



**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ**  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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**Accreditation Report**  
**for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:**  
**Neurosciences**  
**Department: School of Medicine**  
**Institution: University of Crete**  
**Date: 20/01/2025 - 25/01/2025**



Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση  
της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



Πρόγραμμα  
Ανθρώπινο Δυναμικό και  
Κοινωνική Συνοχή



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of  
The **Postgraduate Study Programme Neurosciences** of the  
**University of Crete** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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## **PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW**

### **I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation (EEAP)**

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the postgraduate study programme **Neurosciences** of the **University of Crete** is comprised of the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. **Professor Thimios Mitsiadis** (Chair)  
University of Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland
2. **Dr Nicholas Ktistakis**  
Babraham Institute, Cambridge, UK
3. **Professor Dimitris Grammatopoulos**  
Warwick Medical School, Coventry, UK
4. **Dr Andreas A. Roussakis**  
Imperial College London, London, UK
5. **Ms Panagiota Kyriakidou**, PhD Candidate  
Democritus University of Thrace, Alexandroupoli, Greece

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In accordance with the requirements of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020), the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (**HAHE**), by individual invitation and after formal acceptance, established an independent External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (**EEAP**), with the mission of assessing the compliance of the Postgraduate Studies Programme (**PSP**) in **Neurosciences** the **School of Medicine** of the **University of Crete (UoC)**, scheduled for **January 20<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025**. The established EEAP consists of four experts, from Universities and Institutes abroad, and a student representative 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, the 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:

- [M1.1 Quality Policy.pdf](#)
- [M1.2 Quality Objectives.pdf](#)
- [M2.1 Decision On Establishing PMS.pdf](#)
- [M2.2 Internal Regulations of PMS.pdf](#)
- [M2.3 PMS Study Guide.pdf](#)
- [M2.4 Course Outlines.pdf](#)
- [M2.5 Teaching Staff.pdf](#)
- [M3.2 Complaints Regulations.pdf](#)
- [M3.3 Academic Council Regulations.pdf](#)
- [M3.4 Teaching Methods.pdf](#)
- [M4.1 Ethics Regulations.pdf](#)
- [M4.2 PMS Study Regulations.pdf](#)
- [M4.4 Diploma Model.pdf](#)
- [M5.1 Performance of Specialized Staff.pdf](#)
- [M5.2 Selection Criteria of Specialized Staff.pdf](#)
- [M5.3 Work Regulations.pdf](#)
- [M5.4 Staff Support Policy.pdf](#)
- [M6.1 Infrastructures and Services.pdf](#)
- [M6.2 Tuition Utilization Plan.pdf](#)
- [M6.3 PMS Viability Study.pdf](#)
- [M6.4 Human Resources.pdf](#)

[M6.5 Administrative List.pdf](#)  
[M6.6 Student Information Material.pdf](#)  
[M7.1 OPESP Data Reports.pdf](#)  
[M7.2 Student Registration.pdf](#)  
[M7.3 Data Collection Method.pdf](#)  
[M8.1 Maintenance of the Master's Website.pdf](#)  
[M8.2 Master's Viewing Link.pdf](#)  
[M9.1 Internal Assessment.pdf](#)  
[M10.1 Master's Progress Report.pdf](#)

#### HAHE Material

Acronyms, European Qualifications Framework, M1 Standards PSP En., M12 PSP Mapping Grid, Accreditation Management System - expert manual, PSP\_nar - 1.0.ppsx, Guidelines of Accreditation, M13 PSP Accreditation Report Template, Accreditation Management System - expert manual, M6 PSP-Guidelines for the EEAP, M9 Postgraduate information letter and guidelines of Accreditation of Undergraduate Programmes of Study.

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

The EEAP received the accreditation support material concerning the PSP on **Neurosciences** about a week prior to the accreditation visit. The virtual review was organized by HAHE and the School of Medicine at UoC. The supporting material was of high quality. All documents were very well crafted and designed. During the virtual visit, all the participants involved (University and School Leadership, MODIP, Teaching staff) were very prompt to provide us with all information needed. The meetings took place on the 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2025 and were conducted online utilizing the Zoom video conference facilities. All meetings took place in a very friendly and cooperative spirit.

The timetable and agenda of the accreditation review were as follows:

On Monday 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2025, the EEAP members had a short meeting to organize the accreditation review and allocate the different tasks. Later, on the same day, the EAAP had a welcome meeting with members of MODIP and OMEA, the Head of the School, and the PSP Director. Brief and informative presentations were made by the PSP Director focused on the main features of the programme and the collaborative nature of development, delivery, and management of the PSP. The meeting concluded with a discussion on strengths and possible areas of concern, and the degree of compliance of the programme to the Standards for Quality Accreditation. The same day the schedule included an online tour indicating the UoC and PSP facilities.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2025, the EEAP met with the teaching faculty members and discussed their workload, professional development opportunities and methods for student evaluations, teaching and research activities. The EEAP also met with current and previous students as well as met with potential employers and stakeholders and discussed about their academic and personal endeavour. Thereafter, the EEAP members met in private to discuss and reflect on their first impressions and prepare a brief oral presentation of their findings.

