



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης
Hellenic Authority
for Higher Education

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Accreditation Report for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Sleep Medicine

Department: Medical School

Institution: Democritus University of Thrace

Date: April 2026



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 of **Sleep Medicine** of the **Democritus
University of Thrace** 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 Sleep Medicine of the **Democritus University of Thrace** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Law 4653/2020:

1. KTISTAKIS NICHOLAS (Chair)
Babraham Institute
2. GRAMMATOPOULOS DIMITRIS
University of Warwick Medical School
3. SACHINIDIS AGAPIOS
Institut für Neurophysiologie, Zentrum Physiologie, Medizinische Fakultät, Universität zu Köln
4. Tzimogianni Valentini
University of Patras
5. VISVIKIS DIMITRIS
National Institute of Health and Medical Research

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

Following the requirements of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (laws 4009/2011 and 4653/2020), the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE), upon individual invitation and after official acceptance, established an independent External Evaluation and Accreditation Committee (EEAP), with the mission of assessing the compliance of the Postgraduate Studies Program (PSP) in “Sleep Medicine” of the Democritus University of Thrace which was scheduled for 30/3 and 4/4 2026. The established EEAP consists of five experts, four from Universities and Institutes abroad, and one student representative from Greece.

The EEAP received and considered the following supporting documents through the HAHE Panel-Accreditations online information platform (in the order they had been deposited):

- A0._new. Περιεχόμενα ΠΜΣ ΙΤΥ.pdf
- A1._new. Πρόταση Πιστοποίησης ΠΜΣ_ΙΤΥ.pdf
- A2._new. Πολιτική Ποιότητας ΠΜΣ ΙΤΥ.pdf
- A3. Στοχοθεσία Ποιότητας ΠΜΣ ΙΤΥ.pdf
- A4. Απόφαση Συγκλήτου Ίδρυση ΠΜΣ ΙΤΥ.pdf
- A5._new. Οδηγός Σπουδών 2022-23_ΠΜΣ ΙΤΥ.pdf
- A6._new. Περιγράμματα Μαθημάτων ΠΜΣ ΙΤΥ.pdf
- A7. Ονομαστικός κατάλογος διδακτικού προσωπικού ΠΜΣ_ΙΤΥ.pdf
- A9._new. Αξιολόγηση από τους φοιτητές ΠΜΣ ΙΤΥ.pdf
- A10. Κανονισμός Λειτουργίας Μηχ. Διαχ. Παραπόνων ΠΜΣ ΙΤΥ.pdf
- A11._new. Κανονισμός για τον ΑΣΣ.pdf
- A12. Εσωτερικός Κανονισμός ΠΜΣ ΙΤΥ.pdf
- A13. Κανονισμός Δεοντολογίας της Έρευνας.pdf
- A14._new. Κανονισμός Σπουδών ΠΜΣ ΙΤΥ.pdf
- A15. Παράρτημα Διπλώματος ΠΜΣ ΙΤΥ.pdf
- A16. Ερευνητική Αξιολόγηση ΠΜΣ ΙΤΥ.pdf
- A17. Αναφορές Δεδομένων ΟΠΕΣΠ ΠΜΣ ΙΤΥ.pdf
- A18. Έκθεση προόδου ΠΜΣ ΙΤΥ.pdf
- A8. Πρακτικό ΜΟΔΙΠ ΠΜΣ ΙΤΥ.pdf

The assessment/accreditation process was carried out exclusively remotely using the Zoom platforms. All times indicated are Athens time. During the Zoom meetings, staff members from the University were prompt in providing us with the necessary information.

The scheduled agenda of the certification review was as follows:

30/03/2026

15:00-16:00 Private meeting of the EEAP to discuss first impressions from the PSP and to assign specific principles for each member

16:00-17:30 Meeting with the director of the PSP Professor Paschalis Steiropoulos, Steering committee member Associate Professor Stavros Anevlavis, MODIP President Professor Marirena Grigoriou and Head of Department Professor Konstantinos Vadikolias.

17:30-18:30 Scheduled Online tour of the facilities of the PSP in the form of a short introductory video which was already seen by the EEAP. Instead, the conversation with the PSP directors was extended.

31/03/2026

15:00-16:00 Meeting with the teaching staff of the PSP: Prof. Evangelia Nena, Prof. Georgia Trakada, (Department of Medicine, NKUA), Associate Prof. Aikaterini Arvaniti, Assistant Prof. Fotios Drakopanagiotakis, Dr. Nicholas-Tiberio Economou, Neurologist, MD, Visiting Lecturer.

16:00-17:00 Meeting with 7 students of the PSP all in their 3rd semester.

17:30-18:30 Meeting with 7 graduates of the PSP all pulmonologist and all in employment.

18:30-19:30 Meeting with 4 social partners of the PSP.

20:00-20:30 Closure meeting with the director of the PSP Professor Paschalis Steiropoulos, Steering committee member Associate Professor Stavros Anevlavis, MODIP President Professor Marirena Grigoriou and Head of Department Professor Konstantinos Vadikolias.

The EEAP members would like to thank everybody involved for their positive spirit and their cooperation with the EEAP during the whole online accreditation procedure.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH) was founded in 1973 and began operating in 1974-1975 with the introduction of students in the Departments of Civil Engineering and Law. The university was named after the ancient Greek philosopher Democritus. The university has eight schools, 20 departments, and a variety of postgraduate programs, with a student body of around 29,000 and a faculty of over 700. Its research and teaching activities focus on a wide range of fields, including agriculture, health sciences, education, law, and engineering. The School of Health Sciences at DUTH includes the Departments of Medicine and Molecular Biology, and Genetics.

The Department of Medicine was founded in 1977 (L 641/1977) as “Medical School” and has first operated in the academic year 1984-1985 (L 573/1982) in Alexandroupolis, Thrace. Dealing with the difficulties due to its remote position from the center of Greece, it demonstrated an impressive development, with teaching Programs that fully correspond to current requirements of undergraduate education and high-level postgraduate Programs, participation in internationally recognized research projects, numerous scientific publications and the provision of high-quality health services provided to the population of the wider area.

With continuous efforts of scientific and technological improvement, it has become an attracting pole for prestigious scientists from Greece and abroad. Today, collaborations with domestic and foreign research and academic institutions and participation in funded research and innovative Programs are constantly increasing. The University Clinics and Laboratories organize a significant number of scientific events every year, with great impact in the scientific and the local community as well.

