



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Accreditation Report for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Reproductive - Regenerative Medicine

Department: Medicine

Institution: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Date: 29 September 2023



Επιχειρησιακό Πρόγραμμα
Ανάπτυξη Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού,
Εκπαίδευση και Διά Βίου Μάθηση
Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Postgraduate Study Programme of **Reproductive – Regenerative Medicine** 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 **Reproductive - Regenerative Medicine** 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. Assoc. Prof. Stefanos Volianitis (Chair)**
Qatar University

- 2. Dr. Konstantinos Pantopoulos**
Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research, Canada

- 3. Dr Georgios Aislaitner**
Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices, Bonn, Germany
(Bundesinstitut für Arzneimittel und Medizinprodukte, BfArM)

- 4. PhD Candidate, Academic Fellow, Eirini Ilia**
University of Western Macedonia-Department of Midwifery

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) formed an external and independent panel of experts to assess the compliance of the postgraduate study programme of **Reproductive - Regenerative Medicine** of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens in accordance with the HAHE Quality Assurance requirements (v. 4957/2022). The assessment was conducted through document reviews and online interviews. The method used was an evidence-based process centred on a sampling of the Department's activities and it was aimed at evaluating the fulfilment of the HAHE requirements of the relevant Quality Standard of the Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) and commenting on its compliance, effectiveness, and applicability for the scope of the requirements. The entire evaluation and accreditation exercise did not include a site visit of the Department and University campus in Athens but was carried out remotely using the Zoom platform.

AP members had the first virtual meeting on Monday September 25 at 15:00 (Athens time) to introduce each other and establish a modus operandi regarding the exercise of accreditation. The AP Review of the PSP started formally on Monday, 25 September 2023 at 16:00 (Athens time) via Zoom. In the first part of this virtual meeting, the Director of the PSP Prof. Drakakis Petros and the secretary of MODIP Mr. Konstantinos Bourletidis familiarised the panel with the department (facts and figures). An overview of the department's origins, history, evolution, and current status was presented in a video that was available to the AP members in advance. A virtual tour of the laboratories, teaching, facilities, and instrumentation was presented in a video, which was also available to the AP members in advance. Member of the PSP Steering Committee, Ass. Prof. Stavros Sofoklis, and MODIP member, Mr. Theodoros Chajitheodorou were also present in this meeting.

The second day included interviews with the teaching staff, students, graduates, employers, and social partners. Interviews and discussion with teaching staff members Prof. Drakaki Petro, Ass. Prof. Stavro Sofokli, Laboratory Teaching Staff Mavrogianni Despoina, Prof. Vrachni Nikolao, Assoc. Prof. Simopoulou Mara, Ph.D. Dinopoulou Vasiliki and Ph.D. Anagnostou Elli. The meeting with current students included 7 students from all years. After the meeting with the current students, a meeting with six graduates of the PSP was held. The following graduates were present: Mr Machairiotis Nikolaos, Obstetrician- Gynecologist,

Attikon University Hospital; Mrs Papamentzelopoulou Myrto, Molecular biology lab staff, Erricos Dinan; Mrs Dedousi Dimitra, Medical School Student; Mrs Panagou Georgia, IVF centre staff, Athens IVF Centre; Mrs Droumpogianni Georgia, NKUA research associator; Mr Chrisanthopoulos Ioannis, Male infertility centre staff, Andromed lab

The meeting with industry representatives and social partners was held with the following participants: Pelekanos Michail, President of the Panhellenic Association of Clinical Embryologists; and Vaksevanoglou Terpsithea, Laboratory manager, Clinical Scientist at Genesis Athens. Finally, the AP had a closure meeting for an informal discussion about key findings with the Director of the PSP Reproductive - Regenerative Medicine Professor Petro Drakaki, the Steering Committee member Stavro Sofokli and MODIP staff, Mr. Konstantino Bourletidi and Mr. Theodoro Chajitheodorou.

Upon completion of the two days of online meetings, the AP recognized a positive atmosphere and a willingness of the Department to cooperate and support the University's QA policy at all levels with a commitment to maintaining and further upgrading the quality standards of the postgraduate study program in compliance with HAHE. The AP would like to thank the Department and University Administration as well as all faculty members for their cooperation and fruitful discussions. The AP members had remote online meetings for the completion of the draft Accreditation Report (AR) during 28-30 September, 2023. The online form at HAHE's website was used for compilation and submission of the report.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The PSP "Reproductive - Regenerative Medicine" was established by Law 1908/7.9.2009. It is one of the first PSPs established at the Medical School of the NKUA and has been operating continuously. Re-established by law 4116/21.9.2018 in accordance with the Law and Amendment of the Operating Regulations of the PSP in accordance with the provisions of Law 4957/22 and the Regulations for Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies of NKUA.

