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Accreditation Report
for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Applied Biomechanics and Biomaterials in Orthopedics

Department: **School of Medicine**

Institution: **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens**

Date: **25-30 June 2024**



Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση
της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



Πρόγραμμα
Ανθρώπινο Δυναμικό και
Κοινωνική Συνοχή



NOTES

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Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Postgraduate Study Programme of **Applied Biomechanics and Biomaterials in Orthopedics** of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens** 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 **Applied Biomechanics and Biomaterials in Orthopedics** of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens**, comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Prof. Thimios Mitsiadis (Chair)**
University of Zurich, Switzerland
- 2. Prof. Panagiotis Soultanas**
University of Nottingham, United Kingdom
- 3. Dr Nicholas Ktistakis**
Babraham Institute, United Kingdom
- 4. Ms Vasiliki Bakali**
Postgraduate Student, University of Patras, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In accordance with the requirements of quality assurance in higher education (laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020), the authority of higher education (HAHE), by individual invitation and after formal acceptance, establishes an independent external evaluation & accreditation panel (EEAP - panel), with the mission of assessing the compliance of the postgraduate studies program (PSP) in **Applied Biomechanics and Biomaterials in Orthopedics** of the **school of medicine** of the **national and Kapodistrian university of Athens (NKUA)**, scheduled for **June 25-30, 2024**. The established EEAP consists of four experts, three from universities and institutes abroad, and one from Greece.

The evaluation was carried out through reviews of documents, PSP's website, as well as online interviews with the PSP's director, the head of the department, steering committee, MODIP and OMEA members, teaching staff, students, graduates, and external stakeholders. The EEAP focused on the sampling of the activities of the department and aimed at assessing the fulfilment of the requirements according to the protocol of HAHE regarding the quality of the PSP and compliance, its effectiveness, and implementation within the scope of the requirements. All information and documents provided by the PSP were considered by the EEAP to be factually correct.

The EEAP received all supporting documents via a web-based HAHE's panel-accreditations information platform. The content of the materials provided is as follows:

Department Material

A0. Contents

A1. Proposal of Academic Accreditation

A2. Quality Policy of Postgraduate Study Program

A3. Quality Objectives of the Academic Unit for the Postgraduate programs

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 the previous academic years

A18. External evaluation report of the Institution, regarding the MSc in Intensive Care Units.

A19. Other documentation material

HAHE Material

Acronyms, European qualifications framework, standards PSP, M12 PSP mapping grid, M13 PSP accreditation report template, guidelines of accreditation-English, accreditation management system - expert manual, PSP-guidelines for the EEAP, and guidelines of accreditation of the PSP.

The evaluation/accreditation process was carried out solely remotely using both the Zoom (meetings of EEAP members only) and Webex (meetings of PSP faculty members and EEAP) platforms. The evaluation and accreditation reviews were scheduled and performed in Athens' time zone.

Tuesday, 25/06/2024

From 16:00 to 17:00 hrs., the EEAP members met remotely via the Zoom platform in view of getting to know each other, to establishing a modus operandi regarding the accreditation mission, scheduling and discussing the content of the report template, allocating individual tasks, and being prepared for the site visit that would be performed online using the Webex platform.

From 17:00 to 18:00 hrs., the EEAP started formally the evaluation reviews of the PSP in "Applied Biomechanics and Biomaterials in Orthopedics". The EEAP was welcomed by the Vice Head of the department Prof. Gerasimos Filippatos and the PSP director Prof. Olga Savvidou, briefly presented the PSP's origins, evolution, current status, and different aspects of compliance with the accreditation principles. Present during this meeting were the steering committee and OMEA members, Prof. George Babis, Prof. Vassileios Nikolaou, Assoc. Prof. Panagiotis Koulouvaris, the MODIP staff/member Mr Konstantinos Bourletidis, and the scientific associate-quality assurance consultants, Mrs Amalia Nippi and Mr Anestis Karastergiou.

From 18:00 to 18:30 hrs., it was scheduled an on-line tour of facilities by a video produced to access the classrooms, lecture halls, libraries, laboratories, clinics, and other facilities related to the PSP:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cY_og6bWemDngXQp3ER23UEypWTMBDPM/view?usp=sharing

From 18:30 to 19:00 hrs., the EEAP members had a debrief meeting to reflect on impressions of the first day and prepare for the following meetings.

Wednesday, 26/06/2024

From 15:00 to 15:45 hrs., the EEAP members met with the teaching staff of the PSP, Prof. Dimitris Karalekas, Asst. Prof. Ermioni D. Pasiou, Prof. Stavros K. Kourkoulis, Prof. Panayiotis J. Papagelopoulos and PhD Consultants Dr Konstantinos Kateros and Dr Stamatios Papadakis. The importance of this PSP was discussed, with mobility, competence, learning outcomes, workload, the link between teaching and research, as well as teaching staff involvement in

research projects. While the participation and contributions of all members is greatly valued, delays were experienced in connecting to the Webex meeting, with some joining up to 30 minutes late.

From 15:45 to 16:30 hrs., the EEAP members met with students from the 1st and 2nd year of the PSP to discuss about their satisfaction, their study experience, the Institution infrastructure and their input in quality assurance.

From 17:00 to 17:45 hrs., the EEAP members met with graduates of the PSP Mrs. Constantina Matsika Klossa, Mr. Mathios Michelinakis, Mr. Dionysios Bekyras and Mr. Georgios Saraglis to discuss about their career path.

From 17:45 to 18:30 hrs., the EEAP members met after another short delay with employers and social partners to investigate on their relationships.

From 18:30 to 19:00 hrs., the EEAP members had a debrief meeting, in which the outcomes of the daily meetings were discussed.

From 19:00 to 19:30 hrs. a closure meeting was held with the presence of the director of PSP Prof. Olga Savvidou, the vice-head of department Prof. Gerasimos Filippatos, Assoc. Prof. Panagiotis Koulouvaris, Prof. Vassileios Nikolaou, Prof. Panayiotis J. Papagelopoulos, secretary support officer Mrs. Ioanna Tseka and MODIP member Mr Anestis Karastergiou, where the findings of the accreditation procedure and the several points that require further clarification were highlighted.

From 27 to 30 of June 2024, the EEAP members, taking under account all the material sent by HAHE and the department, as well as the meetings held online, worked on the completion of a draft of the PSP accreditation report.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The university of Athens, inaugurated in 1837, as the first university not only in Greece but also in the Balkan and the eastern Mediterranean, and in 1932 it was officially named national and Kapodistrian university of Athens (NKUA), in honor of Ioannis Kapodistrias, the first governor of Greece. Until the early part of the 20th century, it was the only university in Greece that provided the Greek state with qualified professionals in medicine and other disciplines. Today, the NKUA offers 9 large Schools, 42 departments, 43 undergraduate programs as well as more than 200 postgraduate programs leading to master and doctoral degrees and enrolled 41.454 undergraduates, 25.417 postgraduate students and Ph.D. candidates, 8.255 Foreign students. 2.109 academic staff and 1.021 administrative and secretarial staff.