The EEAP had its last meeting of the day with the Vice-Rector of the UoC, the Dean of the Medical School, the PSP Director, and MODIP members, during which additional comments

and clarifications were discussed. The EEAP gave a short preliminary verbal report about their impressions and key findings.

Members of the EEAP wish to thank the UoC for arranging and hosting these meetings and for the exceptional spirit of openness and collaboration with which it responded to the queries of the EEAP over the course of the virtual accreditation visit.

## **II. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile**

The Interdepartmental PSP in Neurosciences was founded in 2000 and has a total of more than 150 graduates. Over the last 6 years, the PSP had a high number of admissions, while it also had a high number of graduates. Since 2000, there have been amendments to the Official Gazette of the PSP, the last of which was made in 2023. The PSP, in accordance with the recent change in the Official Gazette (5773/2022-11-11, Part B), aiming to harmonize with the necessary requirements of Law 4957/2022, proceeded with the procedure for a new change to the Official Gazette, in accordance with the provisions of Law 4957/2022. The approval bodies of the PSP are the department assembly, the PSP committee, and the senate. The PSP aims to provide high-level postgraduate education in Neurosciences, with an emphasis on Cellular-Molecular Neurosciences, Neurosciences that study the Development of the Nervous System and Clinical Neurosciences.

The orientation of the PSP is professional, educational (acquisition of specialized knowledge), and scientific (research and methodological tools). The professional orientation of the PSP aims to offer professional prospects to students seeking employment, but also the possibility of further professional and scientific development in the Academy and in health services of the broader public and private sector.

This PSP was the first organized PSP in the country that emphasized the understanding of the neuronal system function in physiological and pathological conditions. With its re-establishment as an interdepartmental PSP, and with the full integration of the Departments of Biology and Psychology of the UoC, the Programme aims to further develop research on the nervous system in Greece through expanding collaborations between clinical and basic scientists and attracting top graduates from academic institutions in the country, both from the field of medicine and from the field of positive/technological/cognitive sciences. The educational process of the PSP is carried out with the physical presence of the students. For the successful completion of the PSP and the award of the diploma, the postgraduate student must accumulate at least one hundred and twenty (120) Credit Units (ECTS), and specifically: a) at least sixty (60) ECTS from the successful attendance of the compulsory and elective courses, b) thirty (30) ECTS from the 2 laboratory exercises (Rotations), and c) thirty (30) ECTS from the successful preparation of the PSP dissertation.

Information about the curriculum can be found on the website:

<https://www.neurosciences.med.uoc.gr/>

## 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**

This is an interdepartmental PSP between the Faculty of Medicine, the Department of Biology and the Department of Psychology of UoC. It was first established in 2000 and re-established



in 2022 as an English-speaking programme. It is run by a 5-member steering committee which contains faculty from all 3 collaborating institutions. The PSP has strong support from the Medical School and the other departments of the University of Crete, and it has access to the very good facilities on the campus in Heraklion.

The PSP accepts approximately 15 students and is offered every 2 years. Total tuition fees (recently introduced) are 1000 euros. The student applicants are from biomedical departments as well as other science disciplines for the most part. The topics covered by the PSP (cellular and molecular neuroscience, systems/cognitive neuroscience, developmental neuroscience, translational neuroscience, clinical neuroscience and neuropsychology) are taught by a faculty of over 50 members drawn from Crete, other Greek universities and from abroad.

The PSP lasts for a total of 4 semesters offering 120 ECTS. The first 2 semesters are dedicated to course work, the third semester concerns two lab rotations whereas the last semester is for thesis work.

Most of the income from tuition fees is spent on secretarial and other support with a very small amount dedicated to salaries or to consumables.

The PSP is subject to internal quality control procedures run by OMEA and MODIP, all of which were available to the EEAP. A recent internal evaluation highlighted issues needing some improvement which included better information gathering of work prospects of PSP graduates and a better statistical analysis of student performance in the various courses.

## **II. Analysis**

This is a strong PSP which benefits from the strong tradition of the UoC in neuroscience. The course design appears to be aimed to students who want to use the programme as a stepping stone to continue on a PhD degree, and in fact the majority of the students who met with the EEAP were planning to continue for a PhD either in Crete or abroad.

The subject of the PSP in molecular neurosciences complements well another neuroscience programme offered by the UoC which is more focused on neuronal function and modelling at larger scales. Of note, some courses between the two PSPs are offered at the same time by the same faculty, perhaps as a reflection of the fact that the two PSPs were originally one and subsequently separated.

The faculty involved in this PSP are very well qualified and their academic output ranges from good to excellent. The teaching load is reasonable, and their teaching obligations on other PSPs are also reasonable. One benefit for the faculty involved is that they can have students rotating in the laboratories who may then decide staying for PhD. This is an important characteristic of this PSP.

