



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
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Accreditation Report

for the New Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Methodology and Applications in Lifelong Education in Life and Health
Sciences

Department: Molecular Biology and Genetics

Institution: Democritus University of Thrace

Date: May 2025



Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση
της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



Πρόγραμμα
Ανθρώπινο Δυναμικό και
Κοινωνική Συνοχή



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of
the New Postgraduate Study Programme of **Methodology and
Applications in Lifelong Education in Life and Health Sciences** 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 new postgraduate study programme of Methodology and Applications in Lifelong Education in Life and Health Sciences of the Democritus University of Thrace comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. PAPAGEORGIOU TASSOS (Chair)**
Turku Centre for Biotechnology, University of Turku and Åbo Akademi University
- 2. AISLAITNER GEORGIOS**
Bundesinstitut für Arzneimittel und Medizinprodukte (BfArM) [Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices], Germany
- 3. CHRISTOPHIDES GEORGE**
Imperial College London
- 4. Tzimogianni Valentini**
University of Patras
- 5. VALAVANIDOU-IOANNITOU GEORGIA (GINA)**
Le Mans Université

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The members of the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) for the review of the new postgraduate study programme (PSP) in "Methodology and Applications in Lifelong Education in Life and Health Sciences" were appointed by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) on 9 May 2025 after they were selected from the Register of Independent Experts in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020. The assessment was conducted through document reviews and online interviews. The entire evaluation and accreditation exercise did not include an on-site visit to the Department and University campus but was carried out remotely using the Zoom platform.

EEAP members had their first meeting on May, 12th from 16:00-17:00 (all times refer to Greek time) to discuss the material provided by the Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH) and the Program Committee, allocate tasks, prepare for the on-line meetings with the Institution and agree on key questions and issues to focus on during the evaluation. The Panel reviewed the submitted documents (A1–A19) which were assumed to be factually correct. The received files are listed below.

- A1. Proposal for Academic Accreditation of the new PSP in "Methodology and Applications in Lifelong Education in Life and Health Sciences".
- A2. Senate decision on the establishment of the new PSP.
- A3. Reasoned report of the QAU for the establishment of the PSP.
- A4. Decision of the Senate on the strategy of the Institution in matters of development of postgraduate programmes.
- A5. Feasibility and viability studies for the establishment and operation of the new PSP.
- A6. Quality Policy of the academic unit for the development and improvement of the PSP.
- A7. Quality target of the PSP.
- A8. Study Guide.
- A9. Course Outlines.
- A10. List of teaching staff.
- A11. Internal regulations of the PSP.
- A12. Regulation of studies, internship, mobility, and preparation of the PSP.
- A13. Regulation for the management of complaints and the procedure for handling complaints and objections of students.
- A14. Regulation for the operation of an academic advisor.
- A15. Regulation on Research Ethics.
- A16. Model Diploma Supplement in Greek and English language.
- A17. Summary report on the performance of teaching staff
- A18. Specific regulation for the implementation of e-learning.
- A19. Plan for the use of tuition fees.

On Tuesday May 13th from 15:00-16:00, EEAP had a meeting with the ViceRector/President of MODIP Prof. Marirena Grigoriou , the Head of the Department Assoc. Prof. Nicholas Glykos, the Director of the PSP Prof. Aikaterini Kedraka and the MODIP Supervisor Mrs. Styliani Gkavaki.

During the meeting, general information regarding the University, the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics (MBG) PSP, , and the were discussed. A meeting from 16:00-16:45 with teaching staff of the PSP was followed with the participation of Prof. Athanasios Karalis, Prof. Rafail Sandaltzopoulos, Prof. Ioannis Tokatlidis, Prof. Aristotelis Papageorgiou, Assist. Prof. Anna Tsiboukli, and Assist. Prof Anastasia Raikou. Professional development opportunities, mobility, competence and adequacy of the teaching staff to ensure learning outcomes, workload, evaluation by students; link between teaching and research; teaching staff involvement in applied research, projects and research activities directly related to the programme; possible areas of weakness.

Between 17:00-17:30, an online tour with the participation of Mr. Dimitrios Asimakopoulos (Administrative staff member of PSP) and teaching staff members of PSPs: Assist. Prof. Petros Kolovos and Ms. Chrysa Tsikrikoni. The online tour consisted of a short video (link: <https://youtu.be/8MtldXsmzQ4>). Classrooms, lecture halls, libraries, laboratories, and other facilities related to the PSP were shown to the EEAP, followed by discussion. A meeting with employers and social partners was held from 18:00-18:45 with the participation of: Dr Manos Pavlakis, Member of the Managing Board of the Hellenic Adult Education Association (HAEA), Dr Paris Lintzeris, Head at the Institute of the Hellenic Confederation of a research body for Small and Medium-sized enterprises (IME GSEVEE), Dr Ira Papageorgiou, Labour Institute of the General Confederation of Labour (INE GSEE), Dr Marigoula Kosmidou, Regional Director of Education of Eastern Macedonia & Thrace, and Dr Charikleia Orfanidou, Member of the Managing Board of the Panhellenic Association of Nursing Educators and Research. The relations of the programme with external stakeholders from the private and the public sector was discussed.

The EEAP had a private meeting to discuss the main findings before a closure meeting (20:00-20:30) with the ViceRector/President of MODIP (Quality Assurance Unit, QAU) Prof. Marirena Grigoriou, the Head of the Department Assoc. Prof. Nicholas Glykos, the Director of the PSP Prof. Aikaterini Kedraka, and the QAU Supervisor Mrs. Styliani Gkavaki. EEAP presented briefly their initial findings and impressions and discussed them with the participants.

Overall, the review process (including preparation, meetings, and report writing) was completed smoothly without any significant issues or concerns. The entire process was contacted in a spirit of collaboration. In response to the panel's request, additional material was promptly provided. The panel expresses its gratitude to HAHE for effectively supporting the review of this PSP. All PSP and DUTH officials as well as the employers and social partners showed great enthusiasm and dedication to successfully accomplish the accreditation procedure. EEAP would like to thank the Department and University Administration as well as all faculty members for their cooperation and fruitful discussions.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The PSP in 'Methodology and Applications in Lifelong Education in Life and Health Sciences' is one of the new PSPs that have been approved by the DUTH's Senate. The central strategic objective of DUTH is excellence in education and its connection with research, innovation and entrepreneurship. DUTH organizes second and third cycle programmes (Postgraduate Studies Programmes - MSc, Doctoral Studies Programmes - PhD), which aim to promote original scientific research and make a substantial contribution to the development of knowledge, at least in one scientific discipline. The general strategy of DUTH regarding PSP and Doctoral (PhD) studies was approved with the 25/97/16-11-2023 decision of the university's Senate.