University Clinics established in the excellent infrastructure of the new University General Hospital in Alexandroupolis, provide high quality health services, as they are the only tertiary health center in the Thrace. In general, the Medical School of DUTH, contributes to the cultural and the intellectual life of the area as it ensures a valuable interaction with the local community.

The Department of Medicine of the School of Health Sciences of DUTH organizes and operates 26 postgraduate programmes all offering an MSc degree. The current PSP is aimed at medical professionals and others in related fields. It lasts for 3 semesters, offers 90 ECTS and costs 3000 euros. The programme was initiated in 2013 and re-established in 2018, taking its current form in 2022. In total, it has offered 12 cycles of tuition. It focuses on sleep disorders, especially those associated with obesity, cardiovascular, and metabolic diseases such as arterial hypertension, heart failure, stroke, and diabetes mellitus. The majority of its current and past students have been pulmonologists at various stages of specialisation. Research training and practice is via a mandatory thesis which takes place during the third semester.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP is subject to the quality assurance policy of DUTH as implemented and monitored by the MODIP of the institution. The programme is one of 26 currently being offered by the DUTH, most of them strongly focused on medical fields but none related to sleep medicine.

There are clear statements from DUTH as well as the PSP relating to the procedures for ensuring that internal evaluation of the programme is designed to highlight features of good practice as well as those requiring further improvement.

More specifically, the PSP ensures its quality control via the actions of the Steering committee, via course work sent and analysed via e-class, digital services of the DUTH following student progress and feedback, and by the overall digital monitoring system of MODIP.

There are also a large number of support facilities of the DUTH dealing with student counselling, equality and diversity office as well as career's office.

A small number of annual goals is indicated in the documents received by the EEAP including having a good English version of the website, giving the option of writing the thesis in English, establishing academic scholarships to the best students and upgrading the equipment associated with the practical training of the students of this PSP.

The steering committee of this PSP is composed of the director Professor Steiropoulos and 4 other faculty, all from DUTH.

Over the course of its existence the PSP has admitted 178 students. The vast majority have graduated but in recent years the percentage of those being left behind is increasing. Most students are pulmonologists or in other medical specialties with a scattering of biologists, dentists, physiotherapists and nurses also attending,

Course work for this PSP is very extensive in the first two semesters with a total of 25 subjects being taught. There are no courses during the last semester. Students meet once per month on Thursday to Sunday for a total of 24 hours-two of these sessions are in person and the rest are online.

There are 29 regular faculty teaching in the programme, most from the DUTH but some also from Thessaloniki, Athens and Patra. There are also 15 visiting lecturers from private practice or from Universities abroad who give a limited number of lectures in the programme. None of these people draw a salary, so the majority of income from tuition is spent on equipment, reagents and secretarial support.

II. Analysis

The subject matter of this PSP and its effort to coalesce around the subject of sleep disorders various types of medical expertise is very commendable. The presence of Professor Steiropoulos, a pioneer in the field, lends very strong credence to the effort.

Good procedures are in place by MODIP to ensure that quality assurance is functional and well executed. The absence of an English version of the website was highlighted as an omission; the EEAP also saw a version of the website that was out of date and very poor. As it turned out, the PSP now has a very good website which was communicated to the EEAP after a series of misunderstandings. It is probably among MODIP's remit to ensure that the delay between submitting documents to HAHE and the evaluation date do not end up confusing the issue of what is currently available.

The EEAP questioned whether moving so much of the course work to online teaching and focusing it on only once per month is the most optimal from an educational point of view. In the opinion of the EEAP, courses should take place twice per month, and an effort should be made to increase the in person sessions. This will enhance personal relations between the students, and the overall scientific ethos of the programme. 90 ECTS in three semesters really corresponds to full time study, so it is important to consider this when deciding on course

schedule and ECTS allocation.

Going forward it is possible that a specialization/subspecialty in sleep disorders may become a choice for medical professionals; the PSP is ideally placed to contribute to this and to take the lead in the design of such a specialization/subspecialty.

III. Conclusions

This is a PSP that is needed in the Greek post graduate landscape, and it has enough of a distinction from the specialization training of pulmonologists to justify being a separate MSc-level degree. At the same time the PSP should not continue to reduce in person teaching and training for online sessions; this may be helpful to the work schedule of some of the students but it detracts from the academic and research aspirations of the programme.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Re-introduce some more in person sessions.

Consider re-introducing the older aspect of meeting once per month in Athens instead of Alexandroupolis, to accommodate traveling of those from remote locations.

PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

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

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

In addition, the design of PSP must consider:

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) in Sleep Medicine is a specialised, interdisciplinary postgraduate programme designed to provide advanced education and training in the diagnosis, management and research of sleep-related disorders. The Programme has been operating successfully for multiple consecutive cycles and addresses the growing clinical and scientific importance of Sleep Medicine as an emerging field within modern healthcare.

The Programme consists of three academic semesters corresponding to a total workload of 90 ECTS credits, including taught modules during the first two semesters and a research-based Master's dissertation during the third semester. The Programme admits up to 30 students per year, ensuring a balanced student-staff ratio and allowing effective supervision and interaction between faculty and learners. The programme has been formally established and re-approved through the institutional procedures of the University, with revisions implemented over time to ensure alignment with regulatory requirements.

The Programme attracts students from a broad range of health-related disciplines, contributing to a multidisciplinary learning environment. Eligible applicants include medical graduates, physicians in training or specialists in related disciplines, as well as graduates from Dentistry, Psychology, Nursing and Medical Laboratory Sciences, provided their academic or professional activities relate to the field of Sleep Medicine. Selection of candidates is based on academic performance, relevant professional or research experience, publications, foreign language competence and interview performance.

The aims of the Programme are to provide students with comprehensive theoretical knowledge and practical competencies in the field of Sleep Medicine, including understanding the pathophysiology of sleep disorders, interpretation of diagnostic procedures such as polysomnography, and development of clinical reasoning skills for the management of sleep-related conditions. The Programme also aims to promote interdisciplinary collaboration and to strengthen research competence in sleep-related biomedical and clinical sciences.

The intended learning outcomes focus on enabling graduates to diagnose and manage sleep disorders, interpret diagnostic findings, evaluate disease severity, apply therapeutic strategies and critically assess scientific evidence. Particular emphasis is placed on developing the ability to interpret polysomnographic findings and integrate diagnostic results into clinical decision-making processes. In addition, the Programme supports the development of research literacy through training in biostatistics, research methodology and the completion of an independent research dissertation.