The EEAP was disappointed to meet only 3 graduates and only 2 stakeholders of this PSP. For a programme that has been running for a long time, these numbers are very low and prevented the EEAP from obtaining a complete impression of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme. Hopefully, in future evaluations the steering committee will do a better job of inviting graduates and stakeholders of the PSP.

## **III. Conclusions**

Strong and useful PSP with a long and distinguished history.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

- Organise a better evaluation visit in the future, especially with respect to graduates and stakeholders.
- The question of whether 2 rotations in the third semester are crucial for the students was discussed and answered well in the meeting with the EEAP, but it may need to be revisited in the future.
- Given the small amount of tuition and fees, it may be good for the faculty to obtain outside funding to support the research activity of the students and the PSP administration.

## 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 EEAP reviewed the submitted documentation in line with HAHE guidance for EEAP reviews. The document set for the review was complete. The EEAP discussed details of the PSP with the Course Director, the MODIP members, the UoC Senior Management team, associate academics and fellow teaching staff, as well as prospective students and alumni. Feedback was sought from external stakeholders. Preliminary conclusions were discussed with the Course Director, MODIP and UoC Senior Officers at the close-out meeting.

The Senate decided on the re-establishment of the PSP on 03-Apr-2018/10-May-2018. The PSP is delivered in partnership with the UoC Medical School and the UoC Department of Biology and Department of Psychology. In its current form, the PSP design adheres to HAHE principles, the European standards for Quality Assurance within the EHEA, and the UoC strategic development plan. The PSP maintains a high standard through a comprehensive curriculum structure, which effectively integrates a wide range of educational activities. The learning objectives are well-defined and focused, helping students to meet their educational and professional needs. The expected volume of work follows the standards of the EU ECTS system (level 7). The total number of ECTSs is 120 with a course layout that spans over 4 semesters. Each ECST credit translates to approximately 25-30 hours. The workload breakdown is included in appendices M2.3 and M2.4.

Prospective students are required to attend all classes, tutorials, and laboratory practicals. The PSP “Neurosciences” qualification is awarded following successful participation in lectures and tutorials, and upon completion of a research project and a presentation of the dissertation. In this PSP, marking ranges from 1-10. The courses are taught in English. The dissertation can be written in either Greek or English language; yet in another section in the PSP guide it is implied that the dissertation must be written in English.

### **II. Analysis**

Overall, the PSP outline is comprehensive and well-structured; however, further details need to be included in the PSP guide to offer students a clearer understanding of the curriculum and its requirements. The student guide (written in Greek) is basic. The guidance document serves as an introduction to new students/applicants and as a navigation tool for prospective students. The modules are presented in some detail. The introduction to basic research methodology and statistics are taught in the first semester. Advanced techniques and practices are taught throughout the PSP in the first year. Ethical considerations and relevant Greek and EU legislation notes are discussed with the students, but these are not taught in a separate module. Active involvement of students is incorporated. Prospective students are encouraged to start a research project in areas of their interest. Assisted by teaching staff, the students choose a topic to focus on and agree to work collaboratively to complete their project and dissertation on time.

The PSP has set up an interactive feedback mechanism in which students are encouraged to express their needs freely. Combined with outcome-heavy metrics (attendance rates, success rates in exams, and successful employment outcomes beyond the end of the studies), the PSP Director-students interaction evolves in a constructive and informative way for the benefit of

all parties involved. In response to the students' professional needs, the PSP encourages students to gain work experience and familiarise themselves with the job market landscape in the academic world and the private sector. External stakeholders have shown a significant interest in the PSP. This includes the possibility for third parties to support academically led research, the possibility to indirectly support students. The PSP includes a list of highly qualified teaching staff covering various areas of specialisation. The PSP Director feels confident that communication between the teaching staff, administrators, and students is most effective.

If there is one area where the PSP might develop, and the PSP Director and EEAP have shared this view, it would be in making a few minor adjustments to assist students understand: [i] the difference between what is taught and learnt (i.e. emphasis on the teaching process from an educational point of view), [ii] where the research outcomes from this PSP could fit in the "big picture" i.e. and areas for novel research, and for translation of evidence into clinical practice (e.g., iPS and neurogenesis). This comment is offered in the spirit of supporting development rather than a criticism.

At the end of the studies, graduates should also have a sound understanding of the principles of ICH Good Clinical Practice, the Greek and EU law for human use of medicines and medical devices for research and in clinical practice, the role of the Greek competent authority (ΕΟΦ) and the role of the European Medicines Agency, relevant to clinical research, as well as that of the WHO, FDA, MHRA and other major authorities, in leading change in global medical affairs. Combined with basic knowledge in the framework for animal studies and the regulations for research tissue banks, and research databases, students are expected to know the basics for data protection and information governance including EU GDPR and relevant Greek law.