The development strategy of the DUTH's Postgraduate Programmes aims to:

- Provide all the knowledge, competencies and skills required in the DUTH's faculties, in order to develop all the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the requirements of the subjects treated in all DUTH's faculties, in order to enable their graduates to have a successful career,
- Train young scientists in a wide range of scientific fields,
- Train young executives and professionals in fields that are essential for local and national development by supporting businesses, organizations and organizations and the economy and society in general,
- Support research, both basic and applied,
- Ensure excellence in postgraduate education, learning, teaching, research and innovation, as well as in supporting and exploiting both established and new researchers, academic teachers and administrative staff,
- Provide knowledge, competences and skills required for studies in at doctoral level.
- Contribute through knowledge, innovation, scientific thinking and creation, to the extent appropriate, to prosperity, social progress and to the culture of national, European, and international academia.

The PSP in 'Methodology and Applications in Lifelong Education in Life and Health Sciences' is administered by the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics in the School of Health Sciences at DUTH. The new PSP aims at scientific deepening and professional development of 1) current and future school education teachers, in order to organically integrate modern teaching methods and techniques in their educational work practice and thus contribute to the qualitative upgrading of teaching and learning in the field of Life and Health Sciences, 2) scientists and researchers of life and health sciences education who are interested in working in the field of adult education, such as e.g. training of trainers in life sciences, continuing medical and nursing education education, agricultural education, agri- food education, environmental education, medical and nursing education education, environmental education, education and training of volunteers, planning and development design and development of educational materials. Its establishment (as continuation of a previous PSP in 'Didactics in Health Sciences') stemmed from the need to upgrade teaching skills and guidance of scientists in the fields of life and health sciences for their personal, scientific and professional development.

Graduates can be employed in positions relevant to their specialisation, either in the public sector (hospitals, secondary education, municipalities, etc.), in the private sector (diagnostic laboratories, pharmaceutical companies, etc.) or they can continue in an academic-research career in or pursue academic or research careers in universities or research organisations. The new PSP follows the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and requires 60 ECTS for graduation. Its duration is one year (2 semesters) and the fee is 2 400€ which can be split in two installments.

In the one-year of their studies, the students follow four mandatory courses, with no elective courses. These courses are: Principles of Pedagogy and Teaching Methodology, Adult Education and Lifelong Learning, Teaching Applications in Life and Health Sciences and Microteaching. There is no thesis and no practical training. Emphasis has been placed on the structure of the Program, so that it follows the principles of Adult Education and student-centered learning in the field of Health Sciences. The courses will take place with a blended educational methodology - partly (52.8%) with methods of modern distance education and partly (47.2%) in-person. All courses are comprised of 45 hours of class teaching including lectures, discussions, and student presentations. The remaining hours are reserved for individual studies, person to person discussions with the professors responsible for the courses, the preparation of presentations, and the final essays. The total workload of each course amounts to 375 hours per course. The expected learning outcomes for graduates are to acquire knowledge of contemporary student-centered teaching theories, technological applications, trends, and approaches for the design, organization, implementation, and evaluation of educational activities aimed at minors and adult learners in the field of Life and Health Sciences, while updating their knowledge in the Molecular Biosciences; to be equipped with skills to design, implement, research, and evaluate a comprehensive teaching intervention in a school classroom or in an adult education program in the field of Life and Health Sciences. Teaching is provided in the Greek language, although applicants are expected to have good knowledge of English language, to access the bibliography and other learning materials. The student projection is up to 40 students. Upon successful completion of the PSP, graduates are conferred with a Diploma of Postgraduate Studies. This qualification will equip students with various career opportunities in providing individual and organizational career in relevant innovative educational and social working environments in Greece and abroad.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Strategy, Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Goal Setting for the New Postgraduate Study Programmes

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD INCLUDE IN THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT THE DEVELOPMENT, ORGANISATION, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES (PSP) IN SPECIFIC SCIENTIFIC FIELDS AFTER INVESTIGATING THEIR FEASIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY. INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY FOR THE NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT.

THIS POLICY SHOULD EXPAND AND BE AIMED (WITH THE COLLABORATION OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS) AT THE PSP OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE ACADEMIC UNIT. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL INTERESTED PARTIES.

By decision/s of the Institutional Senate, the Institutions should adapt their strategy to allow for the provision of postgraduate study programmes, in addition to attending to the profile, vision, mission and strategic objectives of the Institution. In this strategy, the Institutions should anticipate the potential benefits, difficulties or risks from the implementation of new postgraduate study programmes and plan all the necessary actions to achieve their goals. The Institution's strategic choices should be documented through specific feasibility and sustainability studies, especially for new postgraduate study programmes.

In the case of PSP delivered by distance methods, the Institution prepares and applies an e-learning strategy. The Institution's e-learning strategy is integrated into its overall strategy and identifies educational goals while keeping up to the rapid technological changes and to the developments in pedagogical models. The Institution should include in its strategy the justification and feasibility as to why e-learning has been selected as the appropriate learning strategy for the particular programmes of study where it is applied.

In the context of e-learning, innovation strategies, the possibility of programme revision, the linking between learning and research (requiring knowledge of the latest innovations in order to select the most appropriate means to achieve the learning outcomes) should be taken into account.

The quality assurance policy of the academic unit for postgraduate study programmes should be in line with the Institution's strategy 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 postgraduate 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 continuous 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 and the availability 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 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 internal review and audit of the quality assurance system for the PSP through the cooperation of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU)*

Documentation

- *The Institutional strategy for postgraduate studies, which includes a special strategy for e-learning, as long as it is applied to the Institution's PSP*
- *Feasibility and sustainability studies for the new PSP*
- *Quality Policy of the academic unit for the development and improvement of PSP*
- *Quality Targeting of the academic unit for the PSP*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP in "Methodology and Applications in Lifelong Education in Life and Health Sciences" was approved by the University Senate in its meeting on June 13th, 2024 (decision 43/114). According to the documents, its establishment stemmed from the need for specialists able to improve teaching and mentoring skills of scientists in Life and Health Sciences.