The school of medicine of NKUA, inaugurated in 1837, and in 1984 with the presidential decree 160/12.4.1984, was formed the school of health sciences that includes four departments: medicine (school of medicine), dentistry, pharmacy and nursing. The school of medicine is organized in six sections: basic medical sciences, clinical-laboratory studies, internal medicine, surgery, mother-child health, social medicine-psychiatry, and neurology.

The facilities of the school of medicine and the basic education of the students takes place in the main buildings of the department in Goudi campus (5 lecture halls) and the clinical education in the majority at the Attikon university hospital campus, Chaidari (AKISA) (2 lecture halls), and at several other clinical sites. For the practical teaching and clinical training of students, 61 university clinics, 28 laboratories and 4 museums in sixteen (16) hospitals are used.

The NKUA school of medicine organizes and conduct a PSP with the title "Applied Biomechanics in Orthopedics", from the academic year 2018-2019 in accordance with the provisions of Law 3165/01.08.2018. In 2020 the PSP was re-established as "Applied Biomechanics and Biomaterials in Orthopedics". The PSP is structured based on the European credit transfer system (ECTS), and the duration of the program is 4 semesters of study equivalent to a total of 120 ECTS.

The PSP in "Applied Biomechanics and Biomaterials in Orthopedics" is designed to provide training to postgraduate students, so that they acquire a strong scientific background, experience, and expertise in the particularly dynamic area of orthopedics and biomaterials.

To obtain an MSc degree, 120 ECTS is required; participation and approved examination in all compulsory courses and elective compulsory equivalents 90 ECTS and to prepare and conduct a master's thesis of 30 ECTS.

The courses take place at the amphitheater of P.G.N. ATTIKON "OKEE "P.N. Soukkakos" and at the laboratories of "testing and materials" of the Metsovion polytechnic.

The number of students admitted per year is 30, and the current academic year (2023) enrolls 14 students. The official language of the PSP is Greek, but there are also courses delivered in English. The tuition fees are set at €4000.

Study guide for the current academic year (2022-2023) of the PSP is described in detail in appendix A5 and A6 and is available also on the website: https://appliedbiomechanics-en.med.uoa.gr/study_program/

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 PSP "Applied Biomechanics and Biomaterials in Orthopaedics" (ABBO) was founded in 2018 after a senate decision in accordance article 32 of Law 4485/2017 (Government Gazette 3165/1-8-2018), and re-founded in 2020 (Government Gazette 197/31-1-2020). It is functioning for 5 years now and will be running until the academic year 2027-28. The PSP is

delivered mainly in Greek but provisions have been made to be delivered in English if appropriate. The PSP is organized and implemented by the medical school of the National Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA).

The PSP in collaboration with the quality assurance unit (MODIP) and the proficient services of the NKUA has harmonized the quality policy of the PSP with the quality policy of the NKUA focusing on continuous and systematic quality assurance through continuous improvement of the study programs and associated supporting services of the NKUA. This policy includes the formulation of clear, specific, measurable objectives and corresponding quality assurance actions, defining the framework for all academic and administrative units within the NKUA to achieve the expected outcomes.

The quality assurance policy of the PSP follows the principles and guidelines for quality assurance in the European higher education area, in accordance with the European Union declaration on quality assurance in higher education Helsinki (ENQUA 2009). The quality targets of the PSP are defined in the relevant quality assurance policy document and include four main strategic objectives (1) continuous upgrade of basic academic activities, (2) reinforcement and promotion of research activity through innovation and excellence in research, (3) links with society and the labour market, and (4) strengthening of the international profile and extraversion of the PSP. These are in line with the broader goals and commitments of the medical school and the NKUA, and are in accordance with the legal and regulatory framework defining the functions of Greek universities. The delivery of these strategic targets is monitored through defined processes and procedures monitoring continuous improvement and quality. These processes and procedures include the implementation of the quality assurance policy, the equitable management and disposal of financial resources, the establishment of quality assurance objectives on an annual basis, the internal evaluation and monitoring on an annual basis, the collection and analyses of quality data, the public disclosure of any relevant PSP information and the external evaluation by the Hellenic authority for higher education (HAHE).

Teaching and administrative staff of the PSP are committed to implement the quality policy making continuous efforts to achieve its objectives. The mission of the PSP is to provide specialist knowledge in the field of biomechanics and biomaterials in orthopedics to health professionals such as doctors, in particular orthopedists, engineers, physical education scientists, physiotherapists and other related professions. Graduates are equipped with highly specialized knowledge and high-quality skills to implement in their professions for the benefit of society. The PSP is committed to providing excellent higher education to its students and to develop a creative research and work/educational environment for its staff and students with dedication to the principles of scientific ethics, sustainable development, and social contribution, while emphasizing on internationalization of students, exploitation of research results and promotion of students' research work, as well as teaching and learning innovation. PSP graduates are able to meet the demands and challenges of the Greek, European and international labour market as well as research and development. The subject of the PSP is shaped by modern challenges in the field of structure and function of the musculoskeletal

system and its mechanical and biological properties. It is a multi-disciplinary PSP encompassing medicine, health professionals, engineers, material scientists and bioethics specialists.

The PSP is harmonized with the European credit system (ECTS). To obtain an MSc in ABBO students must complete 4 academic terms (6 months each) and obtain 120 ECTS. The total number of ECTS is distributed as follows: 90 ECTS via taught courses (30 ECTS per 6-month term) and 30 ECTS diploma thesis in the final 6-month term. The program includes three courses in term 1, three courses in term 2, four courses in term 4 and a final dissertation in term 4. All courses are compulsory. The curriculum is occasionally enriched with participation in relevant conferences and invited visiting lecturers, who are distinguished in their fields. The tuition language is Greek or English if appropriate. The dissertation is Greek but it can also be English. The overall study programme complies with the guidelines of the national qualifications framework (NQF) for level 7. The study guide of the current for academic year is described on the website of the PSP in Greek and in English (https://appliedbiomechanics.med.uoa.gr/programma_spydon/). A maximum of 30 students can enrol per cohort and the tuition fees are €4000. Detailed information for interested students can be found on the PSP website: (chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://appliedbiomechanics.med.uoa.gr/file_admin/depts/med.uoa.gr/appliedbiomechanics/uploads/PROKYRIXI_2023-2025_PMS.pdf) in Greek. The application for enrolment can also be found on the PSP website on (chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://appliedbiomechanics.med.uoa.gr/file_admin/depts/med.uoa.gr/appliedbiomechanics/uploads/AITISI_YOPSIFIOTITAS_PMS.pdf) in Greek. Lecturers with a wide range of expertise (engineers, biologists, physical educators, orthopedic surgeons, physiotherapists) from the NKUA, Metsovio polytechnic, university of Patras, university of Piraeus, university of Ioannina, university of Thessaly and Aristotle university of Thessaloniki contribute to teaching in this PSP.