The PSP aims to provide a high level of expertise and practicing research in Reproductive-Regenerative Medicine by combining high-level abilities both at academic and research level. It aims to create specialized human resources in "Reproductive-Regenerative Medicine" through acquisition of applied knowledge of new technologies in the field and promotion of research.

The PSP's duration is 3 semesters and the qualification awarded is "MSc in Reproductive - Regenerative Medicine". Graduates completing the PSP can be employed both as clinicians (obstetricians, staff in gynaecology clinics, laboratories and other health structures) and academics in the field of education by teaching the subject.

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 quality assurance policy of the PSP "Reproductive Regenerative Medicine" is harmonized with the quality policy of NKUA and is presented in the submitted A2 document is defined as follows:

- Continuous upgrading of the general academic work of PSP
- Improving the educational project and its learning results

- Continuous modernization of the curriculum
- Support and further development of his research activity
- Efficient organizational administrative operation of its services
- Increasing the degree of realization of its visionary goals, through an educational and administrative scientific methodological framework of standardized procedures and actions

The *Quality goal setting* of the PSP is presented in the A3 document submitted are:

- Improving the Graduation Rate of Graduate Students
- Active Participation of Students and Graduates in Internal Evaluation procedures
- Participation of PSP Students in research processes
- Connection of PSP with Doctoral Level Studies
- Implementation of PMS interconnection actions with the labour market and the Local Society
- Utilization, Collaboration and Networking with the Graduates of the Department and of the PSP
- Participation of postgraduate students of the program in ERASMUS

II. Analysis

The Quality assurance policy of the PSP is in alignment with the Policy of NKUA and meets the Standards of criterion 1.

However, the Quality goals set, even though they are in alignment with the criteria *expected* in order to meet the overall accreditation Standards of HAHE, nevertheless, such goal setting corroborates that *currently* the PSP does not yet meet all the accreditation Standards.

Thus, even though the PSP meets the criterion for Quality Goal Setting, this finding has important implications for several of the Criteria presented later in this report.

III. Conclusions

The PSP is fully compliant with the Standards for Criterion 1.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

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 curriculum of the PSP has been designed according to universally accepted standards for the area of modern Obstetrics. The aims of the PSP are to create graduates with high level of knowledge and skills of the subject that can be employed as Obstetricians in Gynecology clinics, laboratories and other health structures in the Public and Private sector, or as teachers and educators of the subject. Through high-level theoretical and practical education in the recent developments in the field, the students of the PSP "Reproductive-Regenerative Medicine" are offered a strong scientific background, know-how and experience in a particularly dynamic area of modern obstetrics.

There is a procedure/regulation in place for periodic revisions of the PSP's curriculum that involves consultation from stakeholders and students.

The structure and Learning Outcomes of the PSP are presented in depth in a Study Guide. However, upon inspection of the Study Guide, the courses syllabi and the program presented in the website of the PSP for Semester B in 2023, the EEAP has not been able to verify agreement between the information provided in the two sources.

II. Analysis

There is a discrepancy between the number of contact hours presented in the courses syllabi and the actual hours presented in the website of PSP-

Specifically, according to the Course Syllabi there are 20 teaching hours per week spread in 6 courses amounting to 30 ECTS for Semester B in 2023. Considering that each semester has 13 weeks of Instruction it is expected that approximately 260 (\pm) teaching hours should be offered. However, according to the teaching material found in the webpage of the PSP only 101 teaching hours were actually offered. This large discrepancy (only 39% of the expected hours) raises concerns regarding the academic workload (ECTS) actually presented to the students.

III. Conclusions

Despite the excellent quality of the teaching material and the high quality of the educational prospect of the PSP, nevertheless, the limited contact (actual teaching) hours compared to the expected academic load required for a standard Full Time Semester (30 ECTS) overshadows this Principle and the EEAP considers that the PSP is significantly limited and only Partially Compliant with the Criteria of Principle 2.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Significant structural revisions should be made in the curriculum to increase the academic load (teaching hours) to approach the expected contact hours corresponding to a Full Time Study Program and the ECTS offered.