The scientific field of the new PSP is Lifelong Education. It is focused on modern theoretical and applied teaching and learning in the field of Molecular Biology and Genomics as applied to Life and Health Sciences as there seems to be a lack of corresponding studies at postgraduate level in this area. It was therefore considered that the content of the new PSP needs to focus on teaching approaches, as well as educational practices and applications suitable for adult learners and should enable graduates to teach in school education on the one hand, and on the other hand in education/training programmes for adults in the field of Life and Health sciences. The graduates will be able to work in interdisciplinary teams in formal or non-formal education, in public or private organisations, institutions, businesses and organisations and capable to design, implement and evaluate, depending on their field of activity, educational actions

in the professional and scientific field of Life and Health Sciences.

The learning outcomes correspond to level seven (7) of the National and European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area.

The annual internal evaluation of the PSP will be carried out in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of DUTH following the internal evaluation of the department/faculty to which the PSP belongs and in accordance with the corresponding process of the internal quality assurance system of the institution. The external evaluation of the PSP will be carried out in cooperation with the QAU in the framework of their accreditation, according to the procedure provided by HAHE. The Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics, which provides administrative support, is evaluated as part of the periodic evaluation and accreditation of the academic units as arranged by HAHE.

II. Analysis

The PSP in 'Methodology and Applications in Lifelong Education in Life and Health Sciences' is supported by the host university and aligns with the overall strategy of the Institution. The available facilities are sufficient and provide all the tools for online and in-person teaching. The program considers cooperation and communication between students an important factor in the learning process. Thus, it encourages teamwork, exchange of ideas, and mutual support. Courses will be given in-person and online to facilitate attendance by students and better engagement of the students to the learning process. It is anticipated that students will be actively involved in the learning process, including presenting projects, participating in discussions, and applying their knowledge to practical problems.

The PSP aims to provide education in the area of Health and Life Sciences. The curriculum provides up-to date knowledge but appears to lack connection with the industry. Although seminars by invited speakers can be arranged to cover these areas, a stronger interaction with external partners would benefit the students and increase their employability and practical training in real-life situations.

The expected income will be mainly from tuition fees for the first years of operation. The income will cover (after 30% deduction by EAKE) teaching staff fees and travel expenses. Other external funding may be sought in the future. Sustainability will, however, require, external funding.

The students will carry out the evaluation of each course and lecturer at the end of each semester. The evaluation will be conducted using a special evaluation form/questionnaire given electronically and completed by the students . Given that participation is usually low, clear instructions and procedures are required

to ensure higher participation. Future alumni should also provide feedback for further improvements. An online form is provided for registration.

III. Conclusions

The program should assess its objectives more carefully and improve several areas to ensure sustainability, including various means of additional funding. The exposure of students to real working conditions (internships, practical exercise, link to research) is missing. No formal interactions with companies appear at the moment. The PSP could provide also some mechanisms to award excellence in teaching and studies. The panel considers that the programme is substantially compliant with Principle 1.

Panel Judgement

Principle 1: Strategy, Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Goal Setting for the New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R1.1 Seek additional funding to ensure sustainability of the PSP.

R1.2 Improve and formalize the connection with the stakeholders and social partners for regular revisions of the curriculum and feedback.

R1.3 Consider some practical training and link with research for the students. R1.4

Ensure that the questionnaires would attract high participation by students.

R1.5 Establish mechanisms to award excellence for teaching staff and students (e.g. in the fee utilization plan).

R1.6 Establish mechanisms for alumni feedback and ensure that all graduates provide contact details.

R1.7 QAU should become more active and critical during the establishment phase and evaluation process.

Principle 2: Design and Approval of New 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 NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES. THE OBJECTIVES, THE SPECIFIC SCIENTIFIC SUBJECT AND THE STREAMS OR SPECIALISATIONS, THE EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND THE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS ARE SET OUT IN THE PROGRAMME DESIGN. DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW 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, the specialisations, the expected learning outcomes, the structure, the courses, the teaching and assessment modes, the teaching staff and the necessary resources 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. In particular, for each expected 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 for the 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 NQF, 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: teaching assignments per subject area and per course*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP “Methodology and Applications in Lifelong Education in Life and Health Sciences” of the Democritus University of Thrace is conceived as an autonomous one-year study program of 60 ECTS points with 4 courses. As designed and published in the Student Guide, the two academic semesters are comprised of two courses of 15 ECTS points each corresponding to 45 hours of teaching (except the Microteaching). In the one-year of their studies, the students follow four mandatory courses, with no elective courses. There is no thesis and no practicum. The courses will take place with a blended educational methodology - partly (52.8%) with methods of modern distance education and partly (47.2%) in- person.

The targeted profile of postgraduate students will be professionals in the fields of Life and Health Sciences, and emphasis has been placed on both the structure of the Program and its educational activities, so that they follow the principles of Adult Education and student-centered learning.

The expected learning outcomes for graduates are to acquire knowledge of contemporary student-centered teaching theories, technological applications, trends, and approaches for the design, organization, implementation, and evaluation of educational activities aimed at minors and adult learners in the field of Life and Health Sciences, while updating their knowledge in the Molecular Biosciences; to be equipped with skills to design, implement, research, and evaluate a comprehensive teaching intervention in a school classroom or in an adult education program in the field of Life and Health Sciences.

All courses – except microteaching- are comprised of 45 hours of class teaching including lectures, discussions, and student presentations. The remaining hours are reserved for individual studies, person to person discussions with the professors responsible for the courses, the preparation of presentations, and the final essays. The total workload of each course amounts to 375 hours per course, which seems excessive. As discussed with the head of the department and the director of the PSP this is due to their choice of creating “umbrella” courses. These courses (1, 2 and 3) are designed to include different topics/orientations – that can be considered as individual courses.

All courses are taught by the teaching staff of the Department, and some are covered by teachers from outside the Department, from faculty members of other Universities, with specialization on the Adult Education and Lifelong Learning and Principles of Pedagogy and Teaching Methodology. The quality of the teaching staff is excellent and they come from different research fields. The teaching language is Greek, and every course includes a final examination in the form of a written essay. The relative weight of the written essays in the overall score of a course is 70%. The rest of the score is formed from the participation in the classes and from other activities related to the topic of the course.