### III. Conclusions

The PSP is well-designed and structured. A few changes are recommended to develop certain areas further. The aim is to support students and ensure optimal learning experience.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

- The EEAP recommends major changes in the course guide to better support the students. This is in reference to improvements in the layout/additions in the course guide aiming to

improve organisation. Some aspects such as the course schedules, rules on deadlines and absences could benefit from better organisation.

- Perhaps a frequently-asked-questions section in the course guide, a table with timelines, and/or a checklist could help students familiarise themselves with processes.
- The EEAP recommends minor changes in the content of teaching material to include ICH principles and regulations for the use of medicines and medical devices in humans including the role of the Greek competent authority (ΕΟΦ). Combined with basic knowledge in the framework for animal studies and the regulations for research tissue banks, and research databases, students are expected to know the basics in data protection and information governance including EU GDPR and Greek law.
- The course guide will improve by introducing a basic structure. The EEAP recommends the following structure as an example: welcome and introduction, PSP structure, academic information (course-specific), support and resources, policies and regulations, practical information, professional development and networking, FAQs and contacts
- The EEAP recommends the course guide to be available in both Greek and English (same amount of information and structure to be included in both texts).

### **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**

In this PSP all courses are delivered in English and with face-to-face teaching. The quality and effectiveness of the teaching work are anonymously evaluated by the students at the end of the semester. The evaluation of the courses in the PSP is carried out through a questionnaire

that includes sections for the courses and the instructor, while allowing students to suggest improvements. The answers are analysed by the MODIP and the results are communicated to the course leaders. This information is utilized by the course leaders and the Curriculum Committee, who may take corrective actions, aiming to improve the quality of the educational services provided by the PSP. The educational process is based on the diversity of the students, the use of new technologies, various pedagogical methods and modern teaching media. It includes lectures, collaborative techniques, assessment through assignments and exams, as well as strengthening student autonomy through guidance and counselling. Mutual respect is promoted in the student-teacher relationship, while there is a complaints management process. The criteria and methods for evaluating student progress are communicated in advance. The process for evaluating student progress is based on criteria specified in the Course Outlines. Assessment is applied fairly, allowing students to discuss their grades with teachers. Special care is provided for students with learning disabilities. Teachers are encouraged to use multiple assessment methods (assignments, practical exercises, case studies). At the same time, academic advisors are appointed, who provide guidance to students for the successful completion of their studies, but without a binding nature.

## **II. Analysis**

According to the responses received by EEAP from teaching staff, students and alumni, the PSP incorporates a student-centered approach to teaching, adopts flexible learning paths and diverse delivery modes, and there is evidence that students are considered active partners in the teaching/learning process. The PSP provides an interdisciplinary environment, where students exchange views and knowledge. This collegiality is appreciated by students, who feel satisfied with the collaboration. Graduates expressed great satisfaction with the support of the teaching staff, both in the courses and in their thesis. The additional courses offered beyond the standard programme were particularly positively commented on. The PSP provides the necessary conditions for students to be encouraged to take an active role in the learning process.

## **III. Conclusions**

The PSP fully complies with principle 3.

### **Panel Judgement**

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



**Panel Recommendations**

- Establish a stable timetable for the exams. Make available the course material before course delivery. This will increase students' active participation.

## **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**

The PSP study regulations include details regarding the student selection process, the stages of study, the preparation of the thesis and the award of the master's degree. Relevant information is also available on the PSP website <https://www.neurosciences.med.uoc.gr/>. Students are selected through a public call for expressions of interest, with a maximum number of 15 applicants per two-year period and a minimum of 5 students. Graduates in relevant scientific fields from Greece and abroad are accepted.

Candidates submit their application, degrees, language certificates, detailed grades, scientific publications (if any) and two letters of recommendation. They are evaluated based on the degree grade, relevant undergraduate courses, research activity, letters of recommendation, knowledge of English (at least B2) and a personal interview. The selection is made by a nine-member Committee, with each criterion being scored from 1 to 10. In the event of a tie, all tied candidates are accepted. After the interviews, the Selection Committee compiles and publishes the initial lists of successful candidates and runners-up on the PSP website. Candidates have the right to appeal within 7 days, which is examined by a three-member Appeals Committee. The results are validated by the Curriculum Committee and the final lists are published. If a successful candidate does not register on time, his or her place may be filled by a runner-up. Registrations are completed before the start of the first semester. Support is

provided to foreign students through the Foreigners Support Unit, as well as to students with disabilities through the Equal Access Unit.

For registration, it is required to present a degree or certificate of completion of studies, the recognition of the title by DOATAP (for foreign graduates) and the payment of the first instalment of tuition fees. The duration of studies is four semesters. The language of instruction of the PSP is English.

Students apply for the preparation of the PSP thesis by the end of the third semester, proposing a topic, supervisor and a three-member examination committee. If no application is submitted, the study PSP committee appoints supervisors and members of the committee. When the thesis is completed, it is submitted to the members of the committee. If approved, public support is assigned. The thesis must meet academic specifications, be in English (with a 300-word summary in Greek and English) and have a length of 12,000-15,000 words. It is submitted in printed and electronic form to the library and the Medical School. If not submitted by the end of the fourth semester, an extension of one semester may be granted. In case of a negative assessment, resubmission is permitted after two months. If rejected a second time, the student is excluded from receiving the Postgraduate Diploma and is removed from the PSP.

