



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Hellenic Authority
for Higher Education

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Accreditation Report

for the New Postgraduate Study Programme on:

Bioinformatics and Digital Biomedicine

Institution: Ionian University

Department: Informatics

Date: December 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 **Bioinformatics and Digital Biomedicine** of the **Ionian University** 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 **Bioinformatics and Digital Biomedicine** of the **Ionian University** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Law 4653/2020:

- 1. Dr. Ktistakis Nicholas (Chair)**
Babraham Institute, United Kingdom
- 2. Assist. Prof. BANITSAS KONSTANTINOS**
Department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering, Brunel University London,
United Kingdom
- 3. Prof. Kyriakopoulos Nicholas**
The George Washington University, United States of America
- 4. Prof. Michailidis George**
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, University of Michigan, United States of
America
- 5. Ms. Nouri Venetia - Despoina**
Democritus University of Thrace, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The review was conducted between 8/12 to 13/12/2025.

On 8/12/2025 the EEAP met privately to discuss first impressions of the PSP as seen by the submitted documents and to allocate to the various members the different principles of the evaluation report.

On 9/12/2025 the EEAP held a series of meetings with various officers and stakeholders of the PSP as follows:

15:00-16:00 Meeting with the Vice-Rector/President of MODIP Professor Konstantinos Angelakos, the Head of the Department Professor Katia-Lida Kermanidis, the Director of the PSP Professor Panagiotis Vlamos, and MODIP Supervisor Mr. Georgios Zacharakis.

16:00-17:05 Meeting with the teaching staff: Assistant Professor Marios Krokidis, Ionian University; Assistant Professor Aristidis Vrahatis, Ionian University; Associate Professor George Kousiouris, Harokopio University of Athens; Professor Ilias Maglogiannis, University of Piraeus. Two other faculty listed in the programme were unable to attend: Associate Professor Christos Diou, Harokopio University of Athens and Professor Georgios Dedoussis, Rector, Harokopio University of Athens.

17:10-17:30 Discussion with PSP member Associate Professor Themistoklis Exarchos, Ionian University about facilities and classrooms of the programme.

18:00-18:45 Meeting with employers, social partners: Mr. Dionysios Papadopoulos, CFO & Vice President, Siemens Healthineers; Mr. Stathis Velivasakis, Country Information Technology Manager, Affidea; Professor Mr. Nektarios Tavernarakis, University of Crete; Professor Mr. Paul E. Schulz, MD, McGovern Medical School, UTHealth; Professor Javier Otiz, MD, McGovern Medical School, UTHealth; Dr Astero Provata, Research Director, NCSR "Demokritos"; Professor Mr. Ilias Kotsireas, Wilfrid Laurier University; Emeritus Professor Mr. Konstantinos Simopoulos, Democritus University of Thrace.

19:30-20:00 Closure meeting with the Vice-Rector/President of MODIP Professor Konstantinos Angelakos, the Head of the Department Professor Katia-Lida Kermanidis, the Director of the PSP Professor Panagiotis Vlamos, and MODIP Supervisor Mr. Georgios Zacharakis.

The EEAP notes that all these meetings were organized with different zoom links which were scattered among other emails that the EEAP members receive each day, thus making the whole process rather inefficient. In the experience of the EEAP, which numbers over 80 PSPs in recent years, these meetings are always organized along a single zoom (or teams) link that stays active for the whole day.

The documents prepared by the PSP and examined by the EEAP before, during and after the visit were as follows:

A01_new_Πρόταση.pdf

A02_new_Απόφ_Συγκλ_για_ίδρυση_ΔΠΜΣ.pdf

A03_Έκθεση_της_ΜΟΔΙΠ.pdf

A04_new_Απόφ_Συγκλ_Στρατηγική.pdf

A05_new_Μελέτες_Σκοπιμότητας_και_Βιωσιμότητας.pdf

A06_new_Πολιτική_Ποιότητας.pdf

A07_new_Στοχοθεσία_Ποιότητας.pdf

A08_new_Οδηγός_Σπουδών.zip

A09_Περιγράμματα_Μαθημάτων.zip

A10_Ονομαστικός_Κατάλογος_του_Διδακτικού.pdf

A11_new_Εσωτερικός_Κανονισμός_Λειτουργίας.zip
A12_new_Κανονισμός_Σπουδών.zip
A13_Μηχαν_Διαχείρ_Παραπόνων.zip
A14_Κανονισμός_Ακαδημαϊκού_Συμβούλου.zip
A15_new_Κανον_Δεοντολ_Έρευνας.zip
A16_new_Υπόδειγμα_Διπλώματος_Δίγλωσσο.pdf
A17_Επιδόσεις.pdf
A18_new_Κανονισμός_για_HM.zip
A19_Σχέδιο_Αξιοποίησης_Διδάκτρων.pdf

These documents were not as well prepared as they should have been. For example, A01 which is meant to summarize all of the rest was missing important information such as Tuition of the Programme, a full list of faculty and, most importantly, the previous history of the PSP, which was useful to understand the design of the current PSP.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

Ionian University (IU) is home to under 10000 students, and it contains 12 Departments scattered around 5 Ionian islands, with the majority in Kerkyra (Corfu). The Department of Informatics has been around since 2004. It has approximately 450 students graduated whereas it currently admits approximately 200 students per year. The Department has approximately 20 full-time faculty members and some additional support personnel. It is involved in 6 PSPs.