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

Teaching combines lectures in classrooms, presentation of specialized topics by students as part of an assignment, and laboratory exercises. Teaching of theoretical courses is performed at the amphitheatre of the Alexandra General Athens Hospital, a teaching hospital of the

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. Clinical training is provided at the Medically Assisted Reproduction Unit of the 1st Obstetrics-Gynecology Clinic. Laboratory courses are offered in the Laboratory of Molecular Biology of Reproduction and the Laboratory of Assisted Reproduction.

The PSP includes students with different backgrounds and skills. The main mode of delivery involves traditional lectures in the amphitheatre with the use of audio-visual equipment. The teaching material includes PowerPoint presentations, review articles, e-books, and references to textbooks.

Student complaints can be expressed in writing using a specific form. A resolution mechanism involving the student, the director of the PSP and the academic advisor of the student is in place.

Anonymous satisfaction surveys are collected at the end of each semester and the findings are evaluated by a steering committee of the PSP and summarized in a report. Based on this report, which is communicated to teaching staff, corrective measures are taken, if necessary.

II. Analysis

There is evidence that the PSP has adopted a student-centered learning approach. For instance, there is flexibility in the use of teaching methodologies and tools according to the needs of the students, while training in small groups is also provided. The teaching material appears to be up-to-date.

The students regularly evaluate the mode of delivery and general quality of the courses. Their overall responses in anonymous questionnaires, but also in personal remote interviews with the Accreditation Panel were very positive and gave the impression that there is mutual respect between students and teaching staff.

The PSP shows respect to the diversity of the students and encourages their contribution to the teaching and learning procedure.

III. Conclusions

The Accreditation Panel concludes that student-centered learning, teaching, and assessment are at high standards and are substantially compliant with the guidelines. Panel members were impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of teaching staff and students. It also identified areas where student-centered teaching, learning and assessment could be improved. The major weakness was the monothematic nature of teaching and evaluation approaches. Another issue that came up during the discussions with students was the need for more “hands-on” experience in laboratories.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The AP encourages the PSP to diversify the teaching and evaluation methods used. These could include more student assignments. For instance, students could be assigned to critically present key primary papers in areas relevant to the course, discuss the results in class, identify important open questions, propose follow up studies. These assignments could contribute to part of the final grade of the course, which currently mostly depends on a single examination with multiple-choice questions. The assessment criteria and methods should be published in advance on the PSP web site. More opportunities for “hands-on” experience in laboratories should be provided. The AP proposes in future to consider the creation of more laboratory and practical courses. Along these lines, the Accreditation Panel also feels that the students should be encouraged to participate more in research projects aiming to acquire experience in research methodologies and techniques, and possibly lead to publications.

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

All regulations and procedures concerning the structure and design of the PSP are included in the Study Guide and in the supplementary documentation. More specifically, the following regulations and procedures are included: (a) The student selection procedures and the required supporting documents, (b) the rights and obligations of students, (c) the monitoring of students' progress, (d) scholarships, (e) procedures and requirements regarding the writing of the thesis, (f) information on student mobility programmes, (g) the duration of the studies, (h) the procedure of award and recognition of the Diploma, and (i) a Research Ethics Code.

The PSP offers a practical training workshop on scientific research methodology and paper drafting. The students praised the knowledge gained from it, and welcomed the possibility of the workshop's expansion.

The PSP does not currently include an internship. All interviewed parties were open to the implementation of an internship component to the PSP curriculum.

The ECTS is applied across the curriculum and procedures and requirements regarding student mobility programmes are established. However, the majority of the PSP students did not participate in exchange programs.

II. Analysis

There is evidence that the PSP has developed and applied all rules and regulations relevant with Principle 4. This information is presented in the Study Guide and in additional relevant documentation. Prospective and current students have a clear picture of the selection procedure, the monitoring of their progress, and regulations governing the drafting of the thesis, mobility programmes, and scholarship opportunities.

The PSP organizes an effective workshop on research methodology that could be expanded to provide more in-depth knowledge in this area.

Increased communication of the availability of mobility programmes would bring students in contact with career possibilities and pathways that may be inaccessible domestically.

III. Conclusions

The PSP has successfully laid out in its documentation all regulations and relevant issues for student admission, progression, thesis drafting and recognition of studies and certification, in alignment with Principle 4, as stated by HAHE.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The PSP should encourage students' participation in mobility programmes.
- The PSP should consider expanding the existing research methodology practical training workshop.
- The PSP administration should consider seeking interested parties for the implementation of an internship component to its curriculum.

