



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



Εθνική Αρχή  
Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης  
Hellenic Authority  
for Higher Education

Αριστείδου 1 & Ευριπίδου 2 • 10559 Αθήνα | 1 Aristidou str. & 2 Evripidou str. • 10559 Athens, Greece  
T. +30 210 9220 944 • F. +30 210 9220 143 • E. secretariat@ethaae.gr • [www.ethaae.gr](http://www.ethaae.gr)

**Accreditation Report**  
**for the New Postgraduate Study Programme of:**

**Management of refractive errors and refractive surgery**

**Department: Medicine**

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

**Date: 25 November 2023**

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the New Postgraduate Study Programme of **Management of refractive errors and refractive surgery** of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

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

### **I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel**

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the New Postgraduate Study Programme of **Management of refractive errors and refractive surgery** of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Prof. Nikolaos Venizelos (Chair)**  
Örebro University, Örebro, Sweden.
- 2. Prof. Thimios Mitsiadis**  
Universität Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland.
- 3. Prof. Konstantinos Pantopoulos**  
McGill University, Montreal, Canada.
- 4. Prof. Agapios Sachinidis**  
University of Cologne, Cologne, Germany.
- 5. Mr. Sotirios Mavromatis, Postgraduate Student**  
Department of Medicine, University of Patras, Patras, Greece.

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In accordance with the requirements of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020), the Hellenic Authority of Higher Education (**HAHE**), by individual invitation and formal acceptance dated 6/11/2023, sets up an independent External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (**EEAP**), with the mission to review the compliance of the new Postgraduate Studies Program (**PSP**) **Management of refractive errors and refractive surgery (MRERS)** of the School of Medicine (**Department**) of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (**NKUA**), scheduled 20-25/11/2023.

The established EEAP consists of 4 experts from universities abroad and one postgraduate student from a Greek University.

The evaluation was carried out through reviews of documents, as well as online interviews with Directors of PSP, the Head of the Department, MODIP members, OMEA members, teaching staff, and external stakeholders. The method used was based on random checks on the department's activities with the aim of assessing the fulfilment of the requirements of HAHE's protocol, regarding the new PSP.

On November 16, 2023, the EEAP received all information and supporting documents from HAHE administration. The content of the materials provided is as follows:

### 1. Department Material

#### A0. Contents

#### A1. Proposal of Academic Accreditation

#### A2. Senate Decision on the Establishment of PSP

#### A3. MODIP Explanatory Report of PSP

#### A4. Senate Decision on the Institution's Strategy

#### A5. Study of Feasibility & Sustainability for the Establishment of the new PSP

#### A6. Quality Policy of Postgraduate Study Programme

#### A7. Quality Objectives of the Academic Unit for the Postgraduate programmes

#### A8. Study Guide

#### A9. Course Outline

#### A10. List of names of teaching staff

#### A11. Internal rules of procedure of PSP

#### A12. Traineeship, Mobility and Assignment Regulation

#### A13. Rules of Procedure for the Management of Student Complaints and Appeals

#### A14. Rules of Procedure of the Institution of Academic Advisor

#### A15. Code of Ethics & Good Practice of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

#### A16. Template Diploma Supplement

#### A17. Brief report of the performance of teaching staff in research and teaching work

#### A18. Specific Regulation on the implementation of e-learning

#### A19. Plan for the utilization of tuition fees of the PSP

## 1. HAHE Material

Acronyms, European Qualifications Framework, Standards new PSP in English, PSP Mapping Grid Assessment Guide in Greek, Template for the new PSP Accreditation Report, Guidelines of Accreditation-English, New PSP Guidelines for the EEAP, PSP Briefing narrated \_initial.

The whole evaluation and accreditation process was carried out solely remotely using the Zoom or Webex platform. All the evaluation and accreditation reviews were scheduled and performed at Athens time zone.

Monday, 20/11/2023, 15:00 - 17:00 hrs., the EEAP members had a first remote introductory meeting to establish a modus operandi regarding the accreditation mission, to schedule and discuss the content and structure of the Report Template and allocation of tasks, and to be prepared ahead of the site visit that would be performed via online using Zoom or Webex platform.

Thursday, 23/11/2023, 15:30 - 16:15 hrs., the EEAP started formally the evaluation reviews of the PSP program by a virtual meeting with the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, International Relations and Extroversion, Prof. Sophia Papaioannou, the Head of the Department: Prof. N. Arkadopoulos, and the Director of the PSP, Prof. Georgios. Kymionis, who briefly presented the postgraduate programme's origins, academic profile, status, and possible areas of concern. Present during this meeting, were, the Head of the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) of NKUA, Mr. Konstantinos Bourletidis, and MODIP Secretary Mr. Theodoros Chajitheodorou.

Same day at 16:15 -17:00 hrs., the EEAP met with the teaching staff of the PSP, Prof. Papadodima Stavroula, Prof. Kozobolis Vasilios, Ass. Professor Karabatsas Konstantinos, Ass. Professor Petrou Petros, Dr. Diakonis Vasilios, Dr. Kontadakis George, Dr. Portaliou Dimitra, Dr. Kandarakis Stelios, Dr. Plainis Sotiris, and discussed mobility, competence learning outcomes, workload, link between teaching and research, as well as teaching staff involvement in research projects.

At 17:00 -17:10 hrs., the EEAP had a digital tour on the facilities and educational resources, through access to a provided video.

At 17:30 -18:15 hrs., the EEAP met external stakeholders and social partners from the private sector to discuss relations of the PSP. Present were, Mr. Kalfagiannis Ioannis from Alcon Hellas, Mr. Alexopoulos Theodoros from SystemVision, Mr. Lalakis Konstantinos from Thea Hellas.

Next after the EEAP members had a debriefing in private, to discuss the outcomes of the daily meetings and prepare a preliminary oral report to the closure meeting.