An Academic Advisor is appointed for each student of the PSP, who is also member of the teaching staff and details for the regulations for the academic advisor are publicly available on the PSP web site (chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://appliedbiomechanics.med.uoa.gr/file_admin/depts/med.uoa.gr/ext/uploads/LOCKED_A/A11_Kanon_akad_symb.pdf). Most lectures appear to be via remote web-based methods using the electronic platform e-class. Students have access to a student advocate (https://www.uoa.gr/foitites/paroches_drastiriotes/synigoros_toy_foititi/), counseling and professional orientation services of the NKUA. In person lectures take place in the auditorium of the orthopedic research and education center “P.N. Soukagos” and in the “AKISA” building of the NKUA in the university hospital Attikon. Experimental training and practicals take place in the “Theoxaris” building in the “materials and strength laboratory” of the national Metsovio university and in the university of Piraeus and the gait and motion analysis laboratory in Athens. Additionally, there is opportunity of work experience through internships in various specialty subjects.

The PSP offers detailed information to students “course structure and objectives, guides and regulations” and more on the website in Greek (<https://appliedbiomechanics.med.uoa.gr/>). The English version of the website is rather basic and needs updating to mirror the Greek web site. Student mobility seems to be encouraged but there was no clear guidance on how to utilize opportunities for cooperation with foreign institutions within the framework of the Erasmus+ program for student exchange.

II. Analysis

The quality assurance policy of the PSP is in line with the quality assurance policy of the NKUA and is formulated in the form of a public statement.

The QAP statement of the department includes commitments that implement a quality policy to promote the academic profile, the orientation, remit, and field of study of the PSP.

There is evidence of continuous improvement of the PSP and a quality policy that aims to realize the program’s goals and sets clear means and ways for attaining them.

There is evidence of continuous annual monitoring and audit of the quality assurance system of the PSP through the cooperation of the Internal Evaluation Unit and the NKUA quality assurance unit, by collecting and analyzing data related to quality assurance.

The PSP seems to have sufficient resources, both specialized human resources and teaching and laboratory facilities to be self-sustainable the foreseeable future. However, most of the financial resources appear to be consumed on paying teaching, administration and technical support staff with no financial resources dedicated to laboratory consumables, infrastructure support and scholarships.

The PSP provides a website in both Greek and English outlining the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and national qualifications framework for higher education for level 7. However, the English version needs updating to mirror the Greek website.

Promotion of quality and effectiveness of teaching at the PSP, and within the NKUA in general, has room for improvement with the introduction of a structured personal staff development plan and peer review of teaching schemes to equip staff with modern didactic methods and approaches and enhance their professional development. This will also partially address the issue of appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff for this PSP.

There does not seem to be promotion and/or engagement with the Erasmus+ program for student exchange. Equally, there does not seem to be a clear plan for internationalization of the PSP to attract and recruit foreign students.

III. Conclusions

The panel considers that the PSP is substantially compliant with the requirements and commitments required for the implementation of an adequate education quality policy in accordance with HAHE’s regulations.

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

Consider the redistribution of financial resources towards supporting better consumables and infrastructure, and the introduction of scholarships.

Implement a structured personal development and training scheme for staff.

Introduce a peer review of teaching scheme.

Update the English web site to mirror the Greek web site and improve the latter to include detailed, uniformly formatted staff CVs, student evaluation data, detailed course descriptions, visiting lectures and seminars.

Promote better student mobility opportunities via the Erasmus+ program for student exchange. Try to engage with the program and offer some courses for Erasmus+ visiting foreign students.

Produce a plan for future internationalization and recruitment of foreign students.

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 “Applied Biomechanics and Biomaterials in Orthopedics” (ABBO) was developed following a well-defined process involving relevant participants, information resources and was founded in 2018 after a senate decision in accordance article 32 of law 4485/2017 (government Gazette 3165/1-8-2018). The PSP was then re-founded in 2020 (government Gazette 197/31-1-2020). The PSP is made up of 120 ECTS, including 10 compulsory courses, worth 90 ECTS in total, plus a 30 ECTS final dissertation, and it takes a minimum of four academic semesters to complete. There are opportunities available for student work experience and the anticipated student workload is fully in line with the ECTS for level-7. The structure of the PSP is rational and clearly articulated and in accordance with the ECTS system. The combination of coursework/lectures/labs and dissertation, counting for 75% and 25% of the PSP respectively, aims at imparting updated and highly specialized knowledge and developing a range of skills to graduates at level-7.

The linking of teaching and research should be made clearer. Any PSP-specific research activities in the form of manuscript publications, research methods and protocols, resulting grant income, conference proceeding announcements etc. should be published on the PSP web site.

The objective of the PSP is to train high caliber doctors in the field of orthopedics, health professionals, engineers and scientists in the emerging and fast developing field of biomechanics and biomaterials in orthopedics. Graduates of the PSP are awarded a MSc and are equipped with highly specialist knowledge and innovative applications involving products and services in biomechanics and biomaterials. Thus, graduates become valuable human assets in the medical and health professions, serving the ever-increasing needs of medicine for innovative solutions to orthopedic interventions. The PSP is in line with the NKUA strategy.

The learning process includes web-based distant and in person lectures, tutorials, the study of international literature, laboratory assignments/training, and a dissertation thesis thus providing students with a solid theoretical background coupled with practical knowledge, and skills required to advance their career in the broad area of health and in particular in orthopedics. Current and former students expressed satisfaction and made positive comments about the PSP during discussions with the panel. This is in line with the results of student evaluation surveys, for the academic year 2021-2022, showing overall satisfaction, above 4.2 average in all student evaluation questions out of a maximum of 5. There seems to be good participation of students evidenced by good completion rates of student evaluation surveys although this was not apparent from the documentation provided and had to be established from our discussions with the director and steering committee of the PSP.

Detailed information regarding admission and graduation requirements, course contents, lecture outlines, teaching/learning methods, expected learning outcomes and skills, student evaluation, assessment items, required and recommended bibliography, infrastructure, and other relevant material, that students need to know about, is available in the study guide and individual course outlines, although the latter did not indicate number of lectures per week.

