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Accreditation Report
for the Postgraduate Study Programme of:

Treatment options and management of vascular surgery emergencies

Department: Medicine

Institution: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Date: 15/06/2026

Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης
ΕΣΠΑ 2021-2027
Πρόγραμμα
Ανθρώπινο Δυναμικό και Κοινωνική Συνοχή
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Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Postgraduate Study Programme of **Treatment options and management of vascular surgery emergencies** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the postgraduate study programme of Treatment options and management of vascular surgery emergencies of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Law 4653/2020:

1. CHRISTOPHIDES GEORGE (Chair)
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   Imperial College London
   (Institution of origin)

2. Roussakis Andreas Antonios
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   Imperial College London / Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust
   (Institution of origin)

3. SACHINIDIS AGAPIOS
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   Institut für Neurophysiologie, Zentrum Physiologie, Medizinische Fakultät, Universität zu Köln
   (Institution of origin)

4. Savvopoulos Nikolaos
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   University of Patras
   (Institution of origin)

5. Soultanas Panagiotis
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   School of Chemistry, University of Nottingham
   (Institution of origin)

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

Brief reference to the Panel preparation for the postgraduate study programme review, as well as to the documentation provided and considered by the Panel. Dates of the review, review, meetings held, and any additional information regarding the procedure, as appropriate.

The External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) conducted the accreditation review between 11/05/2026 and 16/05/2026, according to the official HAHE timetable for the accreditation of the four postgraduate study programmes (PSPs) of the School of Medicine, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH).

An initial joint meeting took place on Monday 11/05/2026 with the Directors of the four PSPs, the Head of the School of Medicine (Department of Medicine), MODIP representatives, OMEA members and programme leadership. Following an introduction by the Head of the Department, the Department and the Director of the PSP presented the structure, objectives, academic profile and operation of the programme. At the end of the session, the Panel requested by the Director of the PSP to submit directly and through the HAHE website the presentations and a list of dissertation titles. These were received promptly after the end of the session.

Prior to the meetings, the Panel reviewed the accreditation package and supporting documentation, including the study guide and curriculum structure, course descriptions, internal regulations, titles of diploma theses, quality assurance documentation, assessment material, workload allocation and ECTS structure, and information relating to practical training and supervision.

The review process also included examination of online material concerning facilities, teaching infrastructure and clinical environments. The videos provided mainly presented the wider infrastructure of the School of Medicine and affiliated hospitals rather than programme-specific facilities.

On Tuesday 12/05/2026, the Panel held separate meetings with representatives of the teaching staff of the PSP, current students, graduates, and employers and social partners. All the meetings were constructive, collegial and open. Students and graduates expressed strong appreciation for the clinical relevance of the programme, accessibility of faculty and flexibility of delivery. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of vascular emergency management within the Greek healthcare system.

These meetings were followed by a private EEAP debrief to discuss the preliminary findings

and a closure meeting with programme leadership and institutional representatives, where these preliminary findings were presented at a high level. The university, school and programme leadership were invited to comment on these preliminary findings. The Panel focused particularly on the extent to which the programme satisfies Level 7 MSc expectations, the balance between professional clinical training and postgraduate academic education, the scholarly depth and methodological rigour of diploma theses, the organisation and assessment of practical training, the coherence of workload and ECTS allocation, and the maturity of quality assurance processes and KPI utilisation.

Overall, the review process enabled the EEAP to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the strengths, operational characteristics, challenges and level of alignment of the PSP with the HAHE accreditation standards.

III. Postgraduate Study Programme Profile

Brief overview of the postgraduate study programme with reference to the following: history, academic remit, duration of studies, qualification awarded, employment opportunities, orientation challenges or any other key background information. Short description of the home Department and Institution, with reference to student population, campus or any other related facts.

The PSP "Treatment Options and Management of Vascular Surgery Emergencies" is a professionally oriented postgraduate programme offered by the School of Medicine of AUTH.

The programme focuses on emergency vascular surgical conditions and aims to provide specialised clinical knowledge and decision-making skills relevant to vascular surgeons and clinicians involved in acute vascular care. The programme leadership emphasised its practical relevance for emergency recognition and management within the Greek healthcare system, including geographically remote regions.

The programme is structured as a one-year MSc corresponding to 75 ECTS. The curriculum combines taught modules, practical exposure and a diploma thesis component completed during the summer period.

Teaching is organised largely in intensive monthly teaching blocks delivered mainly online via Zoom, with lectures typically taking place on Fridays and Saturdays. Practical activities, tutorials and journal club discussions supplement the formal teaching sessions.

The programme admits approximately 25 students annually and is directed mainly toward practising clinicians. Most students remain professionally active during their studies, often combining the programme with full-time clinical responsibilities.

The teaching staff include experienced vascular surgeons, biometrics specialists and clinicians from several Greek universities and hospitals.

Students and graduates consistently described the programme as professionally useful and clinically relevant. Several graduates reported progression toward doctoral studies or increased engagement with research activities following completion of the programme.

The programme demonstrates strong professional and clinical relevance. However, its academic identity currently appears more closely aligned with advanced professional or specialist training than with a strongly research-intensive MSc. The Panel identified variability in dissertation depth, relatively limited original research activity and a stronger emphasis on

clinical exposure and professional development than on sustained postgraduate scientific inquiry.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP “Therapeutic Options and Management of Vascular Surgery Emergencies” has established a formal quality assurance framework aligned with the institutional quality policy of AUTH and the Medical School (Department of Medicine). The submitted documentation includes a dedicated Quality Assurance Policy, quality targets, annual indicators, internal regulations, student evaluation procedures, and mechanisms for annual internal review.