The period for the award of the PSP diploma is four (4) academic semesters, including the preparation of the PSP diploma. To successfully complete the PSP and be awarded the PSP diploma, the student must accumulate a total of 120 ECTS, which are distributed as follows: 60 ECTS from the successful attendance of mandatory and elective courses, 30 ECTS from two laboratory exercises, 30 ECTS from the successful preparation and defence of the PSP Diploma.

## **II. Analysis**

The PSP informs students from the beginning of their studies about the services available to them. Therefore, students are aware of all the rights deriving from their student status. Their progress is monitored through group work and exams with multiple choice questions and is assessed at the end of each semester with written exams and ECTS is applied throughout the curriculum. During their studies, postgraduate students are required to attend and successfully pass postgraduate courses as well as clinical practice and finally write a postgraduate thesis.

The PSP is characterized by a high level and excellent organization, attracting strong interest from students. It provides opportunities for quality research and clinical training, while acting as a gateway for doctoral candidates. The variety of student profiles enriches the educational experience. It is research-oriented, offering significant academic and professional benefits according to the testimonies of participants.

The Diploma Supplement is issued in Greek and English. There is a study guide and the Research Ethics Code for the PSP. There is no manual for the implementation of the thesis. During their studies, students are encouraged to participate in mobility programmes.

## **III. Conclusions**

The PSP ensures that regulations have been developed and published regarding all aspects and phases of the programme (introduction, progression, recognition and award of the degree). Practical training is considered a valuable part of the PSP, in terms of developing specific or broader skills for work and research. The Diploma Supplement is issued upon request by students in Greek and English. There is no thesis manual available, but a reference to key issues related to its preparation is made in the Regulation of Operation.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

- Make available a PSP thesis manual.

## **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 includes 21 lecturers (faculty from the School of Medicine, Dept of Biology and Psychology and collaborating invited lecturers from other Universities, research centres such as IMBB and ITE) who are involved in all teaching activities. Faculty to external speakers ratio is 70:30, which is considered highly appropriate. There are stringent criteria for selection of external lecturers on the PSP, based on CVs and willingness to make a substantial contribution in the theoretical and practical aspects of the PSP curriculum. There is a satisfactory combination of senior and junior faculty and the participation of women.

The EEAP had access to documents providing a detailed overview of the teaching workload of the faculty and visiting lecturers which seemed appropriate.

The quality of teaching is evaluated by the students with questionnaires. The results of the evaluation make a considerable contribution to review and proposed modifications of the PSP. The level of financial rewards for all teaching staff is determined by the school's internal regulations and has been included in the budget and considerations around financial position of the PSP.

During the meeting with members of the teaching staff, EEAP was given the impression that all members were fully involved in the PSP, took ownership of their part and were extremely satisfied with their participation. All faculty are active researchers bringing distinct research expertise in the PSP and student training and skills development in research.

## **II. Analysis**

Some teaching faculty (mostly visiting) is minimally involved, usually in the form of one or two lectures. However, there is a satisfactory number of senior faculty from UoC with considerable involvement. This is very helpful in avoiding leadership problems in the management of the PSP. Staff involved are considered as experts in their respective fields of study and make a positive contribution in the teaching experience. For UoC faculty staff there is adequate departmental and peer support for their scientific and professional development and strengthening of teaching skills.

## **III. Conclusions**

The quality of the teaching faculty is excellent, includes members from various scientific fields and covers all the aspects of the PSP. This is reflected in our feedback from past and current students.

### **Panel Judgement**

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

### **Panel Recommendations**

- It is recommended that the teaching staff be divided into three categories: course leaders, faculty teaching staff and invited speakers.
- It is recommended that where appropriate, leaders to have a similar amount of time involvement in the PSP.
- The PSP leadership should establish support mechanisms to harmonise and monitor teaching quality across the faculty (UoC and external)

## PRINCIPLE 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 offers a comprehensive academic environment with access to modern facilities across the School of Medicine, Departments of Biology and Psychology as well as research Institutes ITE and IMBB. These support both undergraduate and postgraduate education programmes in the city of Heraklion and Rethymnon. In addition, a plethora of additional laboratories in Crete, Athens, and Thessaly are available for laboratory rotations and research projects. These are available through the website of the PSP [www.neurosciences.med.uoc.gr](http://www.neurosciences.med.uoc.gr). The PSP has access to fully equipped classrooms, laboratories, a secretariat room and special care for people with disabilities (PWDs). In addition, facilities include a modern library and information centres with electronic access to scientific journals, books and databases.

The facilities are supported by complete electronic and technical equipment, audiovisual media, digital educational materials and tools for conducting courses. E-learning is supported through the e-Class platform, as well as by the Zoom and Microsoft Teams tools.