At 18:30 -19:15 hrs., the EEAP met the Director of the PSP, the Head of the Department, MODIP, Steering Committee and OMEA representatives, discussed points/findings, which needed further clarification.

The EEAP, at the end of this meeting, was finalised the scheduled PSP-reviews by a short informal oral report of the initial impressions and key findings, to the Director of the PSP Prof.

Georgios Kymionis, the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, International Relations and Extroversion, Prof. Sophia Papaioannou, the Head of the Department, Prof. N. Arkadopoulos.

Present during this meeting, were, the Steering Committee for PSP, Prof. D. Papakonstantinou, Prof. I. Georgalas, Ass. Professor I. Chatzirali, Ass. Professor K. Droutsas. OMEA members, Prof. I. Georgalas, Prof. N. Nikiteas, Prof. E. Pikoulis, Prof. P. Sfikakis, Prof. G. Tsvivouglis. MODIP staff/members, Mr. Konstantinos Bourletidis, Head of the Quality Assurance Unit of NKUA, and MODIP Secretary Mr. Theodoros Chajitheodorou.

During the period 24 to 25 of November 2023, the EEAP members were getting familiar to all material send by HAHE and the Department and worked on the completion of a draft of the PSP Accreditation Report (AR).

### III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

The University of Athens, inaugurated in 1837, as the first university not only in Greece but also in the Balkan and the Eastern Mediterranean, and in 1932 it was officially named National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), in honour of Ioannis Kapodistrias, the first governor of Greece. Until the early part of the 20th century, it was the only university in Greece that provided the Greek state with qualified professionals in medicine and other disciplines. Today, the NKUA offers 8 larger Schools, 41 undergraduate programs as well as 205 postgraduate programs leading to a Master or Doctoral degrees and enrolled 44.215 undergraduates and 25.944 postgraduate students and Ph.D. candidates, 2.105 academic staff and 1.026 administrative and secretarial staff.

The School of Medicine of NKUA, inaugurated in 1837, and in 1984 the School of Health Sciences was formed that includes four departments: Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy and Nursing. The School of Medicine is organized in six divisions: Basic Medical Sciences, Clinical laboratory, Internal Medicine, Surgery, Mother-Child Health, Social Medicine-Psychiatry and Neurology.

The facilities of School of Medicine and the basic education of the students takes place in the buildings of the School in Goudi (5 lecture halls) and the clinical education in the majority at the Attikon University Hospital Campus, Chaidari (AKISA) (2 lecture halls), and at several other clinical sites. For the practical teaching and training of students, 61 University clinics, 28 laboratories and 4 museums in various hospitals are used.

The School of Medicine of NKUA currently employs 515 teaching staff (DEP), (Professors, Assoc. Professors, Ass. Professor and Lectures), 3.294 undergraduates, 5.048 graduate students. 71 postgraduate programmes leading to a Master or Doctoral degrees, enrolled 4.393 postgraduates' students. The administrative staff sums to a total of 129. The School of Medicine of NKUA is one of the most important and well-established Medical Schools of Greece, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

During the academic year 2024, the School of Medicine of NKUA, planned to establish and run the Postgraduate Studies Programme (PSP) entitled, **Management of refractive errors and refractive surgery (MRERS)** after recommendation of the Assembly of the Medical School.

The PSP is structured based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The duration of the program is 4 semesters equivalent to a total of 120 ECTS. The curriculum of the PSP includes 8 compulsory courses and 6 electives of total 90 ECTS and in the 4<sup>th</sup> semester, a preparation and presentation of a diploma thesis of 30 ECTS credits.

To obtain the degree, attendance is required for 4 semesters of study, and successful examination in 14 courses (8 compulsory and 6 elective) and diploma thesis (30 credits). A minimum of 120 ECTS credits are required for the award.



According to the Regulations of the Departments of Education, the degree in Management of refractive errors and refractive surgery is equivalent to the Master's (MSc) degree.

The PSP of Management of refractive errors and refractive surgery at NKUA plans to enrol a maximum 35 students. The courses are conducted in Greek and/or English language. The total tuition fees are set at 4.000 € (1.000 € per semester).

## 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**

On December 1, 2023, the Rector of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) decided the establishment and operation (based on Article 16 § 4a & b of Law 4957/22) of the new PSP entitled "Treatment of refractive aberrations and refractive interventions" at the Medical School, from the academic year 2023-2024 to the academic year 2033-2034. This new PSP will award a postgraduate diploma in treatment of refractive aberrations and refractive procedures. Courses are conducted in Greek and English.

The new PSP is structured based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The duration of the PSP will be 4 semesters of study equivalent to a total of 120 ECTS.

The purpose of the new PSP is to familiarize young doctors and other health scientists with modern knowledge and new techniques used for the best practice of refractive surgery. In addition, it provides specialized knowledge on new treatment protocols, the latest data, and trends in refractive surgery research.

The aims for the establishment of the new PSP "Treatment of refractive aberrations and refractive procedures", is the training of participants with the latest developments in refractive surgery operations. It provides specialized knowledge on new treatment protocols, the latest data, and trends in refractive surgery research. It is emphasized that it is the only

PSP in Greek and European academia, which entails multidisciplinary approaches in refractive interventions (epidemiology, pathogenesis, clinical picture, diagnosis, conventional, targeted, and personalized treatment, supportive actions, research). This is achieved with the participation of distinguished scientists from all fields of biomedical sciences, both domestic and foreign, who deal diagnostically and therapeutically with the cornea.

#### Educational Objectives of the PSP

Training in the modern multidisciplinary, diagnostic, and therapeutic approach to refractive surgery and introduction to modern research, emphasizing on emerging cutting-edge technologies.