Additionally, the PSP organizes a variety of activities, including seminars on various topics such as seminars on the development of academic skills and seminars on the development of professional skills. Students can use the resources of the Democritus University of Thrace Department of Molecular Biology & Genetics via the internet, especially the e-class platform, the library of the Department and the central library of the school. The tuition fee of € 2400 in total is expensive with respect to the Greek standard for one-year program.

II. Analysis

In all the documents reviewed for this principle, the overall provision of information is well articulated and presented and according to the requirements of the proposal/accreditation templates. It is also a great advantage the involvement in the programme of external stakeholders and social partners with long experience in this field.

Despite the overall good impression of the PSP, the EEAP has detected some issues that need to be improved:

- The study program does not offer opportunities for practical exercise or internship during the studies. They offer instead a Microteaching course which has a laboratory character and aims for graduate students to acquire practical teaching skills in specific dimensions of teaching, as they practice the design, implementation, and evaluation of a teaching unit in simulated teaching situations. This course cannot substitute the benefits from a practical training, in the form of an internship which will provide students with the knowledge and skills obtained from a real class situation, with a clear practical focus each of the students' field.
- The "umbrella" course has a heavy workload for students, particularly for the final exam. This exam can be substituted for partial exams throughout the semester. These exams can take various forms and align with the expertise of the teaching staff involved in each course.
- The inclusion of the "Microteaching" module is noteworthy, but the absence of formal practical experience and a final research-oriented project weakens the academic character of the degree. Reframing this module to resemble capstone research-oriented component, such as the design, delivery, and evaluation of an educational intervention, would be one way to help align the programme more closely with the standards of a Master's degree and enhance students' independent academic development.

III. Conclusions

Having carefully examined the structure of the PSP, the EEAP concludes that, in its current form, the PSP partially complies with the needs and the aims of a modern specialized postgraduate study program.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2: Design and Approval of New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	X
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

As the PSP Proposal currently stands, the EEAP recommends that the following aspects be addressed:

R2.1 The final exam can be substituted for partial exams throughout the semester as the “umbrella” course has a heavy workload for students, particularly for the final exam. These exams can take various forms and align with the expertise of the teaching staff involved in each course.

R2.2 The cognitive/theoretical domain of the programme lends itself to the exceptional theory into practice approach, as well as to the highly regarded research orientation teacher/practitioner inquiry. This major element should be included in the PSP with a form of a practicum, which could provide students opportunities to conduct this type of inquiry/research in various fieldwork spaces, perhaps at appropriate sites for each specialization.

R2.3 A regular mechanism of feedback from stakeholders, should be organized. The contact and regular feedback from the stakeholders will increase the opportunities for employment of programme graduates, networking, events, campaigns, and other collaborations.

R2.4 Enhance the research component of the PSP, for example by reframing the “Microteaching” module into a capstone research-oriented project, which would fulfil the expectation for independent scholarly work at a Master’s level.

Principle 3: Regulations for 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).

The Institution should develop and publish the internal regulations prescribed by law which, among other things, should regulate all issues of postgraduate studies from the beginning to the end of the studies.

Indicatively:

- *The students' 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*

In case that the PSP is offered through distance learning methods, the Institution should have in place a regulation for e-learning, including in particular the following issues:

- *Services of the Institution to support e-learning*
- *Methodology for the development and implementation of courses*
- *Ways of providing teaching and variety of teaching and assessment modes*
- *General standard of course structure*
- *Student support system*
- *Support of faculty/teachers with mandatory e-learning training for new staff members*
- *Technological infrastructures made available by the Institution*
- *Student identity confirmation system (student identity check, assignment and exam writing process, security and certification issues).*
- ❖ *The Institution should establish rules for the provision of appropriate access and for the assurance of the participation of students affected by disability, illness, and other special circumstances.*
- ❖ *Ethical issues, such as those concerning data protection, intellectual property rights and rules for protection against fraud are governed by the e-learning regulation.*

All the above must be made public within the context of the Student Guide.

Documentation

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the postgraduate study programme*
- *Special regulation for the implementation of e-learning if the PSP is delivered through distance methods*
- *Research Ethics Regulation*

- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility, and student assignments*
- *Degree certificate template and Diploma Supplement template*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

This PSP will be taught in Greek over 2 academic semesters (with 30 ECTS each divided in 4 “umbrella” courses). The structure and design of the PSP in the Methodology and Applications in Lifelong Education in Life and Health Sciences are described in the Study Guide, on the various regulations and relevant documentation and on the respective sections of the programme’s website. All the information students require has been uploaded on the PSP’s webpage (<https://biodidactics.mbg.duth.gr/>). It should be noted that the webpage is modern and well designed and exists in both Greek and English with full documentation. The website also contains tolls for convenient or modified access.

The information on the website includes a reception day for students in October 2025 and a beginning of the Spring semester in February 2026. A graduation ceremony is scheduled for November 2026. All the necessary documentation to complete the application for the year 2025-2026 is available on the website. The same amount of information is provided on the Greek and the English webpage. There is not an online application but a word document. Interestingly there is a specific application form for the program and a general application form for any issue (https://biodidactics.mbg.duth.gr/?page_id=2325). The relevant and useful templates for the application form for registration, general application form, letter of intent and the diploma supplements are available only on the Greek website (https://biodidactics.mbg.duth.gr/?page_id=2325).

The number of participating students will not be less than twenty (20) and not more than sixty (60). However, the PSP is aiming to have forty (40) participating students. On the website on the presentation of the PSP section the number of positions available for the virtual reality hall are thirty (30). The fees are set to 2 400 €, which can be paid in two instalments.