The current PSP, although it is in a new format, could be considered as a continuation of two previous Bioinformatics PSPs in which the Ionian Department of Informatics has had an involvement. Originally, there was a PSP shared between Open University and Ionian, and later another PSP took its place (MSc in Digital Health and Analytics) which was between Ionian University, Harokopio University (Department of Informatics and Telematics), and University of Piraeus (Department of Digital Systems). In the second version, Harokopio was the central University running the PSP whereas the PSP under consideration now will be run from Ionian University.

The PSP is for one full year and it offers 90 ECTS with a mandatory thesis during the last summer semester. It will award an MSc degree. As stated on the website, “The program aims to provide specialized knowledge and promote research in the fields of Bioinformatics and Digital Biomedicine, with an emphasis on biomedical data analysis, machine learning and artificial intelligence applications in the health sector.” After the first semester, which is common to all students, the PSP divides into 2 separate specializations, Bioinformatics and Digital Biomedicine. Each of the first two semesters contains 4 mandatory courses of 7.5 ECTS each; the third semester is dedicated to thesis work and writing and it also has 30 ECTS. The language of the PSP is English, and one of the aims is to attract an international student cohort.

A maximum of 60 students per year are planned for the PSP, and it will accept graduates from most biomedical and engineering/computer science fields. In this version, the PSP will be exclusively online as far as courses are concerned, but the students are expected to appear in person for their exams at the end of term. Practical work is not contemplated. The total cost of this PSP has been set at 4000 euros and the majority of the income will be spent on salaries for the teaching and administrative staff.

Employment opportunities for bioinformatics graduates are excellent both in Greece and abroad. It was not clear from the stakeholder meeting how strong is the connection between the PSP and commercial entities in bioinformatics (with the exception of the representative from Siemens Healthineers - more related to medical imaging).

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 Bioinformatics and Digital Medicine was established in 2025 by the Department of Informatics, Faculty of Information Science & Informatics, Ionian University in cooperation with the Department of Informatics and Telematics, School of Digital Technology, Harokopio University and the Department of Digital Systems, School of Information Technology and Communications, University of Piraeus. The documentation submitted in support of the request for accreditation is solely that pertaining to the Ionian University with no reference to the other two cooperating universities. There was no documentation available for evaluating the Strategies, Quality Assurance Policies and the setting of Quality Goals of the two institutions cooperating with the Ionian University in offering the programme. The mode of instruction will be hybrid, remote and in person. Instruction will be in English and Greek.

The aim of the programme is to provide specialized knowledge and promote research in the areas of Bioinformatics and Digital Biomedicine with emphasis on the analysis of biomedical data, machine learning and the application of artificial intelligence in the field.

Matriculation is for three semesters, two for course work and one for writing a dissertation. The programme has been approved to operate for five years with the option of further extension.

A detailed Strategic Plan sets forth a vision for the University taking into account the current state: location, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities. In addition to education and research, the Plan outlines goals for infrastructure and services, finances, management and student body.

The plan identifies three specific metrics for measuring achievement of the educational goals: student engagement and completion of studies, student mobility and improvement of student services. Similar goals are set for research and innovation: attraction of additional researchers, improvement in the quality of research activities and increase in research funding. For each goal the Plan identifies specific actions and measures.

The Learning Outcomes of the Programme are described in document A9. However, in the Greek and the English versions of Regulations (<http://83.212.98.199/bdb/en/regulations/>) containing the Studies Guide, Studies Regulation and Πολιτική Ποιότητας Προγραμμάτων, the contents are only in Greek.

II. Analysis

Since the Programme has not yet been in operation, there are no data to assess compliance with the Quality Assurance Policy. Consequently, the Strategy, Quality Assurance Policy and the attainment of the Quality Goals are evaluated on the basis of the submitted documentation and the in-person presentations of the Faculty and Administrators of the Ionian University. Although the programme is designated as Inter-Institutional the submitted documentation is that of the Ionian University. Consequently, the Strategies, Quality Assurance Policies and Quality Goal Settings of the cooperating universities are not included in this evaluation. For the programme to be designated as Inter-Institutional it needs to be monitored by corresponding Inter-Institutional MODIP mechanism.

Absent such mechanism, the programme is under the sole control of the Ionian University. In the absence of data reflecting the operation of the programme, the feasibility and sustainability of the programme can only be assessed on the basis of aspirational information provided by the Institution. From this perspective, the Institution has a reasonably well-defined strategy for implementing the programme and the published Quality Assurance Policy reflects the commitment of the Institution to make a serious effort to achieve the goals of the programme.

The Institution has provided a list of the Programme goals along with quality targets and associated measuring mechanisms. In addition, the list includes actions to be taken, lines of responsibility and timelines for achievement of the stated goals. There is no documentation indicating how the Quality Assurance Policy of the Ionian University is implemented and monitored by the cooperating universities. Consequently, a complete picture of the programme as an inter-institutional endeavour is missing.