The students who will attend the new PSP, will practice in the specialized field of refractive surgery, refraction, preoperative evaluation and postoperative monitoring, prevention, and management of complications. In addition, surgical techniques and the evolution of refractive procedures will be taught. The PSP aims to also develop appropriate skills for experimental research and quality evaluation of clinical practice. The subject has a wide range and many parameters that are not taught in the specialty and is necessary for the understanding and processing of refractive procedures.

The PSP is addressed to graduates of domestic or equivalent, recognized foreign institutions, as well as graduates of other Departments of Universities in Greece or equivalent, recognized abroad, institutions. Accepted for study are students from medicine, nursing, optometry (hospital workers in clinics held refractive errors) and optical biotechnology (operators of medical device for refractive errors).

Learning outcomes and future benefits for graduates are:

- The exposure and training in dealing with refractive errors safely and with the necessary training and know-how.
- Certification of specialization in refractive procedures that provides complete information with the latest data on the preoperative management of the patient, postoperative monitoring, and optimal management of possible complications.

#### Quality Policy (QP) of the Medical School for PSP

The Quality Assurance Policy of the Medical School is fully harmonized with the quality policy of the NKUA, making the PSP “Treatment of refractive aberrations and refractive procedures”, committed to providing high quality of higher education in Greek and foreign language to students who choose it.

The School of Medicine is committed to the implementation of this QP and in PSP Management of refractive errors and refractive surgery, which is expected to be offering in the future, starting in 2024. Implementing quality procedures are provided by the Institution, with ambition of its continuous improvement. This quality policy will strengthen the academic profile and focus of this PSP, promotes its purpose and object, as well as the implementation

of specific goals set each year, while determining the means and ways of achieving the above and ensuring the participation of stakeholders in its evaluation and redesign processes.

For the implementation of this policy, the School of Medicine is committed to implement in its postgraduate programs the quality processes / procedures provided for and analysed in the Quality Manual of the EQMS of the Institution and applied at the level of the Curricula of the School of Medicine with the required specialization / individualization in its Postgraduate Programs and in close cooperation with its Quality Assurance Unit of University (MODIP). All quality assurance procedures of the PSP of the School of Medicine are subject to inspection and review, which are carried out on an annual basis by the OMEA, in collaboration with the MODIP of the Institution.

The processes/procedures applied for the monitoring and continuous improvement of the quality of the Postgraduate Programs are the following:

- 1) The Implementation of a Quality Assurance Policy of the PSP.
- 2) The allocation and management of the resources of the PSP.
- 3) The Establishment of Quality Assurance Objectives on an annual basis of the PSP.
- 4) The Periodic Internal Evaluation and Monitoring on an annual basis of all the PSP.
- 5) The collection of quality data: measurement, analysis, and improvement of the PSP.
- 6) The Publication of Information on the PSP.
- 7) The External Evaluation of the PSP.

#### Planning of quality objectives

The Quality objectives on which the Medical School will be focus on the following:

- Improving the Graduation Rate of Postgraduate Students.
- The Enhancement of the Quality Culture in the MSc in Environmental, Disaster and Crisis Management Strategies".
- Achieving greater Study Flexibility and enhancing Student-Centred Learning.
- The Activation of Counselling Studies and the interconnection of graduates with the Labour Market.
- Enhancing the participation of postgraduate students in quality assurance processes.
- Improving the Connection of Studies with Research and the elaboration of doctoral dissertations.
- The Utilization, Cooperation and Networking with the Graduates of the Department and the MSc.
- The further development of mobility and extroversion through the attraction of Foreign Students to the PSP and Teachers from Foreign Institutions.
- The improvement of the infrastructure and support services of the student community of the MSc.
- The further facilitation of accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Promoting gender parity.

## Teaching and facilities

The duration of the program is 4 semesters of study equivalent to a total of 120 ECTS. The curriculum of the PSP includes 8 compulsory courses and 6 electives of total 90 ECTS and in the 4<sup>th</sup> semester, a preparation and presentation of a diploma thesis of 30 ECTS credits.

For obtain the degree, attendance is required for 4 semesters of study, and successful examination in 14 courses (8 compulsory and 6 elective) and diploma thesis (30 credits). a minimum of 120 ECTS credits are required for the award.

According to the Regulations of the Departments of Education, the degree titled- MSc in Management of refractive errors and refractive surgery is equivalent to the Master's degree.

According to article 88 of Law 4957/2022 and no. No. 18137/Z1/16-2-2023 MD (Government Gazette B' 1079):

- The organization of the educational process of the PSP can also be carried out using modern distance learning methods.
- The organization of courses and other educational activities using modern distance education methods concerns courses and educational activities that by their nature can be supported using distance learning methods and do not involve practical, laboratory or clinical training of students, whose conduct requires the participation of students with physical presence.
- The educational process may be carried out using modern distance learning methods, even in Postgraduate Programs that have not included this possibility in their establishment decision, exclusively in the following cases:

The PSP of Management of refractive errors and refractive surgery at NKUA is expected to start 2024, and plan to enrol 35 students as a maximum. The courses are conducted in Greek and/or English language. The total tuition fees are set at 4.000,0 € (1.000,0 € per semester).

The department provides total 45 teachers to participate in education of PSP (faculty members, researchers (all PhD holders) and physicists). All members are highly qualified and suitably specialized to carry out high-level teaching and research. This corresponding to 1,3 lecturers per student (for more details see Principle 4).

The PSP Management of “Refractive errors and refractive surgery” is a new PSP of the School of Medicine of the NKUA. The Department offers to PSP auditoriums/classrooms for course deliveries and workshops computers for teaching laboratory courses as well as a library.

Specific to this PSP the Department offers the below basic infrastructure and all the necessary equipment for the operation of the PSP are provided from the Medical School of NKUA:

- the existing logistical infrastructure of the General Hospital "Gennimatas" where the First University Ophthalmology Clinic of NKUA, the regular outpatient clinics and the specialized corneal departments, as well as the operating rooms are located. The

courses of the first and second semesters are theoretical and take place twice a week for 13 weeks in the amphitheatre of the General Hospital "G. Gennimatas".