The criteria for entry into the PSP are outlined both on the Greek and the English webpage. In particular, the following are required:

1. A fully completed Application Form. The relevant template (Template A.1 in the Annex) is available on the website of both the Department’ site and the PGMP’s site.
2. A photocopy of the Identity Card of the applicant.
3. A short CV, with complete and accurate contact details.
4. A copy of the applicant’s graduate degree. If the degree is not submitted at

the time of application, candidates must submit it at the time of registration. Alternatively, they may submit a certificate of completion of studies from the relevant Department at the time of registration and the actual degree by the end of the calendar year. In the case of international graduates, a certificate of equivalence of their degree from the Hellenic National Academic Recognition and Information Center or from the body responsible for the recognition of qualifications. If a candidate postgraduate student does not hold an officially recognized from the Hellenic National Academic Recognition and Information Center degree, he/she must provide a copy of his/her degree with the Hague stamp on it and an official translation. If the degree has been awarded by a foreign institution awarding degrees organized through a franchise agreement with private bodies in Greece and is included in the relevant list ('List of foreign institutions awarding degrees organized through a franchise agreement with private bodies in Greece'), a Certificate of Place of Study, issued and sent by the institution where the studies are carried out or the institution carrying out the research project, is also required. If the place of study or part of the studies is confirmed to be in the Greek territory, the qualification is not recognized, unless the part of the studies that took place in the Greek territory is in a public higher education institution.

5. A Diploma supplement or an Analytical Grade Transcript.
6. A Copy of the second degree (if applicable).
7. A certified document for the knowledge of English Language at a level of at least B2. The level of English language proficiency is proved in the following ways:
8. a) The Greek State Certificate of Law No. 2740/1999, as replaced by Article 13 (19) of Law No. 3149/2003,
9. b) a Bachelor's Degree in Foreign Language and Literature or Bachelor's Degree in Foreign Languages Translation and Interpreting or similar and equivalent degree from a foreign institution,
10. c) A Bachelor's, undergraduate or postgraduate degree or a doctoral degree from any recognized higher education institution in a foreign country,
11. d) A diploma equivalent to that of Greek Secondary Education schools, if obtained after at least six years of regular study abroad.
12. A certified document for a second foreign language proficiency at least at B1 level (if available).
13. For non-Greek candidates, documented knowledge of the Greek language is required.
14. Evidence of teaching and/or work experience (if available).
15. Copies of scientific publications (simple photocopies) Include the full texts of publications in Greek and international journals and conferences, with peer reviewers. Alternatively, the applicant may provide the unique DOI number of the publication (if available).
16. Letters of recommendation (max two/2 – if available)
17. A completed Letter of Intent to participate in the Program.

18. Any other evidence supporting the individual selection criteria set for the selection of candidates to the PSP.

A declaration of the Law 1599/86, signed electronically or signed by a Citizen Service Centre for the authenticity of the signature, in which the candidate declares that the documents presented and submitted in his/her file are original and true. The selection process is clearly outlined and the weight/percentage of each criterion of the procedure to the final selection is also available (https://biodidactics.mbg.duth.gr/?page_id=1420). More than sufficiently detailed information is provided in the Greek and the English website. The students are fully aware of the requirements for admission to the PSP.

The available materials describe with sufficient detail all the necessary information that the students will require for the selection procedure, required documentation, the courses taught, the quality policy, as well as the procedures followed during the PSP. More specifically, the following regulations and procedures have been provided to the Accreditation Panel in Greek: Syllabus, the lectures outline with a description of the courses, the study guide, the internal operation regulation, the complaints' regulation, the Center for Psychological and Counselling Support, the Academic advisor, student advocate and the The Committee for Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination information and the example of the Master's Diploma and supplement. This information is available on both the Greek and English websites.

There is no practice/practical training and no requirement for a Diploma thesis.

The ECTS are applied across the curriculum, and procedures and requirements regarding student mobility programmes are established. Information on the student mobility programme ERASMUS+ is available within the framework of the international agreements of the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics (in Greek and in English) and information on the course instructors (in Greek and in English).

The technological infrastructure and e-services of DUTH are made known to the students.

The academic tutor/advisor and the complaints procedure is also made known to the students. The Department and the University appears to have an efficient system in place to manage complaints. Ethical issues, such as those concerning data protection, intellectual property rights and rules for protection against fraud are governed by the e-learning regulation and are clearly described in the available PSP's documentation.

The student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment aspects of the Interinstitutional PSP are demonstrated by offering flexible learning options to students, including online teaching materials and updated technological platforms/solutions as part of the institution's infrastructure (e.g. eClass and MS Teams).

II. Analysis

This is a new and original PSP with no other similar in the Greek Universities. There is evidence that the PSP has developed and applied to the maximum extent the rules and regulations relevant with Principle 3. The information is presented in the Study Guide, regulations, in additional relevant documentation and on both sections, Greek and English, of the PSP's webpage. The study guide is focused and very informative. It is noted that the information across the Greek and English webpages is harmonised, so that the students are well informed. The catalogue of the course tutors provided to the EEAP is slightly different to the one posted on the website (two more instructors are included on the website).

More than sufficient information for the PSP is provided to prospective Greek- and English-speaking students regarding the selection procedure, regulations governing the programme, ERASMUS and e-learning. The Accreditation Panel was informed that there will be no Diploma thesis. It is made very clear to the students the criteria and how the selection process will be conducted. The lectures outlines and the assessment procedures of the students and the monitoring of their progress are described very clearly to the prospective students. Academic support is expected to be provided through the Academic Advisor role, and through effective communication ensured by the motivated Course Director and the teaching staff. Unfortunately, it was not possible to interview any students since the programme has not started yet.

III. Conclusions

The PSP has prepared a complete and detailed documentation for the regulations, procedures, criteria, requirements and relevant issues for student admission and certification, in alignment with Principle 3, as stated by HAHE.

Panel Judgement

Principle 3: Regulations for Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Postgraduate Studies, and certification	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R3. 1. A focused and very informative PowerPoint presentation dealing with all aspects of Principle 3 relevant for the students could be made available to the students during the welcoming ceremony.

R3. 2. The PSP should encourage students' participation in mobility programmes. Increased communication of the availability of mobility programmes would bring students in contact with career possibilities and pathways that may be inaccessible otherwise.

Principle 4: Teaching Staff of New 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 and scientific competence of the teaching staff at the PSP, the appropriate staff-student ratio, the proper staff categories, the appropriate subject areas, the fair and objective recruitment process, the high research performance, the training, 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, policy for attracting highly qualified staff, and PSP Obligation Regulation*
- *List of the intended for recruitment teaching staff including subject areas, employment relationship, Institution of origin, Department of origin and relevant individual achievements*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The teaching staff of the proposed PSP includes tenured and tenure-track faculty (μέλη ΔΕΠ) from the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics (DMBG) at the Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH), as well as faculty from other Greek universities and external collaborators. The academic team spans all ranks (Professors, Associate Professors, and Assistant Professors) and brings together expertise across pedagogy, adult education, educational technology, molecular biology, developmental biology, and neurobiology.