The absence of a formal mechanism codifying the inter-institutional structure of the programme has the potential of making the operation depended on personalities rather than institutional commitment. Although the individuals currently associated with the programme have indicated their commitment to its success, the viability of the programme as a cooperative venture among independent institutions requires institutional commitment to assure long term viability.

III. Conclusions

The Quality Assurance Policy of the PSP if fully implemented has the potential of making the proposed PSP attractive to an audience domestic and international.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

For the programme to be designated as Inter-institutional, the Strategy for the evolution of the programme, as well as the Quality Assurance Policy and the setting of the Goals need to be common for the three co-operating institutions.

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 proposed Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) in “Bioinformatics and Digital Biomedicine” is a joint initiative offered by the Department of Informatics at Ionian University, the Department of Informatics and Telematics at Harokopion University of Athens, and the Department of Digital Systems at the University of Piraeus. The Department of Informatics at Ionian University serves as the coordinating unit, providing administrative and logistical support.

The programme comprises 90 ECTS credits and is designed to address current labor market needs while complementing offerings at other Greek universities. Its curriculum leverages experience gained from two discontinued predecessor programmes in Bioinformatics and Digital Health Analytics, to which Ionian and Harokopion Universities were key contributors.

The full-time, three-semester programme consists of two semesters of coursework and a final semester dedicated to the Master's thesis. Students must complete eight mandatory courses, each worth 7.5 ECTS. The four courses in the first semester focus on foundational expertise, including mathematical tools, machine learning and artificial intelligence, bioinformatics, and medical signal processing. The four courses in the second semester deepen expertise in the programme's two pillars. The Digital Biomedicine track emphasizes the responsible management of biomedical data, regulatory compliance (e.g., GDPR), security, and the ethical/legal implications of technology, alongside technical approaches for Big Data analysis and AI-driven decision-making. The Bioinformatics track covers systems biology, Omics data, and the application of tools in areas such as e-health, pharmacogenomics, and medical imaging. The Master's thesis (30 ECTS) focuses on applying acquired knowledge within a realistic framework. Projects may include case studies, system evaluations, data analysis, or application development. Students may write their thesis in either Greek or English.

Each course involves 39 teaching hours, utilizing a combination of lectures, tutorials, and project-based learning. Delivery is conducted online, targeting a split of 80% synchronous and 20% asynchronous instruction. However, exams are held in person at Ionian University in Corfu. The primary language of instruction is English.

Learning outcomes are aligned with the National and the European Qualifications Frameworks for level 7. To ensure quality, all courses are subject to student evaluation regarding material relevance, teaching effectiveness, and faculty accessibility.

The programme targets an intake of 40 students, with a maximum capacity of 60. Based on faculty experience with previous PSPs, these targets are considered achievable. However, during discussions with the EAAP, the Programme Director indicated that the initial cohort may be smaller, with plans to scale up gradually.

II. Analysis

The PSP adheres to qualification frameworks to ensure advanced instruction. The curriculum forms a coherent structure, effectively balancing the acquisition of advanced tools and techniques with their practical biomedical applications. Furthermore, the Master's thesis allows students to deepen their expertise in specific areas of interest. The core faculty possess significant expertise in the programme's key domains, with anticipated support from additional experts for guest lectures and thesis supervision. As confirmed by stakeholder discussions, graduates face strong employment prospects in both the private and public sectors.

However, the absence of elective courses is a shortcoming. Given the maturity and breadth of Bioinformatics and Digital Biomedicine, electives would offer students valuable opportunities to either broaden their scope or specialize further in their primary focus area.

Additionally, the lack of in-person practical experience is a concern. Given that Bioinformatics and Digital Biomedicine are inherently interdisciplinary fields—relying on the convergence of technical data science and clinical healthcare—technical competence alone is insufficient for professional success. Consequently, an in-person component is crucial for fostering the soft skills required to bridge the gap between IT specialists and health experts. Incorporating on-site activities, such as intensive practice labs or workshops, would significantly benefit students by moving beyond theoretical learning to simulate real-world collaborative environments.

Finally, the requirement for students to travel to Corfu for final exams appears impractical, particularly since two participating departments and the largest pool of prospective students are located in the Athens metropolitan area.

III. Conclusions

The proposed PSP establishes a robust academic framework with a coherent curriculum, significant faculty expertise across three collaborating institutions, and clear alignment with labour market needs. Nevertheless, it requires targeted adjustments to fully optimize the student learning experience. Although the programme provides strong theoretical grounding, the absence of elective courses limits necessary opportunities for specialization, and the lack of in-person practical components hinders the development of interdisciplinary soft skills essential for bridging the gap between technical and clinical environments. Furthermore, the logistical inflexibility regarding examination locations presents a significant barrier for the target student demographic. Consequently, given these critical areas for improvement regarding the PSP's breadth, practical delivery, and student accessibility, the EEAP finds the proposal partially compliant with the principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To broaden student specialization options, the PSP should expand its curriculum by introducing at least two elective courses in each of the focus areas (Bioinformatics and Digital Biomedicine).