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 was established in 2009. Many members of the faculty and teaching staff are active clinicians with significant clinical expertise. Faculty members are mostly affiliated with the Department of Medicine. The non-faculty teaching staff have leading roles in private centres of assisted reproduction and play an important role in the training of students. The teaching staff is regularly evaluated by the students in satisfaction surveys and questionnaires.

Professional development opportunities for the teaching staff are mostly based on personal initiatives. Teaching staff mobility is encouraged.

There is a link of teaching with research, which is also evident in the list of publications provided to the Accreditation Panel by the PSP. The research programs of the faculty are within areas of Reproductive Medicine.

II. Analysis

From its inception, the PSP attracted qualified faculty from the Department of Medicine, but also other specialized teaching staff with expertise on Reproductive and Regenerative Medicine. The faculty has an excellent academic record with publications in specialized scientific journals.

The remote interviews with the Accreditation Panel revealed an enthusiasm and commitment of the faculty and teaching staff. Moreover, the student interviews showed the appreciation and respect of students to their mentors. The same picture emerged from interviews with alumni of the PSP. These findings provide evidence that the recruitment of faculty and teaching staff for the PSP is transparent and governed by merit-based criteria.

Teaching staff mobility is halted by clinical and professional commitments. Nevertheless, there are faculty members affiliated with foreign universities and hospitals and regularly visit them; this certainly promotes academic renewal and stimulates exchange of ideas. The workload of faculty and teaching staff is appropriate and the faculty to student ratio is satisfactory.

Publications involving students of the PSP, either as first or middle authors, include 30 original articles, reviews and meta-analyses, and case reports. The fraction of original articles was relatively small, indicating a relatively low primary research output. A reason for this could be related to the part-time nature of the program. This issue was extensively discussed, and the leaders of the PSP argued with convincing arguments that under the current circumstances and with almost all students being professionally active, this is the only realistic option.

III. Conclusions

The Accreditation Panel concludes that the level of knowledge and skills, and the commitment of the PSP teaching staff are excellent. The processes for recruitment, training and further development, as well as the overall link of teaching with research are substantially compliant with the guidelines. The major criticism was the relatively weak link of teaching with primary research. Another issue was that staff mobility opportunities are not regularly used.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Accreditation Panel encourages a further link of teaching and research within the PSP. This could be done by extending the duration of the diploma work of the students from 1 semester throughout the whole program. Each student could be assigned a research project and be associated with a supervisor. This strategy would make the PSP more research-oriented and complement its excellent role in providing specialized and up-to-date training on Reproductive Medicine to students of diverse backgrounds (mostly Medicine and Biology). The faculty should be further encouraged to take advantage of mobility opportunities.

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 uses two lecture halls Alexandra Hospital Auditorium and Alexandra Hospital Library for all its courses, and three laboratories: IVF Laboratory, Laboratory of molecular biology of reproduction and Regenerative Medicine Laboratory for demonstrations and some practical training. The lecture halls have modern audio-visual and computing equipment, as well as a high-speed connection to the network.

It is stated that NKUA provides to people with special needs (AMEA) access to buildings and lecture halls. There are also appropriate working stations in the library for students with special needs. The availability of web-conferencing services allows some lectures to be taught remotely.

All PSP courses are associated with eClass, which is an online platform, where learning and other useful material and timetables are uploaded. Students have access to the NKUA general facilities and support services (e.g., student restaurant, sports centre, etc.).

The following NKUA services are available to students: eClass, e-Secretariat services (my-uni), Webmail, "Multimedia Content Hosting and Search Service" Library and Information Centre, Student ID, Wireless network connection (Wi-Fi), Counselling services (academic advisor - NKUA Liaison Office for Career Guidance), NKUA Student Advocate, Foreign Language Teaching Centre, Students' Cultural Club, Support for Students with Disabilities, University Gym-Swimming Pool.

The NKUA Department of Medicine also allocates administrative support staff to the PSP.

II. Analysis

The infrastructure used for the PSP lectures appears to adequately serve its purpose. The lecture halls are stated to be accessible by people with special needs. This was confirmed during the interviews with students and graduates. There is adequate web-conferencing technology in place which allowed the program to function throughout COVID-19 pandemic and which permits flexibility in the way of the teaching of the courses. However, it appears that the majority of the lectures were performed on line and very few (possibly one) were performed in person with physical presence of the students and course instructors in the lecture hall.

Due to the remote nature of this review, an actual tour of the halls and facilities could not be performed with on-site visits by the Accreditation Panel.