Pedagogical expertise, particularly for the first-semester modules “Principles of Pedagogy and Teaching Methodology” (MEΔBEZY-1) and “Adult Education and Lifelong Learning” (MEΔBEZY-2), is primarily provided by the programme coordinator and highly qualified faculty from other Greek universities, many of whom are nationally recognised experts in their field. DUTH-affiliated faculty contribute principally to the second-semester modules: “Teaching Applications in

Life and Health Sciences” (MEΔBEZY-3) and “Microteaching” (MEΔBEZY-4). The “Microteaching” module is designed to foster practical skill development and reflective teaching relevant to biosciences and life and health sciences education. However, the programme lacks a formal practical placement component.

Each of the four modules carries 15 ECTS, summing to the 60 ECTS required for graduation. Despite their internal thematic segmentation, the modules are currently delivered and assessed as unified courses. Final assessment is based on a 75% final exam and 25% coursework per module.

Available data indicate that DUTH staff contributes about two hours per week to the PSP, and their broader teaching workload appears sustainable. However, the teaching commitments of external instructors are not clearly specified, making it difficult to evaluate their long-term availability or prioritization of the programme.

Most instructors are active researchers in either the biosciences or educational sciences. Their participation in national and international research projects, scholarly publications, and education policy initiatives supports a research-informed teaching model and enhances academic depth. All staff meet national criteria for academic appointment and advancement, including possession of a doctoral degree and demonstrated pedagogical competence. Staff selection and evaluation follow national legislation and are monitored by the university’s Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP).

Finally, the staff demonstrate competence in blended and distance education, supported by institutional infrastructure such as certified teleconferencing tools and asynchronous e-learning platforms. This aligns with the programme’s blended delivery design.

II. Analysis

The teaching staff bring a strong combination of disciplinary expertise, pedagogical experience, and research activity that aligns well with the PSP’s interdisciplinary objectives. Their qualifications and engagement support both the academic and applied learning goals of the programme.

The significant pedagogical contributions from external faculty enrich the curriculum, especially in the first semester. However, the heavy reliance on non-DUTH instructors for core educational content introduces potential risks in terms of long-term sustainability, institutional ownership, and curriculum continuity. Greater participation from DUTH faculty in pedagogical modules, possibly through inter-departmental collaboration, would help address this and strengthen internal capacity.

While the curriculum as a whole and each module’s syllabus are nominally modular, the description, delivery and assessment of the modules are unified, with final exams accounting for most the grade in each 15 ECTS module. This undermines the benefits of modular learning, overburdens students at examination points, and

limits opportunities for continuous assessment and feedback. Restructuring the modules to include distinct thematic subunits, each with their own learning objectives and assessments, would enhance pedagogical effectiveness, support more continuous learning, and distribute the grading burden more evenly.

The inclusion of the Microteaching module is noteworthy, but the absence of formal practical experience and a final research-oriented project weakens the academic character of the degree. Reframing this module to resemble capstone research-oriented component, such as the design, delivery, and evaluation of an educational intervention, would help align the programme more closely with the standards of a Master's degree and enhance students' independent academic development.

Quality assurance processes are well established and embedded within DUTH's institutional structures. However, the limited transparency around external instructors' teaching loads remains a minor gap in the assurance of teaching capacity.

III. Conclusions

The teaching staff are highly qualified, experienced, and well equipped to deliver both the scientific and pedagogical components of the PSP. Their active engagement in research and educational practice ensures a strong academic foundation and supports the delivery of high-quality, interdisciplinary instruction. However, the programme's substantial reliance on external pedagogical staff raises minor concerns regarding continuity, long-term sustainability, and institutional ownership. These concerns could be addressed by increasing the participation of DUTH faculty in pedagogical modules possibly through interdepartmental collaboration. In addition, the PSP would benefit from restructuring its curriculum into a more explicitly modular format with distributed assessment.

Panel Judgement

Principle 4: Teaching Staff of New Postgraduate Study	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R4.1 Increase the involvement of DUTH faculty in the delivery of pedagogical modules, potentially through structured inter-departmental collaboration, would enhance long-term continuity and institutional ownership.

R4.2 Restructure each module into clearly defined sub-units with thematic coherence, appropriate sequencing, and distributed assessment, would reflect a true modular format and easing the final examination burden.

Principle 5: Learning Resources and Student Support

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER THE TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS OF THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES. 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 and foreign students, students with disabilities), in addition to the shift towards student-centered learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the Institutional context. However, the internal quality assurance proves -on the one hand- the quantity and quality of the available facilities and services, and -on the other hand- that students are aware of all available services.

In delivering support services, the role of support and administration staff is crucial and therefore this segment of staff needs to be qualified and have opportunities to develop its competences.

Documentation

- Detailed description of the infrastructure and services made available by the Institution to the academic unit for the PSP, to support learning and academic activity (human resources, infrastructure, services, etc.) and the corresponding firm commitment of the Institution to financially cover these infrastructure-services from state or other resources
- Administrative support staff of the PSP (job descriptions, qualifications, and responsibilities)
- Informative / promotional material given to students with reference to the available services
- Tuition utilisation plan (if applicable)

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The teaching staff of the PSP includes 16 lecturers, 8 from the Department of Molecular Biology (DUTH) and 8 from other Universities, and provides a well-rounded academic setting with access to up-to-date facilities. The institution has modern classrooms with distance learning possibilities, a virtual reality room, a secretariat office, and provisions for individuals with disabilities. Additionally, it offers a contemporary library and information centers that provide electronic access to scientific journals, books, and databases. These facilities are complemented by advanced electronic and technical resources, audiovisual aids,

and digital educational tools to support teaching. E-learning is facilitated through the e-Class platform, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams. Postgraduate students receive information about the available services at the time of their admission, with support and guidance provided by the teaching staff.