Incorporating an in-person component, such as practice labs, would significantly benefit students. Beyond reinforcing learning outcomes, this facilitates networking, enhances group collaboration, and provides opportunities for concurrent events like career fairs or professional guest lectures and visits.

The programme should adopt a flexible approach to exam locations. Mandating travel to Corfu places an undue time commitment and financial burden on students, particularly as a significant portion of the cohort is likely located near Athens and Piraeus.

To accommodate anticipated high enrollment, the pool of participating faculty should be expanded, specifically to ensure adequate capacity for Master's thesis supervision. This expansion would naturally align with the staffing requirements for the recommended elective courses.

Finally, the EAAP questions whether the workload corresponds to 90 ECTS, noting that the number of contact and study-hour mostly correspond to a programme of 75 ECTSs. The PSP administration should carefully review and justify the credit allocation

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 Institution has developed and made publicly available a comprehensive set of regulations governing all stages of postgraduate studies, from admission to certification. The procedures for student admission, including eligibility criteria, evaluation methods and required supporting documents, are clearly described in the Programme Proposal, the Internal Regulation of the Department and the Study Guide. These documents specify the qualifications required, the process for ranking applicants and the conditions under which final admission is granted. The rights and obligations of students, as well as the mechanisms for monitoring their progression, are detailed in the Study Regulation and the Internal Regulation. These include rules on registration, attendance, assessment, progression from one semester to the next, conditions for repeating courses and the maximum duration of studies. Student progression is also supported by institutional quality assurance processes and the use of the University's digital learning environment. The programme's structure is defined as a three-semester PSP of 90 ECTS, consisting of taught modules and a master's thesis. The distribution of ECTS across semesters and courses is clearly presented in the curriculum and course descriptions.

The thesis process is regulated through explicit and detailed guidelines contained in the Study Regulation and the Programme Proposal, which together define the stages of thesis preparation, supervision, submission, evaluation criteria, deadlines and the obligations of both students and supervisors. Ethical requirements governing research, including data protection, intellectual property and avoidance of misconduct, are covered by the Institution's Code of Research Ethics and apply to all postgraduate research activity. The programme does not include formal practical training; therefore, no regulations regarding internship implementation are necessary. The absence of formal practical training components may limit exposure to professional settings, although the diploma project/ capstone project partially compensates for this. Opportunities for student mobility are provided through participation in Erasmus+.

The regulations for academic advising are defined in a dedicated framework, which assigns each student an academic advisor responsible for offering guidance in academic planning, navigating administrative procedures and supporting students in academic or personal matters. The mechanism for submitting and managing student complaints and appeals is also clearly described in a stand-alone document, specifying the stages of informal resolution, mediation and formal examination. For programmes delivered through distance learning, the Institution has established principles that govern e-learning support, including the use of the institutional LMS, synchronous and

asynchronous teaching methods, digital infrastructure, availability of technical support services and the online identity verification system for examinations. These elements are documented in the Programme Proposal and the Study Regulation. The University also maintains policies ensuring appropriate support and reasonable accommodation for students affected by disabilities or other special circumstances. Finally, the Diploma Supplement is issued according to institutional policy, using a bilingual template, and is made available to graduates as part of the certification process.

II. Analysis

The EEAP finds that the PSP is supported by a complete and coherent regulatory framework that aligns with national and institutional requirements for postgraduate studies. The admission process is well defined, transparent and publicly available, ensuring fairness and consistency in the selection of students. The inclusion of clear rules concerning registration, attendance, assessment and progression contributes to predictable academic planning and facilitates continuous monitoring of student advancement. The assignment of an academic advisor to each student further strengthens the programme's capacity to support academic progress and decision making, and reflects good practice in postgraduate education.

The procedures for the drafting, supervision and evaluation of the thesis are comprehensive and appropriately structured. They reflect recognised standards of postgraduate research training and are complemented by the Institution's Code of Research Ethics, which provides an explicit framework for safeguarding integrity, confidentiality and responsible research conduct. In addition, the development of a concise Thesis Handbook, consolidating the existing information and including guidance on academic writing conventions, could further support students in navigating the thesis process. The existence of a detailed complaints and appeals mechanism enhances transparency and contributes to a student-centred environment in which issues may be addressed fairly and systematically. The existence of a detailed complaints and appeals mechanism enhances transparency and contributes to a student-centred environment in which issues may be addressed fairly and systematically.

With regard to the application of ECTS across the curriculum, the programme clearly defines a total of 90 ECTS for three semesters, with the corresponding credits allocated to taught modules and the master's thesis. The course descriptions specify the intended workload for each module. The EEAP notes that, when these workload estimations are considered in conjunction with the overall duration and structure, the actual student effort may, in practice, correspond to a lower total than that implied by 90 ECTS. As a generic guide, 1 ECTS corresponds to about 25-30 working hours (contact + homework). When adding up the hours of student involvement per course, as described in the

course specifications, the total appears to be less than expected and corresponds to something closer to 75 ECTS. The EEAP suggests a review of the alignment between declared credits and actual workload.