- the courses of the Practical Training (Clinical Practicum) of the third semester that have a duration of ten weeks, the students are divided into groups and practice in outpatient clinics and clinics of the public sector and in centers of the private sector with certified clinical and surgical experience and recognition in the subject.
- the fourth semester of studies includes the preparation of a Diploma Thesis, which can be either a review or research one. The research Diploma Thesis is carried out at the First University Ophthalmology Clinic of NKUA.

The Institution provides digital services, support, counselling services etc. to students [https://en.uoa.gr/about\\_us/services\\_units/career\\_office/](https://en.uoa.gr/about_us/services_units/career_office/).

A study guide for the academic year 2023-2024 of the PSP in Management of refractive errors and refractive surgery, is described in detail in Appendix A8 and there exists a not complete website in Greek on the PSP > <https://refractivesurgery.gr/>.

## **II. Analysis**

The Quality Assurance Policy of the academic unit is in line with the Quality Assurance Policy of the Institution and is formulated in the form of a public statement.

The Quality Policy statement of the Department of Medicine includes commitments, which implement a Quality Policy to promote the academic profile of the PSP, as well as the purpose and field of studies.

The Department of Medicine of NKUA demonstrates an acceptable capacity of actively involved teachers with adequate qualifications and competency within the PSP subject for to run the PSP "Management of refractive errors and refractive surgery".

The School of Medicine at NKUA, specific to this PSP, provides the basic infrastructure and necessary equipment for the operation of the PSP.

The Department provides an insufficient website for the PSP in Greek, which requires additional adequate information and the creation of an English version.

## **III. Conclusions**

The EEAP considers that the School of Medicine of NKUA fulfil the requirements and commitments required for the implementation of the adequate education Quality Policy, in accordance with HAHEs regulation and is in line with the Department's Quality Assurance Policy, and the quality objectives for PSP. The Department offers a good availability of qualified teaching staff and provides the basic infrastructure and necessary equipment for the operation of the PSP.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

- The PSP faculty must improve the Greek website with additional adequate information and should create an English website version.
- The Quality Policy and statement of the PSP must be available on the PSP's website, both in Greek and English languages, so the information will be clearly and completely displayed for all foreign interested partners/companies etc.



## 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**

### **Findings**

The representatives of the new PSP entitled “Management of refractive errors and refractive surgery” submitted all the required documents/proposals/studies according to the relevant instructions of the competent authority (EQAEE). Based on these, the necessary academic bodies were created in the PSP to design and supervise the new programme. The programme was designed following the EQAEE principles according to the EU guidelines standards. The PSP was approved by the Senate (30-05-2023) after the positive vote of the postgraduate committee of the university on 03-05-2023 in agreement with the medical school assembly on 31-3-2023. The overall strategic plan of the University (to establish highly competitive programmes postgraduate programmes according to international standards has been approved by the EQAEE (ΦΕΚ 1726 τ.Β’/6-5-2020).

The programme is new and will be started in the academic year 2023-2024. Therefore, students were not actively involved in the design of the programme. The teaching language of the programme will be Greek and English. In general, the design of the programme is compatible with other European University Programmes regarding the objectives and the number of ECTSs (120). The total costs for the 4 semesters are set at 4.000 € per student. The EEAP received during the evaluation procedure all the relevant documents from the PSP committee and ETHAE. The EEAP has discussed intensively during the meetings with the MODIP members, teaching staff, and stakeholders from the pharma industry and companies specialised in refractory surgery-specific industry. The EEAP identified several points to be taken into consideration before starting the programme.

### **Analysis of judgement**

The main objectives of the PSP are:

1. To train the participants in the newest refractive surgery techniques
2. To provide specialized knowledge on new treatment protocols
3. To enable the participants in performing refractive surgery research

The teaching staff of the PSP pointed out the uniqueness of the programme in Greece and Europe. Nevertheless, a similar programme entitled “Master in Cornea and Refractive Surgery” started in January 2023 in Spain (<https://www.fundacionimo.org/en/master-degree-cornea-and-refractive-surgery>). The academic strategy of the PSP focuses on providing the necessary theoretical and practical training so that students become specialised medical doctors and/or research scientists. The programme takes into consideration epidemiological, pathological, clinical and diagnostical aspects of the topic. The teaching staff consists of well-known established local and international scientists in the biomedical and

surgery field. The EEAP positively noticed that the strategic development of the PSP includes collaborations with several ophthalmology departments from different European Universities such as the University of Vienna, the University of Essen (Germany), the Jules Gonin University Eye Hospital and the Moorfields Eye Hospital. The number of participants is limited to 35 students who are graduates in Medicine, Nursing, Optometry and optical Biotechnologies. The selection of the students occurs according to standard international criteria.

The official language of the teaching and writing language of the thesis is Greek. Only courses for foreign speakers will be held in English. It is planned that in the case of foreign students, the courses will be held in English and the writing of the thesis will be allowed in English. However, the last case is unlikely.

According to the documents and the discussions with representatives of the PSP as well as with stakeholders, the EEAP agrees that the PSP provides more than sufficient knowledge of basic and clinical education in this specialized field. Apart from theoretical basic mechanistic aspects, the students should learn and understand clinical and research laboratory skills as well as learn novel state-of-the-art technologies/methods in this field.

The Student Study Guide of the PSP and the programme gives several details of the objectives, inputs, and expected learning outcomes. Overall, the PSP is based on the Greek legislation, which harmonized the European Directives 80/154 and 80/155/EEC. The education takes place in different medical school lecture rooms and laboratories as well as in different local hospitals. The infrastructure of the programme is state of the art. All lectures and laboratories are well equipped and cover all the essential needs for a successful programme.