Postgraduate students are informed about the available services upon their admission, with the guidance of the teaching staff. Unlike other similar PSPs offered by the UoC there was no mention of assignment of Academic Advisor to monitor student progress. The PSP is funded by tuition fees, donations, grants, research projects and government funds.

The teaching staff (n=21 lecturers) includes members of the School of Medicine faculty Dept of Biology and Psychology and collaborating invited lecturers from other Universities, and research centres such as IMBB and ITE with specialized knowledge in the foundation fields of Neuroscience, Biology and Psychology. Faculty to external speakers' ratio is 70:30, which is considered appropriate. Secretarial support is provided by the School of Medicine, with the administrative staff holding university/technical university degrees, knowledge of English and experience in administrative support.

Students obtain an email account, access to distance learning platforms, and electronic support tools. In addition, they can register for courses, renew their registration and submit applications through the electronic Secretariat.

The UoC provides services such as the Department of Employment, Careers and Interconnection, and Welcome and International Offices, which offer information on adjusting to life in Crete as well as information for jobs and PSPs, as well as teleconsultation for students with disabilities. Safety and hygiene on the University premises are ensured, while an alumni network operates to maintain contact with the Institution.

Within the framework of the operation of the Neuroscience PSP, a tuition utilization plan has been established which is considered realistic, well thought and appropriate.

## **II. Analysis**

Students are adequately supported on an ad-hoc basis, although it seems the student advisor is a role not widely established. The PSP is supported by an impressive range of basic sciences laboratories and modern facilities that ensure an ideal teaching and learning environment. The classrooms are equipped with modern technological means, such as interactive whiteboards and projection systems, providing students with the tools they need for a comprehensive educational experience. In addition, the infrastructure includes specialized laboratories with the latest equipment, software and hardware, facilitating the educational and research process. An important part of the infrastructure is also access to digital libraries and databases, which allow students to research and study the latest developments in the field of neuroscience. These sources of information are crucial for enhancing academic knowledge and supporting research activity. The students interviewed reported overall satisfaction in facilities available.

In addition to the physical infrastructure, the PSP provides a series of support services for students. Career advice is available to guide students in their career orientation, helping them to acclimatise to life in Crete and develop career plans and prepare for the job market. The student welfare office helps students facing various difficulties, whether financial or psychological, ensuring that each student has the necessary support to succeed.



In addition, sports and cultural facilities are available, promoting a balanced student life. These services are easily accessible to all students, including those with disabilities, ensuring inclusion and availability for every need.

The PSP's administrative staff is adequate and appropriately trained, ensuring the smooth operation of services and support for students at every stage of their academic journey. In addition, there is a well-organized tuition utilization plan, which aims to continuously improve services and upgrade infrastructure, thus enhancing the quality of education offered to students.

The EEAP found that the facilities and technology offer an excellent learning environment. Students have access to knowledge resources and support, while the administrative staff is adequately trained. The PSP invests in the continuous improvement of its services, enhancing the educational experience.

### **III. Conclusions**

The PSP has access to an extensive range of facilities across participating departments and research Institutes offering exceptional levels of infrastructure in terms of facilities and specialist laboratories to ensure a high standard of education for postgraduate students. At the same time, they have access to academic and technical support throughout the PSP, both in online teaching, career services and access to resources such as libraries and databases. Support activities and facilities can be organised in different ways, depending on the institutional context. The quantity and quality of the facilities and services available is considered appropriate and modern and that students are aware of all the services available. In providing support services, the role of support and administrative staff is crucial and therefore the staff in this post must be qualified and have opportunities to develop their skills. The PSP through involvement of external speakers from different countries, providing students with the opportunity to broaden their experience through discussions and presentations by renowned scientists, as well as their professional development.

### **Panel Judgement**

<b>Principle 6: Learning resources and student support</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### **Panel Recommendations**

- Formally initiate the role of Academic advisor to strengthen the pastoral care of students and ensure different members of staff are involved.

## **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 has in place procedures for data collection on teaching methods, student body, student progression, employability and career paths of graduates. The PSP presented a plan that adequately describes the data collection system for the PSP structure and evaluation components. The submission of course evaluation questionnaires filled out by students through a special implementation of the e-Class platform of UoC. Students can access and can electronically evaluate courses and express their concerns. The statistical analysis of the survey questionnaire is done by the PSP coordinators, and it is presented in a descriptive statistics format.

The PSP presented a plan describing the progress of the students and their potential for employment after graduation and methods to follow the career paths of the graduates. Most of the information regarding alumni is obtained by the faculty members who are in contact

with them. The PSP facilities are very good. IT systems of an online library, an e-Class system of virtual teaching options are important components of the PSP.

The EEAP meetings with the current students, the graduates and the stakeholders were fruitful and brought forward important views, perceptions and experiences. The current students and alumni expressed their satisfaction for the PSP structure, quality and tutors' availability. The PSP graduates expressed their satisfaction with the skills and knowledge obtained from the PSP and how this PSP helped them move forward with their professional careers.