The regulatory framework for distance learning is adequate and provides clear information on the use of the institutional LMS, the combination of synchronous and asynchronous teaching, the technical infrastructure supporting online delivery and the mechanisms for verifying student identity during remote examinations. The provisions for student mobility through Erasmus+ are sufficiently defined at institutional level and referenced in the programme documentation, ensuring that interested students may participate in mobility schemes where feasible. The Diploma Supplement, issued in bilingual form, supports the transparency and international recognition of the qualification.

In relation to academic advising, the EEAP considers the formal establishment of the advisor role to be a strong and well-structured element of the programme. As the PSP grows, the relationship between the number of students and the available advisors should be observed to ensure that the level of personalised guidance envisioned by the regulations continues to be fully supported. This is not a current weakness but an aspect that may merit periodic monitoring as the programme develops.

III. Conclusions

The EEAP concludes that the PSP meets the requirements of Principle 3, as the Institution has established a coherent and comprehensive regulatory framework governing admission, progression, thesis preparation, recognition procedures and certification. Clear mechanisms for academic advising, monitoring of student progression, complaints and appeals, research ethics and e-learning support are in place and appropriately documented. The arrangements for mobility and the issuance of the bilingual Diploma Supplement align with national and European standards. The EEAP recommends particular attention to the rational alignment of ECTS with actual student workload and to further strengthening the visibility and accessibility of key regulations within the Student Guide and programme website.

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

Review the alignment between the declared ECTS and the actual student workload.

Consider developing a concise Thesis Handbook that consolidates the existing regulations.

Reinforce communication of the existing complaints and appeals mechanism so that all students are aware of the steps available for resolving academic or administrative issues.

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 A01 (Principle 4), A10, and A17 documents provide a detailed description of the staff lifecycle, including selection, progression, and evaluation processes. Key details include:

Selection and Hiring: All academic staff are selected and hired following the well-established process mandated by the Hellenic government.

Recruitment Standards: Individuals recruited from national or international institutions are selected strictly based on their academic rigor and merit.

Workload Management: Staff involvement in the current Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) adds to their weekly teaching load; this extra commitment is carefully monitored and balanced to prevent overload.

Annual Review and Feedback: Academics undergo an annual review process utilising electronic student feedback generated for each individual course. This feedback is instrumental in steering the PSP and serves as a key criterion during academic promotions.

- **Professional Support:** Clear support mechanisms are in place for academic staff regarding research development, continuous professional development, and internal evaluation.

Compensation and Incentives: Unlike other PSPs, academics involved in this programme receive financial compensation. This practice supports their professional development, enhances their academic careers, and promotes international collaborations.

Recognition and Awards: The programme features established teaching awards to recognise good teaching practices, innovation, and research excellence.

The A10 Document contains a concise list of involved academics from the Ionian University, the University of Piraeus, and the Harokopio University, alongside their relevant expertise.

Finally, the A17 document provides a detailed list of all academics and highlights their visibility within the international research community through their publications and citation records, covering staff from both the hosting and collaborating institutions.

II. Analysis

The Postgraduate Study Programme (PSP) is fortunate to include a number of high-calibre academics and researchers, some of whom are world leaders in their fields. The A17 document provides an outstanding overview of their expertise and research impact. Several staff members are highly influential in their research areas, with impressive h-indices exceeding 45. However, the exact number of actual publications was not itemized within this specific document.

The following points warrant specific mention:

Staff Mobility: While a clear distribution of funds for staff mobility exists, it appears primarily limited to travel between the institutions currently involved in the PSP, despite the programme being mostly taught online. Increased staff mobility (to external institutions) is recommended.

Staff Roster Clarity: The EEAP is unclear as to the total number and names of all staff involved in the PSP. The initial submitted documents list ten names (five from the host institution and five from collaborating institutions). However, additional names appeared in newer documentation sent during the accreditation process, causing confusion regarding the final list.

Inter-Institutional Commitment: Six of the listed academics, primarily from collaborating institutions, are assigned only one hour of teaching each. While the EEAP recognises the specific expertise these academics provide, this minimal involvement hardly justifies the designation of an "inter-institutional PSP," reading more like a programme supported by invited lectures.

Finally, all documentation provides clear guidance and commitments for the Ionian University staff. As expected, however, there is minimal documentation addressing the staff from the supporting institutions—who actually carry a significant portion of the teaching load. This represents an oversight for a PSP officially entitled as "inter-institutional."

III. Conclusions

Clear, established procedures govern every aspect of academic staff involvement in this Postgraduate Study Programme.

The PSP members are of a high calibre, evidenced by their strong research output, publications, and international standing. It is clear they are well-equipped to bring their research expertise directly into the classroom, effectively shaping new cohorts of ambitious students into capable professionals.

As this is a new PSP, initial staffing may encounter some teething issues. However, the valuable experience gained from running a similar version of this programme in the past will serve as a practical guide to proactively manage challenges and ensure a successful launch.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Conclude on the list of academic staff to be involved in the PSP so a balanced division of workload can be achieved.