To achieve the scientific objectives of the PSP, several specialized lecture courses are offered to the students. Additionally, students can also participate in practical experimental courses. The programme duration is 4 semesters (120 ECTS), divided into 3 semesters of lectures and practical courses and 1 semester for preparing the diploma thesis for the MSc degree. After the competition of each semester, there are written exams. The final examination of the students occurs after submitting the thesis by three internal members of the teaching staff. Students should also learn how to apply scientific writing tools how to get relevant literature by using open-access scientific websites and how to present data from scientific articles. Such skills are essential for their research activities and critical thinking of the students. In this context, students should prepare in teams (5 students per group) a small project of 2 to 3 pages including 5 to 10 references after a PubMed search on a specific topic. Within the small project, they can practically apply programs, such as the Endnote program. However, the EEAP recommends also some oral exams in the form of a presentation. This will contribute to improving the presentation skills of the students.

The EEAP suggest that the three advisors/supervisors should motivate the students to write their thesis in English so that the students get a chance to publish in international journals. Moreover, as stated in the programme, lectures will be given in Greek. Unfortunately, the PSP does not offer any possibility for Erasmus+ students from other European Universities to attend the PSP. However, the EEAP believes that the PSP must offer some possibilities for Erasmus+ students to attend some parts of the practical courses. The EEAP pointed out that the current PSP in its present form is nationally oriented. The EEAP is also aware that the programme meets the national needs of the country to cover the treatment and logistics of refractory disorders. To fully fulfil the expected learning outcomes as described by the European and National Qualifications Framework (EQF, NQF), and the Dublin descriptors for level 7, the present programme should be modified accordingly to enable easier mobility of

the students within the EU. The EEAP recommend that at least the Diploma thesis should be written in English.

▪ **Conclusions**

The EEAP concluded that this new PSP is well designed taking into consideration all the basics, clinical and therapeutic aspects of the refractory disorders. The structure of the programme is rational but needs some minor improvements regarding the scientific research part of the programme. The EEAP conclude that the PSP in its present form is more national-oriented. The mobility of the participants in the European market is limited. The scientific/research part of the programme should be systematically organized by establishing a data bank with potential research Diploma projects before starting the programme.

**Panel Judgement**

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

**Panel Recommendations**

- Students must be actively involved in to design of the programme before starting.
- The scientific writing and presentation skills must be strengthened.
- The EEAP strongly recommend the participation of more students in research project via the Erasmus+ students exchange programme, and collaboration with other institutions. The EEAP panel recommend acquiring third-party financing grants by the teaching staff that will allow the integration of the students into more research projects.
- PSP faculty continuous training for the delivery of lectures is necessary.
- At least the Diploma thesis of the students must be written in English to increase the chances of publishing in international journals.
- The scientific/research part of the programme should be systematically organized by establishing a data bank with potential research Diploma projects before starting the programme.

### **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**

The PSP "Management of refractive errors and refractive surgery" has been designed by faculty members of the School of Medicine of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA). The total number of participating faculty members and researchers is forty-five (45). PSP staff is originated from various Greek Universities and hospitals (10 members from the school of medicine of NKUA, 13 members from the University of Crete, 4 members from the Aristotelion University of Thessaloniki, 1 member from the University of Ioannina, 1 member from the University of Patras, etc) as well as from 6 foreign institutions and hospitals (Freiburg University, New York University, University of Geneva, Hanusch Hospital in Vienna, etc.). It is obvious that this new PSP includes courses and lectures by speakers from major educational institutions in Greece and abroad. The PSP is designed to provide high-level theoretical training, technological education, and practical exercises in the narrow but very important field of refractive errors management and surgery. With the main aim of achieving the learning goals, activating the participation, and increasing the interaction of the students in the PSP, as well as meeting the individual and group learning needs, a range of educational methods and tools will be used. PSP students will evaluate the courses through written questionnaires. The PSP graduates will seek employment in hospitals, private clinics, optical biotechnology companies, vision service-paid centres, etc., while some might continue their studies in order to obtain the PhD degree.

The PSP has clear regulations that define the study process, the duration of the studies, the progress of PSP students, the terms and conditions for students' mobility, and the procedures for awarding and recognizing the degree. The study recognition procedures are based on relevant academic practices for the transfer of credit units between different departments and institutions within Greece and Europe, in accordance with the principles of the Lisbon convention on the recognition of academic qualifications. After completion of the PSP, each graduate will receive documents that describe the acquired specialization, the grade awarded, and the level of studies that were pursued. Courses and lectures will be conducted in Greek and English. Students are required to take compulsory courses (36 hours in total, including the 9 hours of clinical practice and 3 hours of clinical cases presentation), to complete a total of 120 credits of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), attend four academic semesters and prepare a diploma thesis, which will be pursued during the fourth semester. Courses will be taught either in person or remotely, in accordance with current legislation. Teaching with physical presence promotes meeting of students with lecturers, while modern online teaching will be used for lecturers from areas outside Athens.

The selection of students will be made in accordance with the current national legislation, regulation of postgraduate and doctoral studies of NKUA. The selection committee will be

composed of three members of the PSP. There is a list of required documents that include the application form, CV, copy of diploma, grades for undergraduate courses, certification of the foreign language, letters of recommendation, and any evidence of prior professional or research activity. Provisions are also in place for the potential acceptance of foreign students; however, knowledge of Greek is required. Evaluation of the candidates and student selection is based on the first-degree grade (20%), diploma thesis (10%), previous professional or research experience (10%), foreign language (5%), recommendation letters (5%), oral interview with three faculty members (40%), etc. The maximum number of the PSP students will be thirty-five (35). These procedures are clearly described in the required supporting documents, which also contain information about student rights and obligations and ways to monitor their progress. The PSP should have an independent academic advisor that may participate in potential conflict resolution among faculty and students. The academic advisor will highlight in a student-centred way the student's sense of autonomy while assuring collaboration of each student with the teaching staff. The NKUA liaison office provides advisory support to students in matters of study and professional rehabilitation. Also, the committee for undergraduate and postgraduate subjects of the school of medicine of NKUA is responsible for recording and managing complaints and denunciations from PSP students. The student advocate will examine student requests, complaints for violation of provisions and rules of university legislation and ethics, will facilitate their contact with administrative bodies and services, and will inform them about their rights and their obligations. Finally, research ethics regulation, regulation of studies, internships, Erasmus+ mobility, and student assignments will be provided in the supporting documents.