The PSP reflects the growing importance of Sleep Medicine as a multidisciplinary specialty and responds to the increasing need for trained professionals capable of addressing complex sleep-related disorders across multiple clinical contexts.

The curriculum demonstrates a clear and logical progression from foundational knowledge to specialised clinical and therapeutic competencies. The first semester includes core modules focusing on the clinical problem and pathobiological knowledge. The second semester focuses on clinical management and therapeutic approaches.

A dedicated module in biostatistics and research methodology (6 ECTS) is

included, supporting the development of research competence prior to the initiation of the dissertation. The third semester is fully devoted to the preparation and completion of an independent research dissertation, corresponding to 30 ECTS, ensuring substantial engagement with research design, data interpretation, and scientific communication.

The programme defines clear learning outcomes that reflect clinical reasoning, diagnostic interpretation skills, and the ability to apply evidence-based management strategies across a wide spectrum of sleep-related disorders. Graduates are expected to demonstrate competence in interpreting polysomnography data, evaluating diagnostic findings, and selecting appropriate therapeutic interventions.

The programme addresses an emerging interdisciplinary field of medicine and responds to clear professional and clinical needs. Admission criteria ensure that students possess relevant academic backgrounds, including medical and related healthcare disciplines, contributing to a multidisciplinary learning environment.

The EEAP noted that the programme integrates research and clinical practice effectively, with students required to present their dissertation findings at scientific meetings, supporting the development of academic communication skills and professional engagement.

The Panel also noted the pivotal role of the Programme Director in the successful development and sustained operation of the PSP. The Director demonstrates exceptional commitment and leadership, coordinating academic activities, supporting students, facilitating communication between staff and learners, and overseeing research and educational initiatives associated with the Programme.

Feedback from students and graduates highlighted the Director's accessibility, responsiveness and strong academic guidance, which contribute significantly to the smooth functioning of the Programme and to the high level of student satisfaction observed during the review process. The Director also plays a central role in initiating and coordinating research activities, supervising student projects and supporting dissemination of research outcomes.

This strong leadership has been instrumental in establishing the Programme as a recognised and respected postgraduate course in the field of Sleep Medicine.

II. Analysis

The PSP demonstrates strong academic coherence, with well-balanced distribution of theoretical, clinical and research elements. The staged development of competencies—from fundamental principles to clinical application and research—reflects a curriculum design consistent with postgraduate education standards at Level 7.

In contrast to programmes where research activity is limited to a final-stage dissertation, the inclusion of research methodology and statistical training prior to thesis development provides an appropriate foundation for scholarly work. The requirement for dissemination of research findings through conference presentations represents good academic practice and supports the development of research literacy.

The curriculum structure reflects clear professional relevance and alignment with contemporary clinical practice in sleep medicine. The integration of diagnostic technologies, therapeutic strategies and multidisciplinary clinical perspectives

demonstrates the programme's responsiveness to evolving healthcare needs. While the Programme clearly benefits from strong and highly effective leadership, the Panel observed that many academic and organisational responsibilities appear to be concentrated around the Programme Director. Although this concentration reflects the Director's dedication and competence, reliance on a single individual for multiple core functions may present potential risks to long-term sustainability, continuity and succession planning.

For well-established postgraduate programmes operating across multiple cycles, the development of distributed leadership structures and clearly defined delegated responsibilities is considered good practice. Strengthening the involvement of additional academic staff in key coordination roles would support institutional resilience and ensure continuity of operations in the event of future organisational or personnel changes.

Overall, the programme demonstrates a mature academic structure and strong linkage between education, clinical practice and research activity.

III. Conclusions

The PSP demonstrates full compliance with Principle 2.

The curriculum is clearly structured, academically coherent and aligned with the expected learning outcomes of postgraduate education. The integration of research methodology, clinical application and independent research activity represents a strong feature of the programme.

No major structural weaknesses were identified. Minor enhancements, particularly related to internationalisation and mobility opportunities, could further strengthen the programme's academic profile.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Consider rethinking moving so much of the course work to online teaching, and focusing it on only once per month - is this the most optimal from an educational point of view.

Consider expanding opportunities for international collaboration and student mobility, including participation in joint activities or exchange programmes.

Continue to strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration across clinical specialties contributing to sleep medicine.

Explore the possibility of offering selected modules or seminars in English to enhance international visibility.

Continue to support and recognise the outstanding leadership provided by the Programme Director, which represents a major strength of the Programme.

Develop structured mechanisms for delegation of academic and administrative responsibilities among members of the Coordinating Committee.

Establish formal succession planning and role distribution strategies to ensure long-term sustainability and continuity of Programme leadership.

Encourage broader participation of academic staff in programme coordination, research supervision and strategic planning activities.

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

Based on the provided documentation the Postgraduate Science Program (PSP) in "Sleep Medicine" is committed to implementing a quality policy that supports the academic identity and orientation of the program of study, promotes its purpose and subject matter, implements its strategic objectives, defines the means and methods for achieving them, and aims at its continuous improvement.

Specifically concerning the student centered aspects of the teaching process the PSP "Sleep Medicine" designs, revises, and improves its curriculum with the

participation of all stakeholders, included the students in order to (i). promote scientific knowledge and research in the field of Sleep Medicine, and (ii). provide postgraduate students with a comprehensive understanding of normal sleep, sleep-related breathing disorders, insomnia, hypersomnias, narcolepsy, sleep-related movement disorders, parasomnias, and circadian rhythm disorders, both in adults and in children, and to allow students acquire the skills required for the diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up of patients with sleep disorders.

This PSP requires students to complete 90 ECTS credits over the course of three semesters (60 ECTS the first two semesters on theoretical subjects and 30 ECTS on the third semester with the thesis work). The third semester is dedicated to the thesis work which takes place remotely. The students are encouraged to present their work in conferences and eventually produce articles. The program includes compulsory courses, which are delivered online up to sixty percent (60%). The courses are taking place from Thursday to Sunday morning. Under the current conditions of teaching, the PSP clearly targets students that have already a daytime job and would like to obtain a specialisation and exposure to some research skills in the field of Sleep Medicine. The students have to be present all together in DUTH a couple of times every semester. The operation of the DUTHNET eClass electronic distance learning platform of the School of Medicine of DUTH, for the use of synchronous and asynchronous distance education methods, serves the following purposes: posting course presentations and supporting digital material per semester of study; assignment of coursework per subject; creation of exercises; posting of announcements and informational updates related to the educational and teaching process; communication and information of postgraduate students via email. Student assessment examinations at the end of each semester are conducted remotely using digital evaluation methods.