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 Institution has provided a comprehensive description of the human resources, infrastructure and services available to support the PSP. The PSP uses the existing facilities of the Department of Informatics and the Ionian University, including lecture rooms, the central library, two departmental laboratories and a series of resources which support both teaching and student research activity, while also having the right of access/use to two laboratories of the Departments of the University of Piraeus and Harokopio University. The programme also notes that members of academic and laboratory staff will cover at least seventy-five percent of the teaching needs, and in practice currently cover an even higher percentage. An appropriate space has been allocated for the PSP's administrative support, while the Secretariat of the Department provides access for

documentation and archiving needs, and additional administrative support has been planned. The leading Institution confirms that all University-level student services—library and electronic databases, network and remote access support, email, housing and food services, psychosocial and counselling services, career services, mobility opportunities and the student ombudsman—will be equally available to all PSP students.

The PSP is delivered fully online with a high percentage of synchronous teaching. As a result, students do not usually access the physical laboratories during the coursework phase, but the collaborating institutions guarantee full access to laboratory facilities when the thesis topic requires it. The EEAP also noted that the PSP website requires improvement, particularly the inclusion of a clearly structured section describing student support and services and a more effective multilingual navigation. In addition, the EEAP observed that the programme does not yet sufficiently promote the available support services to students. Concerns were also raised regarding the ability of the academic staff to provide personalised career support, as the projected ratio between teaching staff and expected enrolment may prove challenging if student numbers stay the same. Finally, the tuition utilisation plan indicates that a large proportion of tuition income is directed towards teaching staff and invited experts, which may make the overall tuition level appear relatively high for a fully online programme and needs reconsideration.

II. Analysis

The EEAP finds that the PSP benefits from substantial and well-organised learning resources and student services provided by the Institution and its collaborating departments. The laboratories and research facilities described in the programme proposal are equipped with modern and high-performance equipment, and the equipment available across the collaborating laboratories is exceptional. Although the programme operates online, the guaranteed access to these laboratories for thesis work preserves the scientific depth of the programme. At the same time, the PSP may consider expanding the use of these facilities beyond the thesis stage, enabling students to benefit from the equipment through the workshops and practical activities that the programme is considering implementing.

Moreover, the programme describes a robust digital learning infrastructure, including the institutional LMS (e-Class), videoconferencing platforms with institutional licences, remote access environments, VPN-based access to laboratory systems/HEAL-Link, and remote servers for practical exercises and projects with available datasets. These elements support the delivery of synchronous and asynchronous learning and enable students to work with licensed and open-source tools relevant to the field.

The range of student support services available is comprehensive and covers academic, technical, welfare and professional needs (library, VPN and technical support, email, the e-Rent/E-Enoikiazetai service for housing, student housing and food support, counselling, psychological and health support, career office, student ombudsman and participation in Erasmus+). These services reflect good institutional practice. Furthermore, participation in Erasmus+ should be

encouraged by promoting the opportunities available in this field on your PSP website in a dedicated section, making it easier for students to navigate and access relevant information. The documentation's reference to a welcome event indicates an effort to introduce students to the University community, which is important for student integration. The EEAP observed that although all services exist, their communication at PSP level is limited and the current website structure does not present them clearly in a dedicated subsection. Strengthening the website and providing targeted communication at the start of the year would ensure that students understand how to access these resources effectively and how to use them.

The programme demonstrates strong staffing commitments, particularly in terms of academic staff covering the majority of teaching. Nevertheless, the potential imbalance between the number of teaching staff and the expected student intake may challenge the provision of individualised academic and career guidance. The administrative support is considered sufficient, as the PSP director stated that it is planned to have two persons for administrative support (one full-time and one part-time) and two persons for technical support (one full-time and one part-time). The tuition utilisation plan is comprehensive and aims at long-term sustainability; however, the significant allocation of tuition resources to teaching costs indicates that the current distribution may be unbalanced in relation to the total tuition fee. A re-evaluation of how resources are allocated would therefore be appropriate and could ultimately allow the programme to reduce tuition fees for students in a meaningful way.

III. Conclusions

The EEAP concludes that the PSP meets the requirements of Principle 5 to a substantial degree. The learning resources, physical and digital infrastructure and student support mechanisms are sufficient and demonstrate the Institution's commitment to ensuring a high-quality learning environment. The administrative and technical staffing plan is clear and adequate. At the same time, the EEAP identifies areas for improvement. Most importantly, the PSP needs to further develop the link between the laboratory equipment presented and the students, through workshops and practical activities, in order to inspire students and better prepare them for their thesis. The visibility and promotion of student support services must be strengthened, particularly through a more fully developed website and structured communication with students through multiple channels. The financial balance between tuition income and expenditure should be reconsidered in the context of online delivery, and tuition fees should be reduced. Addressing these points will further enhance the programme's effectiveness and student experience.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The programme is encouraged to enhance the integration of the existing laboratory and research equipment into practical educational activities (workshops, applied sessions), enabling students to benefit from the extensive infrastructure prior to the thesis stage

The tuition utilisation plan should be re-evaluated, as the current allocation of resources appears unjustifiable towards staff fees. A reconsideration of the resource distribution may allow for a meaningful reduction of tuition fees.