The PSP has in place the appropriate tools to collect and analyse information concerning the PSP students' progress. This information will be stored within the PSP students' registration system. The duration of the PSP will be four semesters (30 ETCS each semester), with lectures, seminars, and practical exercises, followed up by the dissertation, which starts in the fourth semester. Students will be evaluated at the end of each semester.

The PSP diploma will allow students to get jobs with specific requirements. PSP graduates can further develop a scientific or academic career by acquiring a PhD degree.

The stakeholders indicated that this PSP has a strong faculty and that it is of great importance and value. This PSP provides additional job opportunities in this significant field.

## **II. Analysis**

This PSP meets the criteria for professional development of the students in both the private and public sectors. This new PSP is unique in Greece and continues a previous programme running by the University of Crete. It will provide important knowledge for the management of refractive errors and refractive surgery. The presence of faculty from various Greek and foreign institutions will allow excellent students' exposure to this targeted and important medical field. Graduating students will be qualified for employment in hospitals, clinics, industry, vision centres, etc., and will have adequate preparation to pursue a doctoral degree after graduation. The four semesters length of the PSP studies is appropriate.

The 45 faculty members will deliver their courses in person or via various e-platforms. This PSP will provide courses and seminars in Greek and English. The use of English in the courses and thesis writing shall enable students to potentially pursue careers abroad. The website of this PSP is not yet fully constructed. The existing Greek website contains only very limited information. The actual website is not attractive and gives the wrong impression about the validity and importance of this PSP. The English version does not exist.

The courses that will be provided cover a variety of current areas of the field. The courses will be delivered within the first two semesters. Clinical practical courses and demonstrations will be conducted in the third semester. PSP staff will be evaluated by students with personal questionnaires. The assessment process will be communicated to all students. Students will be well-informed through announcements and using the online class platform.

Students cannot select topics for their thesis from a catalogue of topics, since the research topics are not yet provided by the PSP faculty. It is advisable that a list of potential research areas is completed as soon as possible.

Noted strengths of the PSP include originality, high quality theoretical and practical training, and foreseeing high degree of absorption of graduates in the labour market. The PSP is attractive and restricted to specialised fields (medicine, optometry, optic biotechnologies, physics, etc.).

### **III. Conclusions**

This PSP complies with transparency through its predefined rules and regulations. The PSP follows the standards of the HAHE. There is special need to involve external stakeholders as consultants with regard to PSP students' career development. These external stakeholders could participate in advisory committees to offer their view of the need for certain courses and practical exercises as well as provide important connections to the outside world. This PSP could be very attractive to foreign students if it were entirely taught in English. This PSP allows participation of foreign experts to deliver courses and lectures remotely. Formal teaching of bioethics, statistics and research integrity issues needs to be added to the programme.



## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

- Steps should be taken to secure 100% students' participation to the questionnaires.
- The PSP could adopt the English language in all courses.
- Create and promote from these first years a PSP alumni association.
- Increase the interaction and communication with all stakeholders. This can be achieved by hosting a social event or symposium per year to allow external stakeholders to participate and share their knowledge and experience.
- Establish from now strict criteria for the delivery of diplomas on time (immediately upon completion of the 4th semester).
- Make efforts to increase the number of published scientific articles in which PSP students participate.
- Formal teaching in bioethics and research integrity issues should be added.
- Design workshops for introducing the current market needs and professional orientation and career opportunities to ensure effectiveness of the PSP.
- Promote students' mobility (short-term visits and/or research practices) towards companies.
- Select in advance the thesis topics.
- Create a good and informative website in both Greek and English. Achievements of the faculty members (prices etc.) should be incorporated. Each faculty member from the PSP should be listed on the website, and information should be provided about their publications, h-index, grants (use Google Scholar or other similar metrics platforms).
- Create trophies for the best students each year.
- Attribute scholarships to at least two PSP students with excellent performances.

## 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 this PSP includes 45 faculty members, researchers (all PhD holders) and physicists. All members are highly qualified and suitably specialized to carry out high-level teaching and research. The provided to the panel list of the PSP staff lacks important information concerning accomplishments and performances (prices, list of publications, h-index, etc.). Similarly, there is no information on extramural funding for the faculty involved in the PSP. Employment regulations and obligations of the PSP staff are also provided and described in the corresponding official documents. A formal policy for the young faculty's support and development is not yet in place in this PSP.

The medical school of the NKUA adheres to transparent procedures for the selection and recruitment of the PSP faculty. This recruitment is based on covering PSP teaching needs and well-defined research directions. A five-member curriculum committee selects the lecturers according to the needs of the PSP. It is not obvious from the documents received that all faculty are experienced in teaching and research. The panel could not detect any formal document for the education and training of staff that will allow them to improve their

teaching capabilities. The five-member Curriculum Committee has incorporated into the PSP distinguished academics, scientists, and clinicians from abroad. The majority of the faculty is from many Greek-based institutions.

There is a listing of all faculty and staff, however there is lack of information concerning teaching staff accomplishments for all teaching faculty. There is no information on available extramural funding for most of the faculty involved in the PSP. Employment regulations and obligations of the PSP staff are also provided and described in the corresponding official documents. Staff's teaching excellence will be assessed by means of student evaluations (PSP student surveys). This is a very important function that can help improve the PSP in the future. These evaluation questionnaires should be administered during final exams to ensure 100% participation of all students. Apparently, there is discussion for institutionalization of teaching awards to provide additional motivation and recognition to faculty. This is not in place now, but it will motivate them to excel in the future. The teaching load is acceptable. The PSP staff can be mobile by means of the Erasmus+ programme.