The general facilities and services offered by the NKUA effectively support the students in their learning experience (e.g., libraries, access to scientific journals, etc.) as well as extracurricular activities (e.g., students' restaurant and sports centre).

Both students and graduates expressed their satisfaction with the availability, operation and accessibility of the aforementioned facilities. No complaints were recorded during the interviews.

III. Conclusions

The Accreditation Panel finds that the PSP's available learning resources and student support are sufficient and fulfil the requirements.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

It is recommended that the lectures are performed both as on-line and in person with physical presence in the lecture halls.

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

During the evaluation of the PSP "Reproductive-Regenerative Medicine", we found the following: The curriculum responds positively to key performance indicators, such as: the quality of teaching, the success rate and the overall satisfaction of students, a fact that was confirmed by interviewing students (graduates and existing students).

II. Analysis

The PSP seems to be achieving its goals. The percentage of graduates and their positive opinion reflect the quality of education. Students express their high satisfaction with the program.

III. Conclusions

In conclusion, the PSP "Reproductive-Regenerative Medicine" is effective and successful in the education of its students. The information which is collected, should continue to be used to improve the program and maintain the high quality of education. Attention should also be paid to continuous monitoring of data and implementation of improvements where necessary. In addition, it is necessary to ensure that the information system is reliable and available for collecting and analysing information.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

PRINCIPLE 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES
INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES IN A DIRECT AND READILY ACCESSIBLE WAY. THE RELEVANT INFORMATION SHOULD BE UP-TO-DATE, OBJECTIVE AND CLEAR.

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP "Reproductive-Regenerative Medicine" has special sections on its website for its promotion. The version of the website is in both Greek and English with basic and objective information. The last update of the MSc Website was in March 2023 and since then there has been no new update of the information, such as for example for the new academic semester, or any current announcement.

II. Analysis

The PSP "Reproductive-Regenerative Medicine" has special sections on its website for its promotion, which shows the commitment of the program to provide important information to the public. This is important so that there can be transparency and a better understanding of the information by the various users, including international students.

However, it would be good for the website to be maintained, updated and updated in general at regular intervals, ensuring its proper functioning. Updating the information is necessary to maintain the timeliness and accuracy of the information provided to the public. The findings demonstrate the effort of the MSc to provide sufficient information and make it accessible to the wider public. The bilingual publication is then addressed to

both local and international stakeholders. However, the lack of information on maintaining and updating the website compromises its effectiveness.

III. Conclusions

The website is not updated regularly with current events. The lack of information regarding the update status of the website renders it untrustworthy to the reader and, thus, limits its effectiveness.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The AP recommends the use of appropriate graphic tables, diagrams and a more organized structure to make information more readable and understandable.
- Most importantly, the MSc website should be updated at regular intervals and information regarding its update status should be clearly stated.

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 content of the program in the light of our recent research seems to respond in part to the constantly changing needs of students, while the interviews showed that there is a flexibility in space-time. Undoubtedly, the PSP has established an internal quality assurance system for its continuous monitoring and periodic internal evaluation, which reflects the commitment to maintaining educational quality and promoting a conducive learning environment for students.

II. Analysis

The workload of students has the potential to expand and respond to current needs to cover all the required teaching contact hours of the program to further develop and enhance the completion of their postgraduate studies. Subsequently, the evaluation process of students is known to them orally and from the first lesson, but without the students knowing anything further about how they are evaluated which is related to the connection of learning outcomes with the assessment methods. In addition, students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the program are positive, but it was noted a request for an increase in workshop hours to further enhance their knowledge on the subject.

III. Conclusions

In conclusion, the institution shall demonstrate sufficient commitment to the principle of continuous monitoring and periodic internal evaluation. The internal quality assurance system needs to further strengthen evaluation criteria, stakeholder involvement and well-documented processes to be commendable, as these practices are aligned with the goal of maintaining educational quality and improving the learning experience for students. The presence of clearly defined procedures and documentation for curriculum re-evaluation, feedback processes, and internal evaluation suggests a structured approach to program improvement.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The institution complies substantially with the principle of continuous monitoring and periodic internal evaluation of postgraduate programs. The learning environment, the services provided are supportive and appropriate for students, but they need to be reviewed and revised regularly with the participation of students and other stakeholders.

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 has not been previously subjected to an external evaluation for accreditation purposes. There are two Final reports: one for the Institution of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and one for the Postgraduate Studies Programs of the Department of Medicine. The PSP on Reproductive and Regenerative Medicine included a progress report from the institution's past external review in 2015¹.