There is a system in place for the evaluation of teaching staff which follows the basic rules of the DUTH. The Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) encourages the evaluation of the quality of educational activities by students. For this purpose, it regularly reminds Departments of their obligation to follow this procedure. The evaluation of instructors by postgraduate students is conducted regularly towards the end of the semester (8th–11th teaching week), in an anonymous manner, through the completion of course evaluation questionnaires by students. Upon completion of the evaluation process, statistical analysis of the questionnaires is carried out in order to produce aggregated results, with the aim of continuously improving the teaching work of the PSP.

The concept of the academic advisor exists but it is not totally clear how this is communicated to the students and whether all of the teaching staff participate in this role

II. Analysis

This PSP at DUTH is a comprehensive program covering both diagnostic and therapeutic procedures for Sleep Medicine. It spans three semesters, requiring 90 ECTS credits, with a combination of compulsory courses, some limited practical

sessions and thesis work in the third semester. The PSP is targeting different categories of students, although in their vast majority they are medical graduates of different initial specialisations (pulmonary, psychiatry, dentistry). The hybrid format where the majority of the courses are carried out online is highly appreciated by the students since most of them have already a daytime job. On the other side they are only meeting all together 3-4 times per year and this may clearly reduce the cohesion as a group. Assessment of the students is done through exams and assignments. A thesis is carried out in the last semester with clear definition of objectives and evaluation criteria. The rate of completion seems to be high (>80%) although decreasing rates are observed and need to be further monitored.

The concept of the academic advisor is present but clearly there seems to be a lack of details in terms of its role and associated implementation. Similarly there seems to be a confusion between the role of the academic advisor and the PSP coordinator. Most of the teaching staff need to assume the role of the academic advisor for a few students. There seems to be a satisfactory level of communication between the PSP coordinator and the students in terms of thesis subjects but there is a clear need to reduce the number of literature review (including meta-analysis) subjects and increase their research component.

There is a system in place for the evaluation of the teaching staff. Questionnaires include the assessment of the following items :

- Technical and administrative organization (Likert scale responses: 1–5)
- Quality of teaching per instructor (Likert scale responses: 1–5)
- Expression of overall evaluation of the positive and negative aspects of the session (free text)

Although the evaluation shows a high level of student satisfaction the rates of response are low and actions need to be taken to increase those. A clear procedure for students complaints are in place through the DUTH general rules but needs to be better communicated to the students at the beginning of their studies.

III. Conclusions

This PSP offers a solid curriculum in Sleep Medicine providing the students with the necessary skills to allow them to exercise in the field of Sleep Medicine. There is an adequate assessment of the students through projects and examinations. More effort needs to be given to the research component of the PSP and closer interactions with the stakeholders. Such actions will improve also the research component of the students' theses. Although the distant teaching is appreciated by the students who in their majority are already working full time, efforts need to be made to improve the cohesion of the group. There are clear procedures in place to ensure that students are evaluating the curriculum and the teaching staff but actions need to be taken to improve the student's response rates to the corresponding questionnaires. The role of the academic advisor needs to be more explicitly defined to the students at the beginning of their studies and most of the teaching staff need to be involved in this role rather than having the PSP director assuming this role for the vast majority of the students.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Although the distant teaching is appreciated by the students who in their majority are already working full time, efforts need to be made to improve the cohesion of the group. Improve counseling in the thesis subject definition with the objective to enhance the research component.

Improve the rates of students' response to the curriculum and teaching staff evaluation questionnaires

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 was established in 2013 and re-established in 2018 and has a 3-semester duration (30 ECTS per semester) with tuition fees of 3000 euros. A scholarship is awarded to the student with the highest scores each year. Admission to this programme is transparent and objective, following the Department's announcement of available places. Although announcements are available on the programme's website, both in Greek and English, the panel believes they should be more up to date.

The selection of applicants is based on their degree grade, relevant research or professional activity of the candidate related to the subject area of the Master's Program, contributions to publications in an international medical journal with an impact factor, knowledge of foreign languages, volunteer work in organizations related to the field of Sleep Medicine, and an interview by the relevant Committee. The programme admits a maximum of 30 students every year. Applications are open to graduates in Medicine, Dentistry, Psychology, and Nursing, as well as graduates of technical college departments of medical laboratory technology.

All lectures and academic activities are delivered once per month from Thursday to Sunday. Twice per semester, lectures take place in person in Alexandroupoli, whereas the others are online. Attendance at all lectures is compulsory. A compulsory research master's thesis takes place during the third semester.

Students are evaluated at the end of each semester in multiple-choice tests.

Although terms and conditions for students' Erasmus+ mobility and Erasmus+ internships are described in the related documents of the Democritus University

of Thrace, these mobility platforms are not used by the PSP yet, given the fact that most of the students are working.

From discussions with students and professors, it became clear that there are frequently guest speakers from abroad. Upon completion of their studies, students are awarded a diploma certificate, which shows their academic achievement. This can be used for further studies or future careers. This programme helps graduates to advance professionally in the field. It also allows them to further develop their knowledge in Sleep Medicine by applying what they have learned to their daily work.

The meeting with current and past students left the impression that the communication between students and staff is excellent. All references to the program director were notably positive. The panel had a very positive impression of the quality and level of courses given by the faculty of this PSP. However, the panel considers that lectures should be more evenly distributed throughout the semester rather than being limited to only four sessions.

II. Analysis

The unique characteristic of the PSP is that it fulfils an important need for further education and professional development for workers in Sleep Medicine. Based on the views of current students and recent graduates, this programme provides increased opportunities to gain scientific knowledge in the field and to further develop their professional competencies.

Alongside their studies, most of the students are already working; thus, lectures are held mainly online. Twice per semester, lectures are held in person. Practical lessons in Sleep Laboratory are rather optional than compulsory.

The length of PSP studies (3 semesters) is appropriate. The panel strongly believes that both Greek and English websites should be updated.

The courses are delivered in Greek. However, providing courses and seminars in English could significantly increase the visibility and the importance of the present PSP. This could also be attractive for foreign students to attend the PSP.

Student mobility through Erasmus+ programmes and traineeships, together with the limited availability of internships, continues to be an issue requiring attention. Although these constraints are understandable, the PSP staff is encouraged to proactively pursue and fully utilise all available opportunities to strengthen and support student mobility.