## **II. Analysis**

This new PSP is designed to successfully accomplish the stated goals. The faculty involved in the PSP are experienced and recognised in the field. The majority of the PSP faculty originates from NKUA and University of Crete, while additional staff or visiting faculty are from other Greek and foreign institutions and hospitals. The good number of faculty from institutions outside Greece enhances the visibility of this PSP. The PSP staff covers various aspects of this specific field. There is a core group that administers the PSP. However, there is a need for an additional core group, composed by both staff and students, that controls the PSP's quality and reorganises the programme regularly. A formal policy for the faculty's continuous support and development concerning their teaching activities is missing. Similarly, there is no discussion of institutionalising of teaching awards to provide additional motivation and recognition to faculty.

## **III. Conclusions**

This is an important PSP serving in both education and training in this specific medical field. There is significant interaction with institutions and hospitals within Greece and abroad. This PSP offers job opportunities and allows for further academic studies (PhD). The PSP can be further enhanced by adopting the participation of external stakeholders in advisory and evaluating capacities for the programme.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 4: Teaching Staff of New Postgraduate Study Programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

- The panel recommends the more active involvement of current students in advising the director and the curriculum committee of the need for certain courses and practical exercise.
- It is recommended to involve stakeholders during the PSP content review to get their opinion on additional courses that need to supplement the curriculum based on their experience. This could be realised through an informal advisory team.
- It is recommended that there is formal mechanism for validating and enhancing teaching credentials through participation in teaching methodology seminars and providing opportunities for faculty to participate as guests in other programs that have teaching enhancement activities. In this regard, the panel recommends the mobility of PSP faculty throughout Erasmus+ and other similar platforms.
- The PSP should continuously promote the policy for the faculty's support and development concerning their teaching duties. Establish formal mechanisms for validating and enhancing teaching credentials through participation in teaching methodology seminars. Establish the "teacher of the year" concept.
- Inclusion of evaluation questionnaires during final exams will ensure the 100% participation of students in the evaluation process.

## 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-centred learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the Institutional context. However, the internal quality assurance proves -on the one hand- the quantity and quality of the available facilities and services, and -on the other hand- that students are aware of all available services.*

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

### **Documentation**

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

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **I. Findings**

The PSP will use the facilities of the First Ophthalmology Clinic of the “G. Gennimatas” University Hospital. These include an amphitheatre for lectures and rooms for laboratory exercises. The amphitheatre is fully equipped with modern audio-visual infrastructure and high-speed internet connectivity. The students will have the opportunity to watch live or recorded surgical interventions and will use an ophthalmic surgical simulator for training purposes. IT infrastructure appears to be available.

All PSP students will have access to an e-class platform for the management of courses and teaching material. The e-class platform also offers the possibility for remote teaching and participation in lectures. The PSP students will obtain an academic ID that entitles them to

reduced transportation fares. They will have the opportunity to register for foreign language courses offered by the university Foreign Languages School at reduced rates. The PSP students will also have access to the activities of the Cultural Student Association of the University in the areas of music, theatre, dance, cinema and photography. The PSP will offer supportive services for students with disabilities.

A plan for utilization of tuition fees and other potential revenues, and a budget breakdown for the next 4 years have been provided. The funds of the PSP will be managed centrally by ELKE, a central university unit that administers research funds, and operates by charging 30% overheads. The remaining funds will cover operational expenses such as infrastructural support, salary supplements for teaching and administrative staff, and transportation expenses. A tuition fee waiver for 30% of the students has been calculated in the budget.

During the remote discussions, the accreditation panel got notified about the commitment of the PSP leadership to establish awards to outstanding students, which will be financially supported by stakeholders from pharma industry.

## **II. Analysis of judgement**

The amphitheatre, study rooms and overall infrastructure of the PSP appear to be in excellent condition. The availability of an ophthalmic surgical simulator for student training is an asset.

There is no information on student access to libraries, digital libraries, or databases. It can be presumed that PSP students will have access to the services of the comprehensive library of the School of Health Sciences; however, this is not indicated in the accreditation proposal. In general, the information on student services is poor. Again, it can be presumed that PSP students will also have access to sports and recreational facilities of the University; however, this is not indicated in the accreditation proposal.

Details on the e-class platform and the administrative personnel for learning resources and student support are not provided. There is no documented plan in the accreditation proposal to engage an academic advisor for student consultation, or to offer students consulting services on career opportunities. In addition, there is no plan to deal with student welfare issues or potential psychosocial problems. Finally, there is no plan to appoint a student attorney in charge of representing students in case of conflicts.

General information on the PSP can be found on a dedicated web site, which has not been fully developed yet. Its content is relatively poor and lacks detailed information on teaching staff and courses, or any information on student services. Moreover, the web site is currently monolingual and lacks an English version. There is no information on availability of other promotional material on the PSP (such as pamphlets or booklets).

The plan for utilization of tuition fees and other financial resources such as donations is satisfactory.

## **III. Conclusions**

The accreditation panel agreed that the PSP is only partially compliant to the requirements on learning resources and student support. While the PSP facilities and infrastructure are excellent, the proposed plan for student support services is underdeveloped and requires major improvement. Moreover, the student support services are poorly communicated. This

should be done on the PSP web site and possibly also in form of pamphlets or booklets that will be available to students.

The web site requires a major update and revision. It should be bilingual, including an English version. It should be enriched with additional content, such as a detailed syllabus, CVs and brief description of research programs of teaching staff, internal rules and regulations, details on student services.