Drawing on the last two documents and the full list of teaching staff by name, affiliation, academic specialization, and employment relationship, a close relationship between the medical school, the Metsovio polytechnic and courses is evident.

The experience of graduates and external stakeholders for this PSP is extremely positive, as assessed from the panel meetings and discussions with them, albeit the meeting cohorts were rather small in numbers and hence limited in terms of drawing safe and useful conclusions.

II. Analysis

The ABBO PSP is an innovative program that offers high value-added specialization in the area of orthopedics. There is good demand for the program evidenced by the relatively successful student enrolment numbers.

It is a well-designed PSP serving the needs of important, complicated, and increasingly demanding orthopedics challenges. The PSP conception was the result of two academics coming up with the broad idea and then followed the defined institutional process but from its conception it did not involve social partners, external advisers, and a broad set of academics from participating academic units. Course descriptions have been provided clearly stating detailed content, learning outcomes and skills expected to be acquired by students, the organization of the lectures and methods of delivery, the supporting structure of the learning processes, and the assessment methods. The information provided on teaching methods and support for each course was incomplete with more detailed information needed to specify the number of lectures that will be conducted in person and remotely, and also the number of lectures per week. An updated version was provided to the panel after our meetings with the director of the PSP and the steering committee.

There is room for improvement in the assessment methods for courses by including team- and individual-assessed tasks rather than only a traditional exam at the end of the course. In this manner, both teamwork and individual work will be appropriately encouraged and rewarded. Perhaps the PSP should consider allocating 20% for a teamwork assessment, and 20% for an individual work assessment for each course, if appropriate. The panel felt that more content on ethics and bacterial infections/biofilms should be incorporated into the program content. Perhaps the inclusion of a clinical microbiologist or a biofilms expert would benefit the program.

Adopting the English language in courses/lectures and seminars can further enhance and promote the PSP internationalization. The PSP dedicated webpages in Greek and English, where all information specifically related to this PSP is made public, are available, but they need improving, especially the English version.

III. Conclusions

The PSP provides a well-designed study program and prepares much sought-after highly qualified graduates in the cognate areas who are employed in the private and public health sectors. The panel has found the PSP to be fully compliant with principle 2.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Intensify efforts to increase internationalization of the PSP and produce a plan for recruitment of foreign students.

Publish on the web site PSP-related research activities.

Introduce more content on ethics and bacterial nosocomial infections/biofilms.

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 ABBO PSP is structured over four academic semesters, with the fourth semester dedicated to the preparation of the master's thesis. The courses are delivered primarily through lectures and seminars from faculty members and various external collaborators. Faculty members are

also actively involved in research projects, and the program integrates teaching with ongoing research in the field. The classes are held mostly via Webex on Tuesdays and in-person at the national technical university of Athens' laboratory on Saturdays. Teaching material, including textbooks and scientific articles, is recommended by the instructors. Additionally, the program provides a free textbook related to the field of study, and all course presentations are available on the e-class platform.

While there are opportunities for students to attend interdisciplinary programs abroad, mobility has not been widely utilized. Students are assessed mainly through written multiple-choice exams and, for a class, a team project PowerPoint presentation. The grading scale is from 1 to 10, with 5 being the passing grade. In case of failure, students may apply for a retake shortly after the end of the course, with the retake permitted only once and for serious reasons as approved by the coordinating committee.

The quality assurance of the program is monitored through student feedback. Approximately 30% of students participate in evaluation questionnaires, with higher participation observed in the program's first two years. The evaluation questionnaires include questions about the organization and presentation of course material, the ability to engage student interest, the clarity of concept explanations using examples, and the overall accessibility of the professors. Students rated these aspects highly on a scale from 1 to 5. Although there is no formal student committee involved in program restructuring meetings, students' oral feedback has been taken into account.

II. Analysis

The teaching methods used in the program are designed to be engaging and comprehensive, covering all necessary background knowledge. Students have expressed that the program provided valuable insights into biomechanics that have significantly benefited their careers. They praised the offered mechanics courses and the professors' efforts to ensure all students' educational needs are met. The availability of an academic advisor for guidance is also highly valued. Student participation in evaluations and feedback mechanisms is positive, with a typical participation rate of around 30%. While there is no formal alumni network, graduates indicated a willingness to participate if one were established. The program's strengths include its comprehensive mechanics courses and the approachability of its faculty. Suggested improvements include the establishment of a student committee to participate in program discussions, the creation of a research topic database on the website, and organizing informational sessions about thesis supervisors. The program remains current with industry and academic standards through external collaborations and partnerships, enhancing its relevance and quality. The program prepares students well for their careers, making them competitive in the job market by providing innovative knowledge and skills. Graduates have successfully pursued careers in various fields, highlighting the program's effectiveness in fostering professional growth.

III. Conclusions

The ABBO PSP is highly aligned with HAHE standards, offering a student-centered learning environment that promotes mutual respect and compliance with principle 3. Both current students and recent graduates consider the overall quality of the program excellent.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Encourage the formation of a student committee to participate in annual program discussions with faculty members to provide valuable feedback.

Increase the number of in-person lectures to facilitate better interaction.

More detailed information on research and master's thesis opportunities could be offered. This could be achieved by adding relevant links to the program's website or organizing informational seminars.

More comprehensive details about the courses taught in the study guide could be included.

Alumni network formation.

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

This PSP was established in 2018, started its function in the academic year 2019-2020, was re-defined in 2020, and offers a degree of “applied biomechanics and biomaterials in orthopedics” (ABBO) to medical doctors (especially in orthopedic medicine), engineers, researchers in physical education, physiotherapists, etc. The PSP counts 22 faculty members: 15 are from the NKUA (medical school, Metsovion polytechnic), and 7 are from other Greek institutions (e.g., university of Thessaly, university of Piraeus, university of Patras, etc.). The PSP faculty consists of experienced professors, associate professors, assistant professors, medical doctors, researchers, etc. External collaborators participate in the PSP and are mainly from Greek academic institutions, hospitals, etc. The selection of students is performed with strict criteria that are made in accordance with the current national legislation and regulations for postgraduate and doctoral studies at NKUA. A list of required documents exists that includes the application form, CV, copy of diploma, grades for selected undergraduate courses, English language certification, evidence of prior professional or research activity, publications, etc. The selection committee is composed of four PSP staff members. The students are selected every second year, and the number admitted is not higher than 30. This is a realistic number concerning the teaching quality and existing infrastructure. The PSP requires student fees (4.000 euros for the total duration of the two-year studies). Students

with specific needs do not pay fees (30% of the students). Scholarships for outstanding PSP students are not available. PSP student supporting documents are provided. These documents contain information about students' rights and obligations, ways to monitor their progression, research ethics, regulation of studies, internships, Erasmus+ mobility (Erasmus+ studies, Erasmus+ traineeships, etc.), and student assignments. Eligible for admission are graduates from various fields and disciplines, such as medical doctors, physiotherapists, engineers, physical education researchers, etc.