The adequately qualified teaching staff brings specialized knowledge in the scientific fields that represent the cornerstones of the PSP theme. Administrative support is provided by the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics, staffed by well-qualified professionals. Students are given email accounts and access to e-learning platforms and digital tools. They can manage course registration, renewals, and applications through the online Secretariat, which also supports the Program and Project Management Board. It also oversees financial administration and all academic and administrative processes from enrollment to graduation. The electronic Secretariat platform also facilitates student support and application management. DUTH offers additional support services through the Employment, Careers, and Interconnection Office, as well as the Welcome and International Offices, which guide job opportunities, postgraduate programs, and teleconsultation services for students with disabilities.

The program is delivered both through in-person and online instructions. To support students, the Department has created a website where students can find detailed information on the curriculum, faculty, announcements, and events.

All the following structures are operating normally: the Student Advocate, for assistance with issues outside the scope of grades and exams, the Ethics Committee, for guidance on matters related to publications, thesis writing, copyright, and similar topics, the Data Protection Officer, who assists with questions about personal data protection, the Research Ethics Committee, addressing concerns related to research projects, the Office of Academic and Career Liaison, the Office of Student Support for Students from Vulnerable Social Groups, the Counselling and Psychological Support Centre, and the University Gym and University Camp.

Tuition fees are 2 400 for each student per year. The tuition utilization plan is described extensively. Indicatively, 40% of the revenue is used for teaching staff salaries, and 16% for administrative support.

II. Analysis

Each student has access to a dedicated academic advisor who guides them throughout their academic journey. The PSP benefits from a wide variety of state-of-the-art facilities that create an excellent environment for both teaching and learning. Classrooms are outfitted with advanced technological tools, both software and hardware, that give students the resources they need for a rich and engaging educational experience, even if it is online. They also have access to digital libraries, databases, and a virtual reality room.

Beyond its physical infrastructure, the program offers many support services that

assist students throughout their academic life. Guidance is available to help students in their career orientation, life adaptation in Alexandroupoli, and preparation for the job market. The student welfare office functions properly, helping students who face difficulties, whether financial or psychological. In addition to enhancing the university life balance, students have access to sports and cultural facilities, which are also easily accessible for students with disabilities.

The staff of the programme's administration is well trained, ensuring the smooth functioning of all the above-mentioned functions throughout the students' academic life.

From the budget plan of the programme, it appears that most of the income from tuition fees will be given as teaching staff salaries.

III. **Conclusions**

The PSP “Methodology and Applications in Lifelong Education in Life and Health Sciences” has advanced technologies, a library, a multitude of rooms with infrastructure for distance learning, and a virtual reality room. At the same time, it provides students with access to sports and cultural activities, thus improving their lives in Alexandroupolis. The Secretariat has an electronic platform through which it can provide 100% support for students who are doing distance learning. The facilities and services provided are both extensive and of high quality, making them highly suitable and up-to-date. A point of concern for the panel is the high tuition fees combined with the fact that most of the revenue from tuition fees appears to be earmarked to cover the salaries of teaching staff, and not for the improvement of teaching aids, awards etc.

Panel Judgement

Principle 5: Learning Resources and Student Support	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R5.1 Consider reassessment of the tuition utilization plan.

R5.2. Seek external funding and consider lowering the tuition fees.

R5.3 Include more info on the web site for the teaching staff (e.g. Google Scholar, Scopus, or WoS links).

Principle 6: Initial Internal and External Evaluation and Monitoring of New Postgraduate Study Programmes

INSTITUTIONS AND ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM, FOR THE AUDIT, INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE NEW POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES, THUS ENSURING COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE PRESENT STANDARDS. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

The internal evaluation of the new PSP includes the assessment of the accreditation proposal, as well as the documentation in accordance with the Principles of the present Standards and the quality procedures of the Institution's Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS). The internal evaluation of new postgraduate study programmes also aims at maintaining the level of educational provision and creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students. The Institution, through its Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) and the corresponding academic units, organise and support the external evaluation procedures of the new PSP, according to the specific guidelines and directions provided by HAHE.

The above comprise the assessment of:

- the objectives, content, and structure of the curriculum, the knowledge offered and the level of science and technology in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the PSP is up to date, according to the relevant documentation listed in the decisions of the pertinent bodies*
- the entailed students' workload for the progression and completion of postgraduate studies*
- the satisfaction of the students' expectations and needs in relation to the programme*
- the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the PSP in question*

Postgraduate study programmes are designed and established in accordance with the provisions of the Institution's internal regulations, involving students and other stakeholders.

Documentation

- *The Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) procedure for verifying whether the requirements of the Standards for Quality Accreditation of New PSP are met, as well as the procedure for organising and supporting their external evaluation procedures*
- *Assessment and feedback mechanisms of the PSP strategy and quality targeting, and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

This is the first External Evaluation of the PSP in "Methodology and Applications in Lifelong Education in Life and Health Sciences". The Quality Policy of DUTH is published on the main website of the University where the responsible units,

procedures, and outcomes of the quality assurance (QA) policy and internal evaluation processes are provided (<https://duth.gr/to-panepistimio/monada-diasfalisis-poiotitas/>). The University is committed to fully participate in QA mechanisms for both its academic and administrative structures. Periodic internal evaluation and monitoring will be carried out on an annual basis by the QAU. Quality data, such as the structure and organization of courses, teaching methods, degree of student satisfaction, etc., will be collected and evaluated. All the above information will be made public to be easily accessible to all interested participants. There are sufficient support services in place for the successful realization of this PSP. The PSP has a duration of one year (2 semesters) and the workload for both the teaching staff and the students is reasonable. The content of this PSP is up to date. The objectives, content, and structure of the curriculum are clearly described in the received documents. However, some important topics (e.g., entrepreneurship, connection with stakeholders and social partners) appear to be neglected.

The Director and the Faculty of the PSP are informed and understand the importance of internal and external evaluation/accreditation of the programme. The Director and the Faculty of the PSP appear committed to make potential adjustments to their strategy by addressing internal weaknesses by using additional available resources and building on strengths in order to exploit opportunities in the external environment. The Director of the PSP appeared ready to be involved in applying any necessary follow-up actions, to adapt and to apply the recommendations of the external evaluation report.

The panel could not be presented with any completed student questionnaires, since the PSP has not started yet.