## **II. Analysis**

The student body expressed their satisfaction with the PSP. The questionnaire survey of student satisfaction is effective and captures perceptions, views and impressions of the PSP. The mechanism for gathering and analysing student-related statistical data works effectively. During the discussion with the alumni, it appears that a considerable number of graduates choose to follow a PhD abroad in the EU or alternatively in Greek institutions.

## **III. Conclusions**

The Department has built a functional information management system, and adequate procedures are in place to support both internal and external evaluations on a periodic basis. The EEAP concludes that the procedures and the level of students' satisfaction concerning the quality, learning outcomes and overall prestige of the PSP are excellent. Graduates are duly prepared to follow their chosen career path either in Greece or in other EU countries.

### **Panel Judgement**

<b>Principle 7: Information management</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### **Panel Recommendations**

- The PSP shall be engaged with their alumni on a systematic basis by updating their contact info, their needs and the potential synergies between the alumni organizations of employment and the PSP to the benefit of the current students.

## **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 website is running and provides useful information about the PSP structure, mode of attendance, criteria for assessment, degree awarded, teaching staffs' CVs. This information is available in Greek and English. This is an easy to navigate public information system, based on the evaluation of the material shown on the website and the materials offered to the EEAP by the PSP coordinators. On the PSP website there is a section on the services provided to the students of the programme. There is a detailed section on the prerequisites and requirements of being admitted to the PSP. All course syllabi of the PSP are duly completed and available online on the PSP website, including a detailed segment on the PSP policy for quality assurance.

### **II. Analysis**

The PSP operates a comprehensive public information system based on the detailed feedback obtained from the PSP coordinators, teaching staff, and students. The PSP website and all material shared with the EEAP were extensively reviewed and allowed the verification of information offered by the students, teaching staff and stakeholders. There is no indication that the PSP website is accessible to people with special needs or disabilities. Based on the website content of the PSP, there is no interaction and engagement between the current students with PSP postgraduates and various stakeholders. However, the PSP engages with the public and various stakeholders with other means. The information about study programme, e-Courses, structure, mode of attendance, degree awarded, and some CVs of tutors and faculty members are available online. However, the CVs of many tutors are not available while most tutors' CVs are not actualized.

### **III. Conclusions**

The EEAP finds that the PSP under evaluation is compliant. Recommendations for further improving the public character and information of the PSPO are provided below.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

- The PSP website and the tutors' CVs need to be updated regularly. Try to harmonize the CVs of the tutors in the PSP webpage (e.g., use of Google Scholar etc.).
- The PSP's website should incorporate information concerning the precise time schedule of students' exams.
- Promote the PSP in social media, local media etc.
- The success of graduates should be emphasized and promoted widely.
- Establish a career day.
- Build a PSP alumni web page.

## **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 Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) at the UoC implements an internal annual monitoring plan. This plan evaluates the teaching curriculum and makes necessary adjustments to all UoC PSPs, including the one under review.

The findings from this work are reported in detail in document M9.1 of 23-Jan-2024. Retrospective data from previous years are not disclosed. The authors of the report recommend measures (corrective and preventative actions) to improve quality for students, academic and support staff.

### **II. Analysis**

Students evaluate the quality of the teaching process of the PSP both directly and indirectly, through formal and informal mechanisms including the completion of feedback questionnaires. Aims towards improvement include the review of available digital e-platforms (mundus and E-class functions), the evaluation of K.E.D.I.M.A. activities for the improvement of delivery and implantation of paedagogic practices, the establishment of a monitoring system that tracks professional success in candidates in the job market within academia and beyond, the review of student-led marks on surveys for staff performance.

### III. Conclusions

The MODIP and Course Director are open to suggestions and continuous improvement committed to improving the learning experience for students and the professional development of teaching staff.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

- The EEAP recommends feedback collection from students and faculty through anonymous mini surveys (at the beginning of the course to assess the needs of students and staff, mid-term and at the end of the course, as well as periodically if needed).
- The EEAP recommends the systematic review of existing processes aiming to enhance efficiency, ensure consistency with previous cohorts, and identify opportunities for improvement in programme delivery and student support.
- The EEAP recommends the implementation of corrective and preventative actions included in the 2024 internal quality assurance report.

## 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

This is the first time that the PSP is being evaluated by the Higher Accreditation and Evaluation (HAHE) authority. Procedures for this evaluation by the EEAP were clearly set out, and the PSP was very co-operative in providing additional information when needed in addition to the original documents that were submitted.

#### II. Analysis

The UoC has been a pioneer in choosing to be evaluated by EEAPs even before HAHE was set up, and it is the opinion of the EEAP that whatever points will be discussed in the evaluation report will be acted upon by the PSP in collaboration with the Internal Evaluation Unit (MODIP). Such continuous discussion with EEAPs can only help improve the PSP and the entire Medical School.