The PSP should further develop and restructure its website by creating clearly visible and dedicated sections on student support and services, on participation in Erasmus+, and by improving its multilingual functionality.

The PSP is encouraged to implement a structured onboarding session at the beginning of each academic year, expanding the existing welcome event into a more comprehensive orientation process. This session could also be offered in a hybrid format to ensure that all online students receive clear guidance on academic expectations, digital tools and available support services.

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

The Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) at IU implements an annual internal monitoring plan. This plan evaluates the teaching curriculum and makes necessary adjustments to all Postgraduate Study Programmes, including the one under review. The findings from this work are reported in detail in document A3. The report lists the process of organizing this PSP and its intended academic structure and relates those with the aims of IU as a whole and with the academic

interests of the Department of Informatics which will host the PSP.

The Department as a whole has been evaluated in 2011 and at that time its areas of focus were (1) Informatics in Humanities and Social Sciences, (2) Computer Architecture, Security and Network Systems, (3) Information Systems and Databases, and (4) Computational Modelling. At that point the evaluation was positive. The Ionian University as a whole seems to be receptive to the evaluation process and past suggestions have been taken seriously.

The PSP in association with MODIP has mechanisms in place to monitor student and faculty performance, programme satisfaction, graduation rates and other related parameters.

II. Analysis

In the opinion of the EEAP, the evaluation of the PSP by MODIP as shown in document A3 and as discussed during the visit was very light touch, almost to the point of being without use.

For example, since this PSP is a reincarnation of two previous ones there should be a section in the internal evaluation discussing positive and negative experiences from participating in those previous programmes and how such findings could influence the design of the current programme.

Another area that was not properly evaluated is the transition to a mostly online programme with a significant percentage of asynchronous teaching: what are the advantages and disadvantages of such a programme and what are the points that will need attention? Some of these discussions did take place during the online visit, but the EEAP believes that they should have also been part of the written submission.

A SWOT analysis of the intended structure and function of this PSP would have been helpful.

Finally, the submitted documents were not very consistent and in some cases important information was missing. As an example of the former, the number of faculty was 7 in document A5, 10 in document A17, and a number of 20 was mentioned when the EEAP asked how 60 potential students could be supervised for their theses by 7 or 10 faculty. As an example of the latter, it was hard to find in document A1 what are the tuition and fees for this PSP.

III. Conclusions

Although the Institution as a whole and the Department in particular have shown that they take the process of internal evaluation seriously and they follow suggestions raised during external evaluations the process of internal checking for this PSP did not work well and many deficiencies were noted. The most critical was probably the absence of any discussion about the experience of the two previous PSPs and what they could teach the one under consideration here. MODIP needs to have a critical role during evaluations of both pre-existing as well as new PSPs. This is especially important in a country that has a

tremendously high number of PSPs per University AND per undergraduate programme. MODIP needs to ask the hard question: is another PSP required, and why? If the answer is yes, and previous versions of the contemplated PSP existed what were their positive and negative lessons?

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

A careful and robust SWOT analysis by MODIP is required, especially in view of the existence of the previous two PSPs in which the current PSP was involved.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

The Institution has a reasonably well-defined strategy for implementing the programme and the published Quality Assurance Policy reflects the commitment of the Institution to make a serious effort to achieve the goals of the programme.

The curriculum forms a coherent structure, effectively balancing the acquisition of advanced tools and techniques with their practical biomedical applications.

The MSc thesis will allow students to deepen their expertise in specific areas of interest.

The core faculty possess significant expertise in the PSPs key domains, with anticipated support from additional experts for guest lectures and thesis supervision.

As confirmed by stakeholder discussions, graduates face strong employment prospects in both the private and public sectors.

The PSP is supported by a complete and coherent regulatory framework that aligns with national and institutional requirements for postgraduate studies.

The admission process is well defined, transparent and publicly available, ensuring fairness and consistency in the selection of students.

The assignment of an academic advisor to each student will strengthen the programme's capacity to support academic progress and decision making and reflects good practice in postgraduate education.

The PSP includes several high-caliber academics and researchers, some of whom are world leaders in their fields.

The valuable experience gained from running a similar version of this programme in the past (if properly utilized) will serve as a practical guide to proactively manage challenges and ensure a successful launch.

The laboratories and research facilities described in the programme proposal are equipped with modern and high-performance equipment, and the equipment available across the collaborating laboratories is exceptional.

The range of student support services available is comprehensive and covers academic, technical, welfare and professional needs (library, VPN and technical support, email, the e-Rent/E-Enoikiazetai service for housing, student housing and food support, counselling, psychological and health support, career office, student ombudsman and participation in Erasmus+).

The Institution as a whole and the Department in particular have shown that they take the process of internal evaluation seriously and they follow suggestions raised during external evaluations.

II. Areas of Weakness

There is no documentation indicating how the Quality Assurance Policy of the Ionian University is implemented and monitored by the cooperating universities. Consequently, a complete picture of the programme as an inter-institutional endeavor is missing.