The PSP has established clear procedures concerning the degree, the duration of studies, and rules ensuring students' progression. The duration of the PSP is four semesters (in total, 120 ECTS), with lectures, seminars, presentations, participation in national meetings (during the three first semesters), and the dissertation thesis during the fourth semester, which is in most cases oriented towards research. It is not clear to the panel how many students exceed the four-semester time frame and require additional time (one or two more semesters) to complete their Master degree. The students are evaluated each semester through multiple-choice question (written) examinations. The evaluation of students is also based on the students' presentations, participation in meetings, participation in the presentation of 10 PSP's dissertations, etc. The students are obliged to write a dissertation that is mainly research-oriented and evaluated by three PSP faculty members. The purpose of the PSP diploma is to allow the students to deepen their knowledge in their disciplines, to get jobs with specific requirements in the public and private domain, or to further develop a scientific and academic career by later acquiring a PhD degree. The PSP faculty follows the progress of the students, is constantly available to assist them, and provides the necessary information for the accomplishment of their studies. The status of the academic advisor exists in the present PSP, and the students are informed and aware of the role and utility of the academic advisor. The medical school and NKUA have in place appropriate processes and tools to collect and effectively analyze information concerning the PSP students' progress. This information is stored within the PSP students' registration system. PSP faculty evaluation by students is conducted upon course evaluation questionnaire completion; however, only 30% of the PSP students participate in this procedure. These questionnaires are anonymous and collected on an online platform of the NKUA.

The lectures of the PSP are of great interest; however, some major courses concerning ethics are given in a short and not detailed manner, whereas courses concerning infection are lacking. Courses are mainly delivered in Greek, but there are also courses delivered in English. The PSP staff considers the diversity of the students, who come from different knowledge backgrounds. The courses are mandatory and mainly conducted in person. Live and digital teaching tools are designed to support, complement, and enrich the educational process. The assessment of the students is performed with written examinations (multiple-choice questions), students' common work and presentations, etc. Course examinations are held at the end of each semester. PSP graduation documents are obtained electronically within a very short time in both Greek and English.

The meeting of the committee with students, postgraduates, and stakeholders left a very positive impression of the utility of this PSP. The postgraduates and stakeholders pointed out that the quality of the PSP is high and that the courses are beneficial to the students for their future development. Overall, all mentioned that this PSP is excellent and very rewarding.

II. Analysis

This PSP provides an important basis for deeper knowledge in biomechanics and biomaterials in orthopedics and fulfills an important need for further education and training for health professionals and engineers. This PSP allows the students either to get a specialized job in the public or private domain or to pursue a research/academic-oriented career. The length of PSP studies (4 semesters) is considered appropriate and follows European standards. The curriculum of this PSP includes a wide range of courses covering current issues in biomaterials in orthopedics. The theoretical training of the students at the end of this PSP is considered very satisfactory since the PSP students have expanded their knowledge. In addition to the classical method of theoretical lectures, courses include students' presentations, participation in meetings, and other activities that are necessary for students' future orientations. The majority of the courses take place in person (live), which enables students to form relationships and communicate with the PSP staff. The load of teaching and practical courses seems to be appropriate. It is desirable that the majority of PSP students finish their studies and deliver their dissertation soon after the end of the 4th semester. The PSP's requirements and other information are available in the guide to studies. Courses, students' presentations, seminars, meetings, etc. are communicated to the students. The students are encouraged by the PSP staff to complete the teacher evaluation questionnaires. However, the proportion of students participating in this process (30%) is not satisfactory.

Online and on-site (live) teaching is delivered in Greek and sometimes in English. Most of the lectures are delivered online (for lectures on living abroad or having job obligations). The PSP does not have a bank of research topics that the students could consult prior to their practical exercise. Students' mobility through Erasmus+ and other established platforms is not satisfactory; however, this is mainly due to the job activities and obligations of the students. The international mobility platform (Erasmus+) offers opportunities for exchanges between Greece and other European countries, and therefore the international exchanges must be promoted by the PSP. Mobility will increase the PSP students' chances of getting easier jobs in Greece or abroad.

Noted strengths of the PSP include high-quality training, research presence, and a high degree of absorption of graduates in the labor market. The PSP is original, very well structured, and attractive. Potential areas for improvement are the increase of the weakly taught hours (actually 6 hours per week), the use of the English language for theses, the inclusion of more courses and seminars in English, and the reorganization of some courses (addition of bioethics, etc.). Formal consultation with PSP students, postgraduates, and stakeholders should be established for continuous PSP improvement. The web pages (Greek and English versions) should be considerably improved (the presentation of PSP's staff members should be homogenous; use Google Scholar or Scopus for all members; add PSP's staff academic

achievements, such as grants, national and international distinctions, etc.). An official webpage for PSP's alumni is missing.

III. Conclusions

This is an original, very attractive, and important PSP. The PSP follows the standards of the HAHE. Current students, graduates, faculty, and stakeholders have an overall positive experience with the PSP. The length of the four-semester study is appropriate. The PSP is delivered in a student-centered learning environment. There is a special need to involve postgraduates of the PSP as mentors to PSP students with regard to their career development. External stakeholders and postgraduates could participate in advisory committees to offer their views on the need for certain courses as well as provide important connections to the outside world. The PSP should invite several recognized foreign (international) experts to deliver lectures remotely on areas of high interest.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Resolutions should be made in advance to have students fill out the questionnaires in class during final exams to secure 100% participation.

Increase the number of teaching hours (more than the 6 hours per week). Incorporate more courses about ethics and introduce a good number of courses in infectiology.

Establish and promote PSP's alumni. A specific web page should be created and remain active.

Modernize and implement the actual PSP web pages: the CVs, publications, grants, etc. of the PSP academic staff should be presented in a homogeneous way (use Google Scholar or similar platforms). Also incorporate the articles, presentations, etc. linked to the PSP.

The PSP could progressively adopt the English language in most courses. Offer the opportunity to conduct the dissertation in English.

Allow stakeholders to participate in courses/lectures and share their knowledge and experience. Design workshops to introduce market needs and career opportunities.

An external advisory/evaluation committee could also help provide an unbiased review of the PSP.

The bank of selected thesis topics must be incorporated into the web page of the PSP.