III. Conclusions

The PSP offers a great opportunity for research and further training in a rapidly growing field of medicine, such as sleep medicine. The research level of the teaching staff is high. The students expressed high satisfaction regarding the Programme, the teaching staff, especially the director, the knowledge achieved, and their professional benefits.

The panel recommends the establishment of compulsory practical sessions as well as structured placement schemes, and further promoting Erasmus opportunities.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

It is recommended to add compulsory practical lessons with specific learning objectives.

It is recommended to incorporate intermediate assessments or assignments throughout the semester to promote student-centered learning.

The possibility of carrying out an internship or an Erasmus+ mobility would be a very beneficial addition to the Programme.

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

On the submitted documents the total number of teaching staff is 29, of whom 21 (72.5%), come from the School of Medicine of DUTH, and 8 (27.5%) come from other universities. 15 invited speakers from abroad and at the national level are also mentioned in the submitted paperwork. However, during the presentation 41 faculty members are mentioned in total (13 from DUTH, 16 from other national institutions and 2 from abroad), while there is also a mention of 10 invited scientists from abroad. For comparison purposes the total number of students in the current year is 17. So in any case the number of teaching staff seems sufficient with respect to the number of subjects covered but also in terms of the number of students. Overall, the teaching staff are highly qualified and suitably expert to carry out specialized teaching and research in the subject matter of the program.

The teaching load seems acceptable.

The evaluation of candidates for faculty positions considers their research output, teaching experience, and professional work. Assessment is based on minimum criteria set by the Senate, along with additional indicators such as journal impact, authorship position, citations, and collaboration metrics. Teaching ability is evaluated through trial lectures conducted before the selection process. These

lectures are attended by students, faculty members, and the selection committee. The evaluation procedures are governed by institutional regulations in line with national legislation. All election and promotion processes are carried out through the APELLA electronic system to ensure transparency.

The academic unit supports high-quality research by enabling staff at all levels to participate in national and international research programs. Faculty are strongly encouraged to develop and submit proposals to competitive funding schemes. Support is provided by ELKE during both the submission and implementation phases of research projects.

Research activity is a key criterion in evaluations for promotion to higher academic ranks. This serves as a strong incentive for continuous personal and professional development. Faculty members produce a substantial body of research, disseminated through journals, conferences, and books. Most of this work is published in peer-reviewed journals and presented at reviewed scientific conferences, ensuring its quality. The Institution also supports staff mobility by covering part of the travel and accommodation costs for conference participation on an annual basis.

At DUTH, various opportunities support the professional and scientific development of teaching staff. These include educational leave of varying duration, depending on years of service. Such leave enables faculty to teach or work at universities abroad. These leaves are planned annually to ensure compliance with the institution's approved budget. The DUTH, aiming to recognize teaching excellence, promote student-centered learning methods, and enhance the quality of teaching within the broader academic community, awards every two years a prize for outstanding teaching to active teaching staff of the university. The goal is to recognize teaching excellence, encourage the adoption of student-centered learning methods, and improve the quality of teaching across the wider academic community.

II. Analysis

The faculty involved in the program are experienced in the different specialties appropriately covering the different subjects in this PSP. This is essential given the wide range of subjects covered. There is an appropriate proportion in the faculty membership of the home department and external members. The number of faculty members is appropriate in terms of the subjects covered, the number of students and the teaching load is appropriate and not overwhelming. Although there are some invited members from international institutions mentioned there are no details on the number of lectures given and the frequency. At the same time there is sufficient space to increase the number of these internationally prestigious invited speakers which could also include some appropriate members coming from industry. The institution provides multiple opportunities both in terms of equipment but also funding for the development of teaching staff research activities. Looking at the publication record of some of the faculty members, it seems that they do not use sufficiently these opportunities and they should clearly increase their research activities both in terms of applications but also in terms of funded projects. This will increase both the opportunities for more research oriented thesis for the students but also increase the notoriety of this PSP. Finally, the faculty members should engage more with the students

within the role of academic advisor.

III. Conclusions

There are appropriate procedures in place for the competitive recruitment of the faculty members of this PSP. The experience and number of members of the faculty of this PSP is appropriate with respect to the subjects covered by this PSP. There is still space to increase the participation of international experts as lecturers on the course. There are multiple opportunities provided by the DUTH for the continuous evolution of career and acquisition of extra research experience by the faculty members. The faculty members should use these opportunities to increase their research expertise. They should also engage more with the students within the role of academic advisor.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Increase the participation of international external lecturers

The faculty members should use the opportunities provided by the DUTH for the acquisition of further research experience

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, 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

Funding for this PSP comes from the tuition fees and covers primarily administrative and technical support fees, consumables, infrastructure support, educational material, scholarships and prizes, research activities, and expenses for travel and conferences. In the field of Sleep Medicine, there are relatively limited opportunities for securing funding, although efforts will be made to generate revenue through grants and participation in programs.

Students enrolled in the Program have access to both digital teaching resources tailored to the curriculum and current online library services. A range of teaching methods is employed to enrich the learning experience and support the attainment of learning outcomes. Students are provided with clear and comprehensive information regarding available facilities and services, as well as

guidance on accessing support throughout their studies.

Additional resources accessible to PSP students include the Department's facilities during the hands-on lessons, secretariat, and computer terminals. There is close cooperation with hospitals around Greece for student theses and hands-on lessons.

The highly qualified personnel support the program's research and teaching efforts. Their responsibilities range from handling student registration to providing academic counselling and delivering administrative support to both faculty and students.

Although students seem to be aware of the role of the academic advisor, most of them, as they stated, have the program director as their academic advisor. All the students and graduates seemed enthusiastic about the director, his dedication to the program, and the ongoing support he provides to the students.

II. Analysis

The infrastructure of this PSP is high-quality, and the care given to students during their studies is excellent. Students have access to Academic Identity, Digital Services, Counseling Services, Department of Counseling and Psychosocial Support, Student Advocate, Employment and Career Services, the Student Ombudsman, the Foreign Language Teaching Center, the Cultural Student Club, and Support for Students with Disabilities. According to students and graduates, communication between students and faculty is continuous, both during and after their studies. At present, there is no established alumni association.

It is evident from the documentation the panel reviewed and from the answers provided to our meetings' questions that the students enrolled in the PSP are totally aware of both the academic requirements of the coursework and their post-graduation job prospects.

III. Conclusions

Overall, the PSP "Sleep Medicine" fosters a highly supportive environment for student development.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Panel suggests establishing an alumni association.