The absence of a formal mechanism codifying the inter-institutional structure of the programme has the potential of making the operation dependent on personalities rather than institutional commitment.

The absence of elective courses is a shortcoming. Given the maturity and breadth of Bioinformatics and Digital Biomedicine, electives would offer students valuable opportunities to either broaden their scope or specialize further in their primary focus area. The lack of in-person practical experience is a concern because although Bioinformatics and Digital Biomedicine are inherently interdisciplinary fields—relying on the convergence of technical data science and clinical healthcare—technical competence alone is insufficient for professional success.

Incorporating on-site activities, such as intensive practice labs or workshops, would significantly benefit students by moving beyond theoretical learning to simulate real-world collaborative environments.

The requirement for students to travel to Corfu for final exams appears impractical, particularly since two participating departments and the largest pool of prospective students are located in the Athens metropolitan area.

When adding up the hours of student involvement per course, as described in the course specifications, the total appears to be less than expected and corresponds to something closer to 75 ECTS; therefore the EEAP suggests a review of the alignment between declared credits and actual workload.

While a clear distribution of funds for staff mobility exists, it appears primarily limited to travel between the institutions currently involved in the PSP, despite the programme being mostly taught online. Increased staff mobility (to external institutions) is recommended.

The EEAP is unclear as to the total number and names of all staff involved in the PSP. The initial submitted documents list ten names (five from the host institution and five from collaborating institutions). However, additional names appeared in newer documentation sent during the accreditation process, causing confusion regarding the final list.

Six of the listed academics, primarily from collaborating institutions, are assigned only one hour of teaching each. While the EEAP recognises the specific expertise these academics provide, this minimal involvement hardly justifies the designation of an "inter-institutional PSP," reading more like a programme supported by invited lectures.

There is minimal documentation addressing the staff from the supporting institutions—who actually carry a significant portion of the teaching load. This represents an oversight for a PSP officially entitled as "inter-institutional."

The PSP needs to further develop the link between the laboratory equipment presented and the students, through workshops and practical activities, in order to inspire students and better prepare them for their thesis.

Tuition fees are too high for a PSP that is primarily online.

A significant source of frustration for this evaluation is the absence of a robust analysis of the previous two PSPs which have been used to design the current one, and this is a MODIP shortcoming.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

For the programme to be designated as Inter-institutional, the Strategy for the evolution of the programme, as well as the Quality Assurance Policy and the setting of the Goals need to be common for the three co-operating institutions.

To broaden student specialization options, the PSP should expand its curriculum by introducing at least two elective courses in each of the focus areas (Bioinformatics and Digital Biomedicine).

Incorporating an in-person component, such as practice labs, would significantly benefit students. Beyond reinforcing learning outcomes, this facilitates networking, enhances group collaboration, and provides opportunities for concurrent events like career fairs or professional guest lectures and visits.

The programme should adopt a flexible approach to exam locations. Mandating travel to Corfu places an undue time commitment and financial burden on students, particularly as a significant portion of the cohort is likely located near Athens and Piraeus.

To accommodate anticipated high enrollment, the pool of participating faculty should be expanded, specifically to ensure adequate capacity for Master's thesis supervision. This expansion would naturally align with the staffing requirements for the recommended elective courses.

The EAAP questions whether the workload corresponds to 90 ECTS, noting that the number of contact and study-hours mostly corresponds to a programme of 75 ECTSs. The PSP administration should carefully review and justify the credit allocation

Consider developing a concise Thesis Handbook that consolidates the existing regulations.

Reinforce communication of the existing complaints and appeals mechanism so that all students are aware of the steps available for resolving academic or administrative issues.

The programme is encouraged to enhance the integration of the existing laboratory and research equipment into practical educational activities (workshops, applied sessions), enabling students to benefit from the extensive infrastructure prior to the thesis stage

The tuition utilisation plan should be re-evaluated, as the current allocation of resources appears unbalanced for a fully online programme. A reconsideration of the resource distribution may allow for a meaningful reduction of tuition fees.

The PSP should further develop and restructure its website by creating clearly visible and dedicated sections on student support and services, on participation in Erasmus+, and by improving its multilingual functionality.

The PSP is encouraged to implement a structured onboarding session at the beginning of each academic year, expanding the existing welcome event into a more comprehensive orientation process. This session could also be offered in a hybrid format to ensure that all online students receive clear guidance on academic expectations, digital tools and available support services.

MODIP needs to produce a robust SWOT analysis for this PSP to include lessons learned from its participation in previous versions.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **3, 4**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **5**

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 6**

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

KTISTAKIS NICHOLAS

Signed by KTISTAKIS NICHOLAS

BANITSAS KONSTANTINOS

Signed by BANITSAS KONSTANTINOS

KYRIAKOPOULOS NICHOLAS

Signed by KYRIAKOPOULOS NICHOLAS

MICHAILIDIS GEORGE

Signed by MICHAILIDIS GEORGE

NOURI VENETIA DESPOINA

Signed by NOURI VENETIA DESPOINA