Create prizes for the best students each year. Distribute one or two scholarships to the best performing PSP students.

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 PSP benefits from a diverse and extensive pool of teaching staff drawn from NKUA and other Greek academic institutions. The PSP involves a mix of teaching, research, and laboratory staff, etc., ensuring a diverse range of expertise. With 15 members from the NKUA teaching and research staff of the medical school and Metsovion technological institute and 7 members from other Greek universities (e.g., University of Patras, Piraeus University, University of Thessaly, University of Peloponnesus, University of Ioannina, etc.) and external collaborators, the PSP appears to have a sufficient number of staff to satisfy the students' needs. The teaching staff covers a wide range of subject areas, which aligns with the PSP's specialization.

While the exact staff-student ratio is not explicitly mentioned, from the above number of staff and the number of students per 2 years (less than 30 students), the ratio seems adequate.

The selection process for instructors appears to be based on meritocratic and transparent criteria, with specialization in the relevant subject area being a primary criterion. Professional contacts may function to catalyze applications but do not appear to affect a fair selection.

The research performance (grants and scientific outputs) of staff members has not been explicitly mentioned, but the involvement of researchers suggests a commitment to good research standards.

The PSP supports the further training and development of instructors through participation in national and international conferences, seminars, etc., indicating a commitment to ongoing professional development. However, specific policies regarding staff development and mobility (e.g., Erasmus+) and educational leaves could be further elaborated.

From the presentation, interviews, and documentation, there are no explicit mentions of quality assurance processes for staff. Formal feedback mechanisms, including peer assessments, could enhance the PSP's ability to assess and improve staff performance. Although questionnaires are filled out by students, a formal feedback mechanism for staff does not exist.

II. Analysis

The PSP benefits from a diverse pool of teaching staff drawn from both the NKUA and various Greek institutions. This diversity enriches the PSP by bringing in a variety of expertise. The PSP involves a mix of teaching, research, clinical, and technical staff, ensuring a functional teaching team with expertise in various specialization areas and comprehensive coverage of relevant PSP's topics.

With 22 staff members and several external collaborators, the PSP appears to have a sufficient number of teachers to meet the needs of its student population, which currently stands at less than 30 students per 2 years.

The selection process for instructors is based on meritocratic and transparent criteria, emphasizing excellence and scientific adequacy. The specialization in the relevant subject area is the primary criterion, thus ensuring the recruitment of qualified and competent individuals in the PSP.

The PSP supports the further training and development of instructors through participation in national and international meetings, seminars, etc., indicating a commitment to ongoing professional growth and enhancement of teaching quality. However, the mobility platforms (Erasmus+) are rarely used, or not used at all.

III. Conclusions

The PSP's staff demonstrates strengths in diversity, expertise, and commitment to professional development. However, there is room for improvement in formalizing feedback mechanisms, clarifying staff development policies, and enhancing quality assurance processes. Developing structured feedback mechanisms can provide valuable insights for staff improvement.

The PSP demonstrates a commitment to excellence in recruitment, training, and development, but precise quality assurance processes for staff are not explicitly mentioned. Formalizing quality assurance processes, including performance evaluations and self-assessment mechanisms, can ensure consistent teaching quality and continuous staff improvement.

The PSP encourages scholarly activity. Staff mobility schemes and educational leaves could be further elaborated. Clear guidelines and opportunities for staff development can enhance teaching quality and professional growth.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Develop and implement structured feedback mechanisms, such as from peer evaluations, to gather comprehensive insights into teaching effectiveness and areas for improvement.

Establish explicit quality assurance processes for teaching staff, encompassing performance evaluations and self-assessment mechanisms. Support continuous improvement initiatives.

It is recommended to implement the PSP staff with a few microbiologists and biologists who could cover important parts related to regenerative and infection processes in orthopedics.

Further elaborate on policies related to staff development (in addition to the NKUA regulations), mobility schemes, and educational leaves.

Encourage innovation in teaching methods. Conduct regular formal reviews of staff development procedures to ensure alignment with evolving educational trends and institutional goals.

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

The PSP is housed in two separate locations: the first orthopaedic surgery clinic at Attikon hospital of the medical school of NKUA, and in the laboratory of material sciences at the Metsovion polytechnic. Both of these locations are used each week of the term, on Tuesdays the students attend in Metsovion whereas on Saturdays the lectures are given at Attikon. In both locations, there are laboratory exercises (or demonstrations) taking place as well.

The educational materials used for the teaching of this PSP are of the highest quality, and the faculty are all real experts in their field of work; in this sense the students of the PSP receive a very high level of education.

The budget of the PSP is primarily dependent on the tuition charged: €4000 for the duration of studies. Expenditures include salaries for technical and secretarial support, as well as a small salary supplement for the participating faculty.

Support services for the students of the PSP are offered by the existing infrastructure of the Athens medical school since the PSP is registered there. These include libraries, gym facilities, computer support, career development offices and psychological counselling. There is also the possibility of foreign language tuition and a cultural student group. Specific secretarial needs for the students of the PSP are offered by a dedicated person. Upon entrance to the PSP, the students are informed about the various support services and facilities available-some of this information (but not all) is also available on the website.

II. Analysis

Teaching areas of the PSP in two locations are good, although students and recent graduates mentioned that it is sometimes hard to navigate Athens traffic to get there. However, this is unavoidable.

Infrastructure and support facilities/services for the students of the PSP are very good, relying mostly on what is on offer to the rest of the students of the Athens medical school.

It was not completely clear to the panel on how the budget of the PSP is handled since the document that was submitted was not accurate, or well written. From what can be surmised, the majority of the tuition fees are spent on small salary supplements for the faculty, and on the hiring of a part time secretary dedicated to the student needs. Expenses for educational material of the PSP is a very small percentage of the total income (€1259 per term).

III. Conclusions

The PSP maintains good infrastructure specifically for the students, and it also offers, as part of the Athens medical school, a good selection of additional support services. The budget of this PSP is one sided towards salaries and very low on educational material.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Improve the account management of the PSP, at least when it needs to be shared with an outside panel.

Consider reducing the tuition if the needs for educational material are so low.

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 PSP uses the UniTron system for collecting information on the student progress and there are additional methods to monitor the performance of both faculty and students. The UniTron system uses a large number of categories so as to be able to derive very detailed information on student activity and progress.

Student satisfaction with the course work is collected via questionnaires that are administered for each module. Information on student evaluation of several faculty was shared with the PSP.

The Internal Evaluation Unit (MODIP) is mainly responsible for the operation of the QA associated systems. Information and data on faculty performance analysis, administrative support, funding, etc. are also under regular monitoring. The PSP should be able to identify and document sufficient key performance indicators (KPIs), such as career paths, student retention/progression, completion rates, etc.

