rare and common disorders. Based on the assessment, the department of Humans Genetics at the medical School of the UTh, which hosts the PSP HG-GC, offers adequate facilities for the programme's needs. Students' access to the library or/and a computer lab for studying or other PSP-related conditions remains open. The students can be informed about the facilities provided by the PSP either by the study guide or the secretariat, or/and the steering committee of the offered programme. However, the study guide contains only limited information. Thus, in-person contact with the PSP's administrative personnel is almost inevitable, which may limit the chances that potentially interested students learn about the PSP. The website is completed and updated but does not exist in English language as should be. Completing the construction and the regular updates of the PSP's website could substantially contribute towards this direction. The teaching staff is deemed satisfactory and adequately qualified for the needs of the offered programme.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Construct the HG-GC PSP's website in English and update it regularly so that current or new substantially interested students can be quickly and efficiently informed about the services offered by the PSP.

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

Information that guides the department should be collected in a transparent, uniform and standardized manner. In improving the quality of the education and, in general, of its work to all its participants and to social, cultural and productive entities with which it cooperates.

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 School of Medicine.

The procedure is as follows:

1. Data collection through the MODIP transition information system data in the OPESP 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 projects.
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 graduate and strategic planning committee of the department.

Student participation

At the end of each teaching period or the end of the semester (depending on the structure of the PSP), the PSP students are invited through an electronic application developed by MODIP of the UTh 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, disposable links, and special 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 to develop comments). MODIP fully guarantees the anonymity of the participants in the evaluation, and the relevant assurance is provided, as no identification data is kept. 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 PMS, has a standardized informational message with which it requests the Secretariats:
- To inform their PSP students about the procedure that will follow while urging them to participate and not to ignore the message they will receive.
- To raise awareness by utilizing all the means of communication at their disposal (e-class, Facebook, announcement on the website, personal communication) regarding the value of their participation in these procedures as with their participation they contribute to the improvement of the quality of the studies provided.
- To inform the course leader so that he/she, in turn, makes fellow teachers aware of the process, since, if the teachers do not belong to the Institution's staff and are external collaborators, they may not be familiar or aware of the process.

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
- Information system OPESP the information system of ETHAAE 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 partial bibliometric data is given

III. Conclusions

Information Management is the first and crucial step in the quality assurance process.

Information management is the crucial step to promote specific PSP programmes with clinical relevance.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Complete and upgrade the website and improve the quality and aesthetics of public information.
- Provide a well-designed PSP with an emphasis on laboratory research.
- Revise, re-check, update the information, and monitor the pages regularly.
- Make the importance of clinically oriented education in Greece to the audiences, staff, students and stakeholders.
- Further promote the field of Medical Genetics and genetic diagnosis in Greece.

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

The PSP in HUMAN GENETICS-GENETIC COUNSELING of the Department of Medicine has created a website (<http://www.med.uth.gr/pmsgenetiki/>) for its promotion, which provides general information about the Program, the courses offered and the teachers involved.

Also, there is a specialized area on the Department's website for the promotion of the PSP and for its annual announcement.

In particular, it includes the description of each course offered and all the documents (forms) that students need to use to communicate with the PSP Secretariat.

On an annual basis, a website manager is appointed in order to update the information concerning the PSP through a process that is carried out annually at the start of the applications submission period.

There is also an official Facebook account which provides another way to communicate with students and alumni of PSP and inform them about announcements, events, educational seminars and other activities.

However, a serious lack is that the above information is not offered in English.

II. Analysis

The PSP program satisfies the criteria for Principle 9 with the exception of the absence of the English version.

III. Conclusions

Considering that the provision of the above-mentioned public information in English is an essential requirement the panel can only award a substantially compliant mark.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

An English version of the online published information is essential for the full compliance with principle 8.

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 HUMAN GENETICS-GENETIC COUNSELLING 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 PMS 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 Department 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 PSP 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 PSP "Medical Genetics - Genetic Counselling" has not been subjected to an accreditation and evaluation process before. In any case, the professors and the director of the PSP were more than willing to participate in the accreditation process. They provided us in a timely manner with the necessary paperwork and were very detailed and honest during the questioning. The faculty seemed to agree with the committee's observations, and they had all the goodwill to correct any failures reported in order to improve the quality of the graduate program.

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

- In total, multiple teaching methods are implemented, through which the involvement of students is encouraged.
- This PSP is a timeless and very important programme and the only one running in Greece for the education and training of the students.
- There is an informative web page in Greek.
- Existence of questionnaires about staff performance.
- Follow up of the students' progression.
- Good faculty, respected/recognized in the field.
- Rate of student satisfaction is high.
- Enthusiastic faculty.
- High interaction between students and faculty.

II. Areas of Weakness

- In the majority of courses, face-to-face attendance is not compulsory and the time for the preparation of a thesis is minimum.
- Incomplete study guides especially regarding the students' laboratory exercises
- Web site does not exist in the English version.
- More teachers in Genetics (from other Universities and abroad) are needed.
- Low students' and faculty's mobility.
- Library of topics does not exist.
- Only one semester for the preparation of the dissertation.
- Many theoretical courses, too little practical courses.
- Many students with partial/full-time jobs affecting the functioning of this PSP.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Extension of the total number of semesters to 3 or 4, in order to provide extra time for the conduction of dissertation.
- Extension more in-depth the PSP thesis. A Master's of Science thesis is usually 20 to 30 ECTS.
- Re-writing of a more detailed Study Guide.
- Requirements for graduation is the incorporation of a dissertation thesis based to an experimental work on one of the topics offered by the faculty.
- Invitation for lecturing to several word-leaders in the field.

- Creation of a web page in English.
- Increase of the students' mobility via Erasmus+ or other similar platforms.
- Strengthening of the PSP by incorporating one more semester, which will be laboratory research oriented.
- 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.
- Creation of a faculty body that will meet once or twice per year to discuss progress and problems of the PSP.
- Addition of new faculty from other Greek Institutions.
- Participation in the PSP, upon invitation, of world known geneticists (delivering live or remote courses).
- Development of more collaborations in the field of PSP HG-GC with other institutions and laboratories in Greece and abroad.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

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

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 4, and 8.**

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

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

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2. **Prof. Emeritus Nikolaos Venizelos**
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3. **Prof. Panagiotis Karanis**
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4. **Assoc. Prof. Stefanos Volianitis**
Aalborg University, Denmark
5. **Mr. Sotirios Mavromatis** (student)
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