The PSP has not performed a SWOT analysis to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the programme and to assess the opportunities and threats of the environment. This could have been useful

The Director and the Faculty of the PSP are aware of the internal evaluation, which was conducted under the supervision of the Democritus University of Thrace MODIP based on the institution's Internal Quality Assurance System. QAU's evaluation concluded that:

- a. the e-learning strategy of the institution is integrated into the overall strategy of the University and identifies educational objectives adapting to rapid technological changes and changes in pedagogical models.
- b. a justification and feasibility of the selection of e-learning is included in a percentage of up to 52.8% as an appropriate learning strategy for the new PSP.

QAU also stated that the Quality Policy of the new PSP:

- i. is harmonized with the Quality Policy of the academic unit to which it belongs (Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics) which is in line with the DUTH's strategy for postgraduate studies.
- ii. it is publicised and implemented with the participation of all stakeholders.

II. Analysis

The organization of internal evaluation by QAU is satisfactory and aims to provide high-quality studies, improving the benefits and services, as well as the efficiency of the faculty. However, a more active and independent contribution by QAU in shaping the PSP would be beneficial. Students' feedback on course content, teaching methods, and instructor efficiency would shape the annual internal report resulting in improvements. This inclusive internal evaluation ensures a supportive learning environment and alignment with evolving academic and market demands, overseen by the University's quality assurance unit following national guidelines. Based on the results of all data indicators (student evaluations, research work, etc.), necessary measures are taken, and appropriate corrective interventions are implemented. The external evaluation process of the PSP is clearly outlined. This underscores the need for practical implementation to gauge its effectiveness. Essentially, the process entails periodic evaluations by panels appointed by HAHE for certification purposes. The outcomes of these evaluations will be utilized to continuously improve institutions, academic units, and the PSP. Gathering feedback from stakeholders and along with representatives from local and national social institutions and partners, could further elevate the PSP's quality and relevance.

A source of concern is the dependence of the internal evaluation process on student questionnaires for gathering feedback on various aspects of the program. While students' input is essential for evaluating teaching effectiveness and satisfaction of the course content, reactive measures based solely on questionnaire responses may not always be efficient. Issues such as low response rates, inadequate capturing of relevant feedback, or a small and unrepresentative sample size, especially at the program's inception, can hinder the usefulness of student questionnaires. The questionnaire will be provided electronically. A mechanism to gather feedback and stay in touch with future graduates (alumni) appears not in place.

PSP students can potentially obtain the necessary knowledge and training in this important and continuously evolving field. The provided services, both electronic and academic, are of good quality. However, the PSP does not provide strong connection with the private sector. EEAP, based on the preparation of the materials and the commitment of the Director of the PSP and the Faculty is confident that the programme will continue to improve all aspects of the educational process. It is expected that a SWOT analysis will be prepared at regular intervals to serve its main purpose, i.e. emphasize the strengths, identify the weaknesses, and exploit the opportunities.

III. Conclusions

The structure and organization of the internal evaluation are satisfactory. The provided documents outlined a robust framework for evaluating and monitoring the PSP, although the effectiveness of the measures would be ultimately tested in practice when the programme starts. The commitment and preparedness for external evaluations of the Director and the Faculty of this PSP is acceptable according to the HAHE standards. EEAP considers the programme fully compliant with Principle 6.

Panel Judgement

Principle 6: Initial Internal and External Evaluation and Monitoring of New Postgraduate Study Programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R6.1 Ensure alumni feedback: Establish right from the beginning procedure to gather information from graduates of the PSP (e.g. completion of the online registration form as one of the prerequisites for graduation).

R6.2. Ensure high participation in questionnaire completion: Design questionnaires that would attract more participation by students. Send frequent reminders and make clear to students that feedback is an obligation and a necessary tool for continuous improvement of the offered studies.

R6.3 Improve the participation of social partners and stakeholders: Establish mechanism/s to gather feedback from stakeholders and social partners, e.g. by creating an informal advisory board.

R6.4. A SWOT analysis, which will be updated every year, is considered useful by the EEAP.

R6.5. The PSP may need to re-evaluate certain aspects of its operations, such as minimum and maximum number of students after the first year of its operation.

R6.6. The PSP may need to prepare some documentation on Faculty discussions concerning the recruitment of Faculty, the progress of the PSP and the areas that need improvement from the Faculty's point of view, after the first year of its operation.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- GP1. Experienced teaching staff from different universities.
- GP2. The new PSP will fill a gap in current education in the field of Health Sciences.
- GP3. Course on 'microteaching'.
- GP4. Support for students and modern facilities for teaching in person and on-line.

II. Areas of Weakness

- W1. Sustainability.
- W2. Lack of practical experience. Microteaching could only imitate working life situations.
- W3. Tuition fees are considered high for a short two-semester PSP.
- W4. Clear plan for external funding is missing.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- R1. Seek external additional funding to ensure sustainability of the PSP.
- R2. Consider reassessment of the tuition utilization plan.
- R3. Establish mechanism/s to gather regular feedback from stakeholders and social partners for timely revisions of the curriculum.
- R4. Consider some practical training for the students.
- R5. Consider lowering the tuition fees.
- R6. Re-evaluate certain aspects such as minimum and maximum number of students and tuition fees after the first year of operation.
- R7. Introduce partial/midterm exams throughout each semester to avoid heavy workload for students during the final exam.
- R8. Encourage students' participation in mobility programmes.
- R9. Increase the involvement of DUTH faculty in the delivery of pedagogical modules, potentially through a structured inter-departmental collaboration.
- R10. Restructure each module into clearly defined sub-units to ease the final examination burden.
- R11. Reframe the "Microteaching" module into a research-oriented capstone component.
- R12. Perform regular SWOT analysis updated every year.
- R13. QAU should have a more active and critical role in the shaping of the PSP.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

3, 4, 5 and 6

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

1

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

2

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:

None

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

PAPAGEORGIU TASSOS

AISLAITNER GEORGIOS

CHRISTOPHIDES GEORGE

Tzimogianni Valentini

VALAVANIDOU-IOANNITOU
(GINA) GEORGIA

Signature

Signed by PAPAGEORGIU TASSOS

Signed by AISLAITNER GEORGIOS

Signed by CHRISTOPHIDES GEORGE

Signed by Tzimogianni Valentini

Signed by VALAVANIDOU-IOANNITOU GEORGIA
(GINA)