II. Analysis

From the student questionnaires shared with the PSP, it appears that the level of student satisfaction is high, with scores ranging from 4.2/5 (small number) up to 4.6 and above (the majority). However, although the number of students answering the questionnaire was listed, the percentage was not. Based on the total number of students of the three cycles of the PSP (15, 26 and 24) it would appear that in most modules a good percentage of the attending students fill the questionnaire.

The PSP was told upon questioning that faculty who do not do well in those evaluations are monitored and some corrective action in a friendly fashion taken. This is satisfactory.

Given the small number of students overall in the totality of this PSP, it would be pointless to derive statistical information at this point. Rather, monitoring of individual student and faculty activity are more appropriate actions, and in this sense the PSP does a good job.

III. Conclusions

The PSP has in place adequate mechanisms for monitoring student progress and faculty performance. As student numbers increase in future years, more statistically meaningful conclusions can be drawn.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

In addition to students, consider making a portal for collecting information on the graduates of the PSP: their future endeavors, and their thoughts on the PSP.

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

Information on the ABBO PSP of the medical school is already provided on the NKUA website. The content of the course descriptions and learning outcomes during the four semesters of the PSP studies and the ECTS attributed are presented on this website. The teaching material is also available on the website. NKUA and the medical school disseminate information about academic events and seminars linked to the medical field. Information about PSPs and various other activities within NKUA and the medical school is also available on this website. Information about PSPs includes the objectives, the organization of the study cycles (semesters), the mandatory requirements for students, the courses, the practical/clinical/research exercises, etc. The website also includes the teaching methods (lectures, seminars, laboratory work, clinical work, etc.), the student coursework evaluation via questionnaires, a guide for the PSP studies, a description of the medical school and the ABBO PSP, information about the personnel, areas of focus, Erasmus+ mobility, Erasmus+ traineeship, study advisors, academic advisors, mental health support, hours and resources of the library, publications, etc. The website encourages direct communication between the students and the academic and administrative staff. Information and communication with the PSP students and course content are also adequate via email.

Actually, only a Greek version of the PSP website exists. This website is not indicative or representative of this innovative and qualitative PSP. Information is sparse, not in detail, and sometimes unclear. For example, under the CVs of PSP faculty, we can see the CVs of only 11 PSP faculty members; the faculty CVs are not following the same structure (the names of the PSP faculty are not linked to Google Scholar or Scopus), are difficult to follow, there is not information concerning research grant acquisition, student supervision, scientific publications or poster presentations linked to the PSP, etc. In addition, information concerning the teaching staff performances (publications, h-index, etc.) is not available. Similarly, under the human resources column, it seems that only 14 staff members participate in this PSP, while in

the provided documents (A16), it is indicated that 22 staff members are active within the PSP. In the link “ΠΕΡΙΣΣΟΤΕΡΕΣ ΠΛΗΡΟΦΟΡΙΕΣ” information concerning the PSP is found in English, and this is surprising. Overall, the web page of the present PSP is confusing, not well-structured and sufficient. A webpage in English that could ensure international visibility of this PSP does not yet exist. The PSP faculty informed the panel that the construction of an English webpage will be realized. It is obvious that the ABBO PSP’s website is not regularly maintained and updated by the PSP faculty. A bank of research topics for the PSP’s students training is missing from the actual webpage. Similarly, a PSP alumni network does not exist. The PSP has already created some links with other departments and institutions, thus providing the tools and opportunities for collaboration, but this is not reflected in the present webpage of the ABBO PSP.

In addition to this website page, the PSP provides information concerning their program through the widely used media platform of Facebook.

II. Analysis

The national and international visibility of this PSP suffers from a lack of an attractive and up-to-date website in Greek and the absence of its English version. Hopefully, the restructuring and actualization of the Greek website and the creation of an English version of the PSP website (the translation of the Greek version) can solve this issue. It is also important that the Greek version contain the academic and research achievements of the PSP faculty. The PSP’s Facebook website page is not updated or maintained by the PSP faculty. A PSP alumni network does not exist. Information about the detailed study program, e-courses, structure, mode of attendance (in-person, via Webex, etc.), number of students, etc., is not available online. There is no indication as well that the PSP website is accessible to people with special needs or disabilities.

The PSP staff does not envisage the use of additional social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter) in the near future.

The PSP does not organize national or international courses for students.

III. Conclusions

Principle 8 is not adequately fulfilled.

The panel finds that the PSP should understand the importance of an attractive, informative, updated, and well-structured website. A link dedicated to the PSP’s alumni has to be created and updated regularly. The English version should be of equal quality to the Greek version.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The PSP website needs to be restructured and updated regularly. It is mainly shown in the Greek language, and if it abides by the strategic plan of the PSP, it shall also include English language content.

Incorporate into the Greek PSP’s website information concerning all teaching staff members, their accomplishments, and performances (publications, h-index, etc.).

It is recommended to the PSP staff to promote the PSP abroad by advertising it to their close collaborators working in international institutions.

The panel highly recommends creating, promoting, and activating an alumni web platform run by the PSP administration. This is a commendable and highly effective way for PSP students to connect with PSP postgraduates. This is helpful for any sort of information or networking.

Distinctions obtained by PSP faculty and students should be communicated and promoted nationally and internationally. It is important for the visibility of the PST to effectively advertise these distinctions.

The success of graduates should be emphasized and promoted widely. Publications and presentations linked to the PSP should be visible on the website.

The Panel advises the PSP to set up active social media pages to better inform future applicants about the program and strengthen its presence in the scientific digital forum.

The panel advises the PSP to consider making the website more friendly to people with special needs or disabilities.

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 has in place a robust procedure for monitoring its performance on a yearly basis. The process starts towards the end of October involving setting of targets; from mid-December to mid-January the students are asked to fill questionnaires which are then evaluated by end of February. All of this information is monitored by MODIP and OMEA and shared with the relevant people.

Overall, monitoring and evaluation are conducted following the quality assurance policy of the NKUA.

Student workload and progression are monitored. However, the PSP was concerned that completion rates are low. For the first group of students starting 5 years ago only 11 out of 15

students have finished whereas for the second group which started 3 years ago only 6 of 26 students have finished.

Student needs and satisfaction levels are monitored by private discussions as well as by questionnaires. The panel did not see evidence of an organised “group meeting” with all the students to discuss concerns and other issues.

The PSP appears to have good policies in place for the equality-inclusion-diversity framework.

II. Analysis

Monitoring its performance is particularly relevant for this PSP which is based on two different locations and involves faculty from many departments and Universities in Greece.