II. Analysis

The current evaluation is the PSP's first external accreditation review. Some recommendations from the past NKUA institution's external review have been implemented to this PSP as well, towards improvement.

The Accreditation Panel found that members of the PSP faculty were very helpful in answering all questions during the current review and engaged in constructive discussions. Moreover, they showed that they understand the importance of the accreditation process and the Accreditation Panel's recommendations.

The Greek website contains the announcement of the last year's PSP and the application form. Some relevant documentation such as criteria for the selection, Study Guide, description of courses, methods of students' evaluation, or CVs of the teaching staff were not available.

¹ https://modip.uoa.gr/fileadmin/depts/uoag/modip/uploads/Ektheseis/FINAL_REPORT_EKPA.pdf

III. Conclusions

The PSP has not been evaluated before by an external committee for accreditation purposes. It is acknowledged that several recommendations from the NKUA institution's external review in 2015 were also applicable to this PSP. All academics involved with the PSP were very helpful to facilitate inquiries from the EEA panel.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The program should increase its efforts to populate the Greek website with more material helpful for potential students (see also Principle 8).
- The up-to-date instructors' detailed CVs must be posted on the PSP website to facilitate the students' selection of a supervisor for the dissertation topic (see also Principle 8).

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- The Quality assurance policy of the PSP is in alignment with the Policy of NKUA.
- The curriculum of the PSP has been designed according to universally accepted standards for the area of modern Obstetrics.
- There is evidence that the PSP has adopted a student-centered learning approach with flexibility in the use of teaching methodologies and tools according to the needs of the students, while training in small groups is also provided. The teaching material appears to be up-to-date.
- All regulations and procedures concerning the structure and design of the PSP are included in the Study Guide and in the supplementary documentation.
- The level of knowledge and skills, and the commitment of the PSP teaching staff are excellent.
- The infrastructure used for the PSP lectures appears to adequately serve its purpose.

II. Areas of Weakness

- Despite the excellent quality of the teaching material and the high quality of the educational prospect of the PSP, nevertheless, the limited contact (actual teaching) hours compared to the expected academic load required for a standard full time Semester (30 ECTS) is a significant weakness.
- Another major weakness is the monothematic nature of teaching and evaluation approaches. Additionally, there is a need for more “hands-on” experience in laboratories.
- Limited student mobility. Limited Professional development opportunities for the teaching staff. Teaching staff mobility is halted by clinical and professional commitments.
- The fraction of original articles is relatively small, indicating a relatively low primary research output. There is a link of teaching with research, albeit, relatively limited.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Significant structural revisions should be made in the curriculum to increase the academic load (teaching hours) to approach the expected contact hours according to the ECTS offered.

- The Accreditation Panel encourages the PSP to diversify the teaching and evaluation approaches. These could include more student assignments. For instance, students could be assigned to critically present key primary papers in areas relevant to the course, discuss the results in class, identify important open questions, propose follow up studies. These assignments could contribute to part of the final grade of the course, which currently mostly depends on a single examination with multiple-choice questions. The assessment criteria and methods should be published in advance on the PSP website. More opportunities for “hands-on” experience in laboratories should be provided. Along these lines, the Accreditation Panel also feels that the students should be encouraged to participate more in research projects aiming to acquire experience in research methodologies and techniques, and possibly lead to publications.
- The PSP should encourage students’ participation in mobility programmes.
- The PSP should consider expanding the existing research methodology practical training workshop. The PSP administration should consider seeking interested parties for the implementation of an internship component to its curriculum.
- The Accreditation Panel encourages a further link of teaching and research within the PSP. This could be done by extending the duration of the diploma work of the students from 1 semester to throughout the whole duration of program. Each student could be assigned a research project and be associated with a supervisor. The faculty should be further encouraged to take advantage of mobility opportunities.
- The AP recommends the use of appropriate tables and graphs to improve the presentation of the information provided in the website.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 4, 6, 7, and 10.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **3, 5, 8, and 9.**

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: **2.**

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

- 1. Assoc. Prof. Stefanos Volianitis (Chair)**
Qatar University
- 2. Dr. Konstantinos Pantopoulos**
Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research, Canada
- 3. Dr Georgios Aislaitner**
Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices, Bonn, Germany
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- 4. PhD Candidate, Academic Fellow, Eirini Ilia**
University of Western Macedonia-Department of Midwifery