#### III. Conclusions

All internal evaluation units (MODIP and OMEA) appear to take the evaluation process seriously, and this is also true of the PSP and the leadership of the UoC as made clear during the discussions of the EEAP with faculty, administrators and stakeholders.

### Panel Judgement

Principle 10: Regular external evaluation of postgraduate study programmes	
Fully compliant	X



Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### **Panel Recommendations**

Discuss findings of the evaluation report and set in motion mechanisms to address any outstanding issues of concern.

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

### **I. Features of Good Practice**

- This is a timeless and very important PSP for the education and training of students dealing with neuroscience issues.
- Multiple lectures and research topics on neurosciences are implemented.
- Existence of questionnaires about staff performance.
- Excellent mechanisms to follow up on the students' progression.
- Excellent faculty, highly respected and recognized in the field.
- Study guides regarding the students' courses.
- Correct number of courses.
- Satisfactory time for the PSP accomplishment.
- The satisfaction rate of the students is very high.
- Enthusiastic faculty.
- Use of the academic advisor.
- High interaction between the students and faculty.
- Students' mobility; faculty's mobility.
- The number of practical courses is correct.

### **II. Areas of Weakness**

- A library with research topics does not exist on the web page.
- More information is needed on the web page about teaching staff and their research.
- There are not highly informative web pages in Greek and English.
- An alumni webpage does not exist.
- Social media are not in use.
- Limited interactions with social partners and stakeholders.

### **III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions**

Organise a better evaluation visit in the future, especially with respect to graduates and stakeholders.

The question of whether two rotations in the third semester are crucial for the students was discussed and answered well in the meeting with the EEAP, but it may need to be revisited in the future.

Given the small amount of tuition and fees, it may be good for the faculty to obtain outside funding to support the research activity of the students and the PSP administration.

The EEAP recommends major changes in the course guide to better support the students. This is in reference to improvements in the layout/additions in the course guide aiming to improve organisation. Some aspects such as the course schedules, rules on deadlines and absences could benefit from better organisation.

Perhaps a frequently-asked-questions section in the course guide, a table with timelines, and/or a checklist could help students familiarise themselves with processes.

The EEAP recommends minor changes in the content of teaching material to include ICH principles and regulations for the use of medicines and medical devices in humans including the role of the Greek competent authority (ΕΟΦ). Combined with basic knowledge in the framework for animal studies and the regulations for research tissue banks, and research databases, students are expected to know the basics in data protection and information governance including EU GDPR and Greek law.

The course guide will improve by introducing a basic structure. The EEAP recommends the following structure as an example: welcome and introduction, PSP structure, academic information (course-specific), support and resources, policies and regulations, practical information, professional development and networking, FAQs and contacts

The EEAP recommends the course guide to be available in both Greek and English (same amount of information and structure to be included in both texts).

The EEAP recommends an annual meeting with members of the “Brain & Mind” PSP to continuously develop their respective PSPs without major overlaps.

Establish a stable timetable for the exams. Make available the course material before course delivery. This will increase students’ active participation.

Make available a PSP thesis manual.

It is recommended that the teaching staff be divided into three categories: course leaders, faculty teaching staff and invited speakers.

It is recommended that where appropriate, leaders to have a similar amount of time involvement in the PSP.

The PSP leadership should establish support mechanisms to harmonise and monitor teaching quality across the faculty (UoC and external).

Formally initiate the role of Academic Advisor to strengthen the pastoral care of students and ensure different members of staff are involved.

The PSP shall be engaged with their alumni on a systematic basis by updating their contact info, their needs and the potential synergies between the alumni organizations of employment and the PSP to the benefit of the current students.

The PSP website and the tutors' CVs need to be updated regularly. Try to harmonize the CVs of the tutors in the PSP webpage (e.g., use of Google Scholar etc.).

The PSP's website should incorporate information concerning the precise time schedule of students' exams.

Promote the PSP in social media, local media etc.

The success of graduates should be emphasized and promoted widely.

Establish a career day.

Build a PSP alumni web page.

The EEAP recommends feedback collection from students and faculty through anonymous mini surveys (at the beginning of the course to assess the needs of students and staff, mid-term and at the end of the course, as well as periodically if needed).

The EEAP recommends the systematic review of existing processes aiming to enhance efficiency, ensure consistency with previous cohorts, and identify opportunities for improvement in programme delivery and student support.

The EEAP recommends the implementation of corrective and preventative actions included in the 2024 internal quality assurance report.

Discuss findings of the evaluation report and set in motion mechanisms to address any outstanding issues of concern.

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: 2, 8

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: none

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: none

Overall Judgement	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## **The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel**

**Names and Surnames**

**Signatures**

- 1. Prof. Thimios Mitsiadis**
- 2. Prof. Nicholas Ktistakis**
- 3. Prof. Dimitris Grammatopoulos**
- 4. Dr. Andreas A. Roussakis**
- 5. Ms. Panagiotia Kyriakidou**