Overall, the panel was satisfied that the PSP, though its steering committee and in cooperation with MODIP and OMEA, do a good job of monitoring performance.

The rate of completion is low for the students of this PSP. A better set of data to explain this trend would be good to collect so as to modify policies or admission requirements.

III. Conclusions

The PSP covers the requirements for Principle 9 well.

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

Continue to monitor carefully performance indicators of the PSP.

Consider having once (or twice) per year a meeting with all students of the PSP and selected faculty discuss issues arising from the function of the PSP.

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

I. Findings

The PSP “Applied Biomechanics and Biomaterials in Orthopedics” at the NKUA had not previously undergone an accreditation and evaluation process. The faculty members were cooperative during the accreditation, answering the committee’s questions. Some clarifying materials regarding the allocation of expenses were requested but have not yet been received. The faculty agreed with the committee's observations and expressed their willingness to address any reported issues to improve the quality of the program. While we greatly appreciate the participation of all professors, there were some delays in attendance. Additionally, the head of the department, Prof. Nikolaos Arkadopoulos, was unable to attend, and vice head Prof. Gerasimos Filippatos represented him.

II Analysis

No comparison can be made with previous accreditations, as this is the first time the postgraduate program has undergone the process. The accreditation process was not conducted smoothly, as some clarifying materials, including those related to the allocation of expenses, were requested but not received in a timely manner. While the participation of all professors is greatly appreciated, there were instances of delayed attendance, inactive cameras, and unmuted conversations unrelated to the accreditation process.

The administration should facilitate the work and function of the panel by respecting time schedules and providing correct and detailed information. This behaviour was perceived as a lack of respect for the overall procedure, compromising the effectiveness of the panel's work. It is recommended that all documentation be clear and detailed and that interactions remain respectful and focused on the accreditation objectives. Addressing these issues is important for ensuring a more courteous and efficient process in future evaluations.

III. Conclusions

The program does not fully comply with Principle 10 due to the aforementioned issues related to respect and cooperation during the evaluation process. Addressing these concerns will be crucial for improving future accreditation procedures.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

All documentation provided should be clear and detailed.

Interactions during the meetings should remain courteous and focused on the accreditation objectives.

Strict adherence to scheduled times should be maintained to ensure professionalism and respect for all participants.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

Features of Good Practice

- This PSP is a very important program for the education and training of students dealing with orthopedics.
- The PSP is a 2-year master (120 ECTS).
- The PSP has a diverse team of teachers, which brings a variety of knowledge and viewpoints to the program.
- Multiple lectures and research topics on orthopedics are implemented.
- Well-designed and elaborated PSP in a very specialized and needed field.
- Existence of questionnaires about staff performance.
- Good mechanisms to follow up on the students' progression.
- Very good faculty, highly respected, and recognized in the field.
- Existence of study guides.
- The academic advisor is utilized.
- High satisfaction rate of the students
- Enthusiastic faculty and students
- Current students, postgraduates, faculty, and stakeholders have an overall very positive experience with the PSP.
- There is interaction with external entities.
- The PSP collects and analyzes all data related to quality assurance and performs analyses of the collected course evaluation data at the instructors' level.
- Learning resources and student support are successfully implemented in this PSP.
- High interaction between the students and faculty.
- Well-designed PSP serving the needs of important, complicated, and increasingly demanding orthopedics challenges.
- Innovative program that offers high value-added specialization in the area of orthopedics.
- The structure of the PSP is rational and clearly articulated and in accordance with the ECTS system.
- Broad range of expert teaching contributors.

Areas of Weakness

- The PSP's Greek web site lacks important information (teaching staff and their research accomplishments).
- The web site does not exist in the English version.
- Time for the PSP accomplishment (4 semesters) not often respected. Many students acquire their diplomas over the four-semester period.
- Absence of students' and faculty's mobility via Erasmus+.
- The library of topics does not exist.
- The number of courses should increase.

- A webpage for PSP alumni is missing.
- Students' participation in questionnaires is low (30%).
- Students' participation in PSP quality assurance bodies (reorganization of the PSP) does not take place.
- There is no formal communication with external stakeholders.
- Awards for the best students do not exist.
- Better distribution of financial resources to support research and infrastructure and to offer scholarships.
- Poor student mobility.
- No clear plan for internationalisation to attract international students.
- Websites in Greek and English need updating.
- No structured personal development plans for staff.

Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Incorporate more courses into the program. Courses in ethics should be reinforced.
- Restructure the existing PSP's webpage.
- Create a PSP webpage in English.
- Incorporate in both Greek and English webpages the names and achievements (publications, H-index, etc.) of each PSP faculty. Similarly, incorporate the detailed course program, publications and poster presentations linked to the PSP.
- Invite several world leaders in the field from abroad to deliver online lectures.
- Introduce several new topics of interest (infectiology, biology of tissue regeneration).
- Establish explicit quality assurance processes for the PSP staff, encompassing performance evaluations, and self-assessment mechanisms. Evaluation criteria are needed to ensure consistency in teaching quality and support continuous improvement initiatives.
- Promote the faculty's mobility via Erasmus+.
- Create an internal formal evaluation committee that will meet once per year to discuss issues related to the improvement of the quality of the PSP.
- Involve a PSP students' representative, alumni, and stakeholders in the design and reorganization of the PSP.
- Organize an informative day (open day) where the various stakeholders can explain the possibilities of mobility, job opportunities, etc.
- Create a library of research topics.
- Promote formal connections with external stakeholders (public and private health organizations).
- Promote the delivery of courses in English and strongly encourage the writing of dissertations in English.
- Motivate the students to participate in various national and international meetings.
- Increase PSP students' mobility via Erasmus+ and Erasmus+ Traineeships.
- Create prizes for the best students each year.
- The success of graduates should be emphasized and promoted widely, especially via social media.
- Attribute scholarships to the best performing students.

- Adopt a policy supporting junior faculty's development in teaching.
- Promote the creation of a PSP alumni page with a dedicated webpage in Greek and English.
- The panel advises the PSP to consider making the website more friendly to people with special needs or disabilities.
- In addition to students, consider making a portal for collecting information on the graduates of the PSP: their future endeavors, and their thoughts on the PSP.
- Improve the account management of the PSP, at least when it needs to be shared with an outside panel.
- Consider reducing the tuition if the needs for educational material are so low.
- Continue to monitor carefully performance indicators of the PSP
- Consider having once (or twice) per year a meeting with all students of the PSP and selected faculty discuss issues arising from the function of the PSP.
- All documentation provided should be clear and detailed.

Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: 2, 3, 7, 9

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10

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

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2. Prof. Panagiotis Soutanas
3. Dr Ktistakis Nicolaos

4. Ms Bakali Vasiliki