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 EEAP conducted a thorough assessment of the documents delivered by the HAHE of the information management policy of the MSc program in “Sleep Medicine” at the medical department of DUTH. The Department of Medicine implements procedures for collecting information on:

- Student evaluations of teaching via electronic surveys and teaching reports (MO.DIP DUTH); Integrated Information System (OIS) of MO.DIP DUTH
- Students and the MSc program (e.g., grades, number of active students) via the Electronic Registry System (Universis)
- Infrastructure (equipment, buildings) via records from Department Heads and Technical Services
- Research projects and funding via data extraction from resCom (Research Project Management System, ELKE-DUTH)
- Student welfare data via the Academic Affairs Directorate (D.A.STA.)
- Service delivery data via the Student Ombudsman, D.A.STA., Library, Information Center, Counseling & Psychological Support Unit, etc.
- National Integrated Quality System (OPESPA) of EOAAE

The OMEA (Academic Evaluation Committee) collects, processes, and uses data to improve teaching and research. Key indicators include the number of scientific publications and citations per year by faculty (DEP/EDIP), Student evaluation data used to assess teaching quality, and data analyzed and reported to the Department's General Assembly. The communication channels are the Official Website of the MSc program, the Study Guide available in Greek, and partly in English. E-Learning materials, such as course materials, are stored in Dropbox with access only to enrolled students. Continuous Monitoring & Periodic Internal Evaluation(annual) is conducted in collaboration with MO.DIP DUTH and the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS).

II. Analysis

The digital system systematically collects and evaluates data on students, faculty, and course delivery through standardized forms, aiming for evidence-based decision-making, curriculum refinement, and transparent communication.

The information management system of the PSP is well-structured, functional, and internally robust, meeting many Level 7 criteria. However, it falls short in public transparency, international benchmarking, and research integration, key features of Level 7. To fully align with the European and National Qualifications Framework, the programme must publish key performance data, integrate research metrics, engage external evaluators, and adopt international best practices in data openness and accountability. In particular, the following lacks have been identified:

The current system, while technically robust, lacks essential components of modern digital learning ecosystems. Key weaknesses include the absence of e-portfolios, digital badges, public dashboards, and accessibility compliance (WCAG), which limit lifelong learning, international recognition, transparency, and inclusivity. Additionally, the lack of Erasmus+ tracking, alumni feedback, and employer input hinders the assessment of long-term impact and internationalization efforts. These gaps collectively undermine the system's ability to support equitable, measurable, and globally recognized learning outcomes. While the system is comprehensive, there is no mention of benchmarking against international MSc programmes in other European countries in terms of data transparency, student support, or research integration.

Moreover, although data are collected and used internally, the public-facing website does not display key performance indicators (e.g., graduate employment rates, research output, student satisfaction scores), which are standard in top-tier international programmes. Finally, the programme depends heavily on internal evaluation and self-reporting, with limited use of external feedback (e.g., from employers, alumni networks, or international peer reviews).

Additional limitations include a lack of transparency in the information management system, as data on graduate outcomes, stakeholder engagement, and centralized initiatives—such as collaborations with international programs—are collected and assessed without clear visibility. Furthermore, the system's limited international reach reduces its global impact and visibility.

III. Conclusions

The PSP's information management system is technically sound and supports effective internal evaluation, but it falls short in public transparency, international benchmarking, and integration with global learning standards. The absence of e-portfolios, digital badges, public dashboards, and accessibility compliance limits its ability to support inclusive, lifelong, and internationally recognized learning. Without external validation, public performance data, or engagement with alumni and employers, the program's long-term impact and global competitiveness remain difficult to assess.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Develop and implement public-facing dashboards to display key performance indicators (e.g., graduate employment rates, student satisfaction, research output) in alignment with European and national quality frameworks.

Introduce digital credentials such as e-portfolios and micro-credentials to enhance student recognition, lifelong learning, and international mobility.

Establish an e-learning module (Interface) to enhance intensive contact between the students.

Establish formal mechanisms for collecting and integrating feedback from alumni, employers, and international peers to strengthen program evaluation and relevance.

Ensure full compliance with WCAG accessibility standards and integrate Erasmus+ and international mobility tracking to enhance inclusivity and global engagement.

Benchmark against leading European MSc programmes by comparing practices in transparency, student support, and research integration with top international programmes.

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 EEAP conducted a thorough assessment of the public information policy of the MSc program in "Sleep Medicine" at the medical department of DUTH based on the programme's official website: <https://sleep.med.duth.gr/>. The Director of the PSP mentioned that the homepage was developed independently and is not managed by the Department of Medicine. The website was submitted on March 31, 2026, by the representatives of the PSP. The website that appears in the submitted PDF documents lacks substantive content.

The website is available in Greek and is rudimentary in English. The PSP provides a documentation outlining the programme's structure, duration, objectives, and other essential elements required for a robust MSc offering. All key information of the programme's internal quality assurance framework is available. The website is well-integrated within the Faculty of Medicine and linked to relevant departments and schools across DUTH, facilitating access to additional resources such as library services, study guides, and other academic support systems. All key components of the programme's internal quality assurance framework are transparently available. This includes official regulations on student conduct, academic advising, research ethics, study regulations, mobility, internships, thesis preparation, and a fully detailed curriculum with clear pathways and course structures. Communication with students is effective and well-structured, with course content and administrative information readily accessible via email and the programme's online platform.

II. Analysis

The programme's website is well designed and user-friendly. The public information policy in its present form, despite the limited content of information,

is suffering from several critical transparency gaps that undermine the programme's credibility and international competitiveness. The program is taught in Greek, and the website is constructed in Greek and rudimentary in English. There are no course materials, syllabi, or exam formats available in English. This limits international applicants and contradicts EU-wide trends toward multilingual higher education, and in general, the program's international visibility. There is no mention on the website whether the MSc degree of the program is recognised by other European countries as an equivalent master's degree.

The website does not specify how students are assessed (e.g., exams, thesis, presentations), which affects transparency and fairness. Indeed, while some information is available in the uploaded PDF documents, the procedures are not clearly presented and are difficult to extract. While the program is highly specialized, there is no data or testimonials on graduate employment, career paths, or industry partnerships.

Moreover, topics are specialized but not clearly linked to research or theoretical depth. Clear information about the research methodology or critical analysis tools must be easily extracted from the website of the program. No indication of independent research, critical evaluation of literature, or development of new knowledge is mentioned on the website. Clinical training is mentioned, but no details on how complex or unpredictable clinical scenarios are addressed.