The detailed budget breakdown shows a thoughtful distribution and utilization of the PSP income. The commitment of the PSP to provide excellence awards with the support of stakeholders was very positively viewed by the accreditation panel.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 5: Learning Resources and Student Support</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	<b>X</b>
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

The Accreditation Panel recommends a substantial revision of the section of the accreditation proposal that deals with learning resources and student support. Particular attention should be given to student support services, which are poorly developed and communicated. The PSP web site should be revamped and enriched in content; an English version should also be developed.

## **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**

#### **Findings**

This postgraduate programme is addressed to students of medicine, nursing, optometry and optical biotechnology. The field of study of the master's curriculum has a broad range and numerous parameters which are not taught in the residency and are essential for understanding and performing refractive procedures. The internal evaluation of the Master's degree is carried out by the MODIP, and the quality assurance procedures include the evaluation of the teaching work, as well as all academic functions and activities. This process



will be carried out on an annual basis and aims to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the MSc's operations, including the setting of new objectives and matching them with the desired outcomes. At the end of the evaluation, the MODIP will produce a specific report describing all the findings of the evaluation, the proposed improvements, the timetable for their implementation, the participants involved, and the resources required. It is planned that the annual internal evaluation reports will also be published on the website in order to facilitate the information process.

- **Analysis of judgement**

In more detail, the process of internal evaluation by the MODIP, conducted on an annual basis and involving both members of the teaching staff and administration, as well as students, will include the evaluation of: the degree of relevance of the curriculum to the field of study of the Master's degree, the amount of workload of the students and their performances, their satisfaction with the content of the courses, the assessment procedure, the teaching methods (through questionnaires) and the extent to which the Master's degree is related to the needs of modern society. Through these processes, the continuous improvement of the quality of studies and programme provision will be sought, the sustainability and adequacy of resources and infrastructure will be ensured, and feedback will be provided to faculty to improve the teaching approach of the Master's programme. The publication of the above findings on the Master's website will also promote easy information on the quality of the Master's programme for all stakeholders.

- **Conclusions**

The organization of the internal evaluation is quite satisfactory and aims at the multi-sided evaluation of the postgraduate programme, with the aim of improving it.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

No further recommendations.

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

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

- Unique important programme only running in Greece which involves several relevant excellent European Universities.
- The programme is well-designed and rational taking into consideration all the basics, clinical and therapeutic aspects of the refractory disorders.
- The overall teaching and learning environment are excellent, while an adequate range of support services are available to students.
- Adequate duration of PSP, and appropriate number of courses.
- Satisfactory time for the PSP accomplishment (four semesters).
- Motivated faculty and stakeholders.
- The process of internal evaluation of the MODIP has a fairly good structure and aims at the multifaceted evaluation of the postgraduate programme (relevance of courses to the subject matter, degree of student satisfaction, quality of the curriculum, connection with the needs of the labour market).

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

- The PSP in its present form is more national-oriented
- The scientific/research part of the program should be systematically organized and strengthened to integrate more students into research projects
- The mobility of the PSP participants in the European market is limited
- The website of the PSP is underdeveloped
- Erasmus+ activities are not existing or evident
- The interactions of the PSP with society and stakeholders must be heightened

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

- The EEAP recommends a substantial revision of the section of the accreditation proposal that deals with learning resources and student support. Particular attention should be given to student support services, which are poorly developed and communicated. The PSP website should be revamped and enriched in content; an English version should also be developed.

- Create a good and informative website in both Greek and English. Achievements of the faculty members (prices etc.) should be incorporated. Each faculty member from the PSP should be listed on the website, and information should be provided about their publications, h-index, and grants (use Google Scholar or other similar metrics platforms).
- The Quality Policy and statement of the PSP must be available on the PSP's website in both Greek and English, so the information will be clearly and completely displayed for all foreign interested partners/companies etc.
- The EEAP recommends systematic planning of the integration of the student's research master thesis by the teaching staff.
- Students must be actively involved in to design of the programme before starting.
- The scientific writing and presentation skills must be strengthened.
- The EEAP strongly recommends the participation of more students in research project via the ERASMUS students exchange programme, and collaboration with other institutions.
- The EEAP recommends acquiring third-party financing grants by the teaching staff that will allow the integration of the students into more research projects.
- Continuous education of the PSP faculty is necessary.
- At least the Diploma thesis of the students must be written in English to increase the chances of publishing in international journals.
- The scientific/research part of the PSP should be systematically organized by establishing a data bank with potential research Diploma projects before starting the programme.
- Actions must be taken to secure 100% of students' participation to the questionnaires.
- The PSP could adopt the English language in all courses.
- Create and promote from the first years the PSP alumni.
- Increase the interaction and communication with all stakeholders. This can be achieved by hosting a social event or symposium per year to allow external stakeholders to participate and share their knowledge and experience.
- Establish from now strict criteria for the delivery of diplomas on time (immediately upon completion of the 4th semester).
- Make efforts to increase the number of published scientific articles in which PSP students participate.
- Formal teaching in bioethics and research integrity issues should be added.

- Design workshops for introducing the current market needs and professional orientation and career opportunities to ensure the effectiveness of the PSP.
- Promote students' mobility (short-term visits and/or research practices) towards companies.
- Create trophies for the best students each year.
- Attribute scholarships to at least two PSP students with excellent performances.

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1 and 6.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **2, 3, and 4.**

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: **5.**

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

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

## The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

**1. Prof. Nikolaos Venizelos (Chair)**

Örebro University, Örebro, Sweden.

**2. Prof. Thimios Mitsiadis**

Universität Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland.

**3. Prof. Konstantinos Pantopoulos**

McGill University, Montreal, Canada.

**4. Prof. Agapios Sachinidis**

University of Cologne, Cologne, Germany.

**5. Mr. Sotirios Mavromatis, Postgraduate Student**

Department of Medicine, University of Patras, Patras, Greece.