The website has a basic layout and lacks a downloadable brochure or video explanation, reducing accessibility and appeal. The website provides no details about potential international partnerships with universities or institutions, nor does it mention participation in exchange programmes such as Erasmus+. This absence deprives students of opportunities to gain international perspectives and limits networking with European forensic systems, contradicting the Bologna Principle of fostering international academic mobility and collaboration. There is no information on a defined research focus. Without such clarity, students may submit low-impact, small-scale case studies or purely literature-based analyses, which fall short of the scientific rigour expected at the master's level. A well-articulated research framework is essential to ensure academic quality and consistency.

The website does not specify how many students each supervisor is expected to mentor. Given that high student-to-supervisor ratios are common in Greek academic settings, this lack of transparency raises serious concerns about the feasibility of meaningful, individualized academic supervision. Without clear limits, the risk of inadequate guidance, potentially leading to superficial or non-compliant theses, remains significant.

There is no information on the identity of the examiner, whether they are external, or their research credentials. The absence of external examiners undermines the independence and scientific integrity of the assessment process. Independent evaluation is a cornerstone of quality assurance in higher education, and its omission weakens the credibility of the degree.

No public data are available on graduation or dropout rates. The absence of such metrics is a major shortcoming, as these indicators are essential for prospective

students to assess programme quality and academic rigor.

CVs of the teaching staff members, including comprehensive research records such as peer-reviewed publications, h-index values, PubMed citations, and competitive grant funding, are not available. The internal quality policy (MOD IP) documents and students' evaluations are not available on the website.

III. Conclusions

The programme's website lacks transparency, international accessibility, and essential academic information, undermining its credibility, competitiveness, and alignment with European higher education standards. Key deficiencies include limited English content, absence of course materials, unclear assessment and supervision structures, and no data on employment outcomes, research focus, or quality assurance mechanisms.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Publish course syllabi, exam formats, and assessment criteria in English to support international applicants.

Clearly state whether the MSc degree is recognized as equivalent in other European countries.

Provide detailed, measurable learning outcomes aligned with research and critical analysis skills.

Make public data on graduate employment, career paths, and industry partnerships.

Include more detailed information on international collaborations, exchange programmes (e.g., Erasmus+), and global mobility opportunities.

Define the programme's research focus and methodology to guide high-quality, original student work.

Highlight career paths, research opportunities, and accreditation.

Publish supervisor-to-student ratios and details about external examiners, including their credentials.

All faculty CVs should be standardized and include complete, verifiable information on research activities, publications, grants, and academic impact to ensure transparency and facilitate evaluation.

Note on principle 8: Most information missing from the website was actually shown during the PSP presentation; therefore the steering committee should ensure that what is on the presentation finds its way to the website.

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

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

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

The above comprise the evaluation of:

- a) the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the PSP is up to date*
- b) the changing needs of society*
- c) the students' workload, progression and completion of the postgraduate studies*
- d) the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students*
- e) the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- f) the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the PSP in question*

Postgraduate study programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date.

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP operates within the established Internal Quality Assurance System of the University and is supported by institutional structures including the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP), the Internal Evaluation Group, and the Programme Coordinating Committee.

The Programme has been delivered across multiple consecutive cycles, with systematic monitoring of student enrolment, progression and completion rates. Data presented to the Panel demonstrated stable student participation and successful completion across twelve programme cycles, reflecting sustained demand and operational continuity.

Evaluation mechanisms include student feedback on teaching quality, course content and programme organisation. These evaluations contribute to the ongoing monitoring of programme performance and provide feedback to academic staff and programme leadership.

Programme governance structures include the Coordinating Committee, which is responsible for curriculum management, distribution of teaching assignments, monitoring of programme delivery and proposing curriculum modifications where required.

Evidence of continuous programme activity includes regular updating of regulations, periodic revision of the curriculum, and adjustments to teaching modalities, including the structured integration of distance learning components and monthly teaching sessions.

Graduate progression data indicate that a number of alumni have advanced to academic positions or pursued doctoral studies, demonstrating positive academic and professional outcomes associated with programme participation.

II. Analysis

The Programme demonstrates characteristics of a mature and well-established postgraduate course with effective monitoring mechanisms. The sustained operation across multiple cycles provides strong evidence of institutional commitment and programme stability.

Student feedback mechanisms appear to function effectively and contribute to maintaining teaching quality. The governance structure supports structured decision-making processes and enables timely modification of programme components where necessary.

The monitoring of graduate destinations represents a particularly strong feature, providing valuable insight into the long-term impact of the programme on academic and professional development.

Overall, the Programme demonstrates effective integration of institutional quality assurance procedures with programme-level monitoring activities.

III. Conclusions

The Programme demonstrates full compliance with Principle 9.

Monitoring and evaluation procedures are well established and supported by institutional quality assurance structures. The long-term operation of the PSP across multiple cycles, combined with documented student outcomes and graduate progression, provides strong evidence of effective ongoing programme management and continuous improvement.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Continue systematic collection and analysis of data around graduate destinations to support programme development and visibility.

Consider establishing a formal alumni network to enhance feedback mechanisms and professional networking opportunities.

Maintain regular documentation of curriculum revisions to further strengthen transparency in programme development.

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 National Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) evaluates the PSP Sleep Medicine at the DUTH by panels of external experts set by HAHE. In the following report, the EEAP evaluated the progress made based on recommendations from the external evaluation of Demokritos University of Thrace (DUTH) and its QMS certification, both conducted by international expert committees in 2015 and 2018, respectively, and both of which are relevant to the MSc programs.

The Action Plan of the QMS Monitoring Report was approved on February 22, 2021 (Decision No. 5/22-2-2021, DUTH/MODIP/38626/389) and communicated to the Senate. Since then, MODIP has systematically monitored and documented the implementation of all actions, issuing formal decisions and reminder letters to responsible parties, reinforcing follow-up during stakeholder meetings, and sharing best practices via the MODIP website and email dissemination. The report was initially approved at the MODIP meeting No. 7/12-4-2021 (DUTH/MODIP/44340/443/13-4-2021) and finalized after a completeness review by EAAE at MODIP meeting No. 3/18-11-2021 (DUTH/MODIP/14907/112/18-11-2021).

II. Analysis

Summary of Recommendations Related to the Educational Process and MSc Programs:

From the 2016 External Evaluation, key recommendations included strengthening data management and expanding multilingual curricula and resources to support internationalization, fostering a culture of excellence in teaching and research across all departments, and enhancing infrastructure, student services, and partnerships with industry and other universities. The 2018 QMS Certification emphasized the need for clearer student involvement in educational improvement, the provision of an accessible English version of the university's

central and faculty websites, greater use of English in teaching and research activities, and improved interdepartmental collaboration—particularly important given the institution’s presence across four campuses.

The MSc is partly aligned with European MSc standards under the Bologna Process, ESG, and ENQA, demonstrating strong performance in internationalization English-language instruction and website), (quality assurance, student feedback, interdepartmental collaboration, and support for academic excellence. However, full compliance remains unmet due to critical gaps as discussed. While the program shows a clear commitment to continuous improvement, addressing these areas is essential to achieve full alignment with top-tier European MSc benchmarks.

III. Conclusions

The MODIP has made meaningful progress in aligning with European MSc standards through enhanced internationalization, improved quality assurance, and strengthened stakeholder engagement, as evidenced by its response to prior evaluation. The program meets the European MSc benchmarks partially. To achieve full compliance with European standards, action is required from MODIP and HAHE to become a more competitive and internationally recognized MSc program.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Develop and publish formal learning outcomes aligned with EQF Level 7 and the Bologna
 Publish a detailed ECTS handbook with workload, credit distribution, and assessment criteria.
 Establish a student representative body in the Program Committee.
 Introduce career development workshops and industry partnerships.
 Implement an alumni tracking system and publish graduate employment data.
 Apply for EUR-ACE or similar international accreditation.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

The subject matter of this PSP and its effort to coalesce around the subject of sleep disorders various types of medical expertise is very commendable. The presence of Professor Steiropoulos, a pioneer in the field, lends very strong credence to the effort.

The PSP reflects the growing importance of Sleep Medicine as a multidisciplinary specialty and responds to the increasing need for trained professionals capable of addressing complex sleep-related disorders across multiple clinical contexts.

The programme defines clear learning outcomes that reflect clinical reasoning, diagnostic interpretation skills, and the ability to apply evidence-based management strategies across a wide spectrum of sleep-related disorders.

The programme integrates research and clinical practice effectively, with students required to present their dissertation findings at scientific meetings, supporting the development of academic communication skills and professional engagement.

There is a system in place for the evaluation of teaching staff which follows the basic rules of the DUTH.

The Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) encourages the evaluation of the quality of educational activities by students.

The meeting with current and past students left the impression that the communication between students and staff is excellent and all references to the program director were notably positive.

The PSP offers a great opportunity for research and further training in a rapidly growing field of medicine, such as sleep medicine.

The research level of the teaching staff is high.

The number of teaching staff seems sufficient with respect to the number of subjects covered but also in terms of the number of students.

The teaching load seems acceptable.

There are multiple opportunities provided by the DUTH for the continuous evolution of career and acquisition of extra research experience by the faculty members.

The infrastructure of this PSP is high-quality, and the care given to students during their studies is excellent.

The information management system of the PSP is well-structured, functional, and internally robust, meeting many Level 7 criteria.

Communication with students is effective and well-structured, with course content and administrative information readily accessible via email and the programme's online platform.

II. Areas of Weakness

The EEAP questioned whether moving so much of the course work to online teaching, and focusing it on only once per month is the most optimal from an

educational point of view. In the opinion of the EEAP, courses should take place twice per month, and an effort should be made to increase the in person sessions.

Many academic and organisational responsibilities appear to be concentrated around the Programme Director. Although this concentration reflects the Director's dedication and competence, reliance on a single individual for multiple core functions may present potential risks to long-term sustainability, continuity and succession planning.

The concept of the academic advisor exists but it is not totally clear how this is communicated to the students and whether all of the teaching staff participate in this role.

Although the evaluation shows a high level of student satisfaction the rates of response are low and actions need to be taken to increase those.

Although the distant teaching is appreciated by the students who in their majority are already working full time, efforts need to be made to improve the cohesion of the group.

Although terms and conditions for students' Erasmus+ mobility and Erasmus+ internships are described in the related documents of the Democritus University of Thrace, these mobility platforms are not used by the PSP yet, given the fact that most of the students are working.

Lectures should be more evenly distributed throughout the semester rather than being limited to only four sessions.

While the system is comprehensive, there is no mention of benchmarking against international MSc programmes in other European countries in terms of data transparency, student support, or research integration.

The website is constructed in Greek and rudimentary in English: there are no course materials, syllabi, or exam formats available in English.

Clear information about the research methodology or critical analysis tools must be easily extracted from the website of the program.

The website does not specify how many students each supervisor is expected to mentor.

CVs of the teaching staff members, including comprehensive research records such as peer-reviewed publications, h-index values, PubMed citations, and competitive grant funding, are not available on the website.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

Re-introduce some more in person sessions.

Consider expanding opportunities for international collaboration and student mobility, including participation in joint activities or exchange programmes.

Explore the possibility of offering selected modules or seminars in English to enhance international visibility.

Develop structured mechanisms for delegation of academic and administrative responsibilities among members of the Coordinating Committee.

Improve the rates of students' response to the curriculum and teaching staff

evaluation questionnaires.

The panel recommends the establishment of compulsory practical sessions as well as structured placement schemes.

Incorporate intermediate assessments or assignments throughout the semester to promote student-centered learning.

There is sufficient space to increase the number of these internationally prestigious invited speakers which could also include some appropriate members coming from industry.

Establish an alumni association.

To fully align with the European and National Qualifications Framework, the programme must publish key performance data, integrate research metrics, engage external evaluators, and adopt international best practices in data openness and accountability.

Develop and implement public-facing dashboards to display key performance indicators (e.g., graduate employment rates, student satisfaction, research output) in alignment with European and national quality frameworks.

Establish an e-learning module (Interface) to enhance intensive contact between the students.

Benchmark against leading European MSc programmes by comparing practices in transparency, student support, and research integration with top international programmes.

Publish course syllabi, exam formats, and assessment criteria in English to support international applicants.

Make public data on graduate employment, career paths, and industry partnerships.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

2, 4, 5, 6, 9

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

1, 3, 7, 10

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

8

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:

0

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname	Signature
KTISTAKIS NICHOLAS	Signed by KTISTAKIS NICHOLAS
GRAMMATOPOULOS DIMITRIS	Signed by GRAMMATOPOULOS DIMITRIS
SACHINIDIS AGAPIOS	Signed by SACHINIDIS AGAPIOS
Tzimogianni Valentini	Signed by Tzimogianni Valentini
VISVIKIS DIMITRIS	Signed by VISVIKIS DIMITRIS