The programme demonstrates a clear professional and clinical orientation focused on emergency vascular surgery, contemporary open and endovascular approaches, and the management of urgent vascular conditions. The programme leadership articulated explicit goals relating to scientific updating, development of clinical research activity, and provision of specialised clinical knowledge and practical skills.

The quality policy includes commitments to continuous improvement, student evaluation of teaching, monitoring of graduate outcomes, efficient use of resources, annual internal evaluation, and alignment with the European and National Qualifications Frameworks. The programme also defined measurable KPIs related to student performance, completion rates, student satisfaction, publications, doctoral progression, and internationalisation.

The programme appears administratively organised and demonstrates strong clinical leadership, commitment, and clear awareness of the workforce relevance and specialised niche served by the programme. Students, graduates and stakeholders consistently highlighted the accessibility and expertise of faculty, the flexibility of the programme, and the usefulness of the clinical discussions and journal club elements.

At the same time, the EEAP observed that the programme currently operates predominantly as a professionally oriented postgraduate specialisation programme rather than as a consistently research-intensive MSc environment. Teaching delivery appears highly concentrated and flexible, adapted primarily to the needs of professionally active clinicians. Students described the programme as functioning “more like a fellowship” than a traditional MSc, with educational interaction centred mainly around monthly teaching blocks, tutorials and local clinical arrangements.

The dissertation portfolio reinforced this impression. Based on data provided by the programme, approximately half of all dissertations are narrative reviews, while comparatively fewer involve original clinical research, systematic reviews, or meta-analyses. During interviews, teaching staff openly acknowledged that most students do not undertake substantial research because of time limitations associated with clinical work. While several dissertations demonstrated meaningful clinical relevance and analytical elements, the overall portfolio showed considerable variability in methodological sophistication and Level 7

characteristics.

The EEAP noted that additional evidence provided by the PSP demonstrates systematic collection of data relating to graduate progression, doctoral enrolment, publication activity and student satisfaction. While these indicators are collected and reviewed, evidence of their strategic use for programme-wide quality enhancement, curriculum redesign and long-term academic development remains less clearly documented.

The PSP demonstrated that substantial small-group tutorial activity and supervised clinical learning occur throughout the programme. Nevertheless, opportunities for broader programme-wide scholarly interaction, structured research discussion and collective academic engagement beyond the scheduled teaching framework appear more limited.

II. Analysis

The programme demonstrates good formal compliance with the requirements of Principle 1 through the existence of a structured quality assurance framework and documented quality objectives. The EEAP notes positively the presence of measurable indicators and attempts to monitor educational performance, student progression, research activity and internationalisation.

The strongest dimension of the programme is its professional and clinical relevance. Emergency vascular surgery is a highly specialised and clinically important field, and the programme appears well aligned with continuing professional development needs within healthcare systems. The programme also benefits from committed leadership, experienced faculty and positive relationships between students and supervisors.

However, the principal evaluative issue identified by the EEAP concerns the balance between professional clinical training and MSc-level postgraduate academic depth. The programme currently appears positioned closer to an advanced professional or subspecialty training model than to a consistently research-intensive Level 7 MSc environment.

In particular, the structure of 75 ECTS delivered over two semesters plus a summer dissertation period appears academically compressed compared with more conventional MSc structures. The EEAP therefore remains concerned whether the available timeframe and workload distribution are sufficient to support sustained independent research engagement, methodological training, dissertation development and broader scholarly immersion at Level 7 depth.

Approximately half of the dissertations reviewed were narrative reviews rather than original clinical studies, systematic reviews or meta-analyses. The Panel recognises that high-quality narrative reviews can provide valuable training in literature appraisal, synthesis and scientific writing. However, the predominance

of this dissertation format limits the consistency with which all students are exposed to more advanced methodological approaches and independent research activities typically associated with MSc-level research training.

The EEAP fully recognises the practical constraints associated with professionally active clinicians, both among students and faculty, and understands the rationale for the concentrated and flexible delivery model adopted by the programme. Nevertheless, a postgraduate MSc corresponding to Level 7 and 75 ECTS requires sustained academic engagement, structured scholarly interaction, independent analytical work and meaningful immersion in postgraduate learning activities.

The current once-monthly block delivery model, combined with limited continuous academic engagement between sessions, risks reducing the intensity and continuity of the postgraduate academic experience. While flexibility is understandable and necessary, the programme should identify mechanisms that increase ongoing student engagement, faculty-student interaction, structured formative activities, scholarly discussion and continuous participation in postgraduate academic life in ways that more clearly justify the allocated ECTS and Level 7 expectations.

The quality assurance framework itself also appears more formal than fully operationalised. Although quality indicators exist, evidence of systematic use of QA data to drive curricular redesign, pedagogical development or strategic planning remains limited. Stakeholder and alumni engagement exist primarily through informal relationships rather than through structured institutional mechanisms integrated into programme governance and long-term development.

III. Conclusions

The PSP has established an appropriate formal quality assurance structure aligned with institutional and national requirements and demonstrates a clear commitment to continuous improvement, student monitoring and educational quality assurance.

The programme possesses strong professional relevance, clear clinical identity, committed leadership and substantial value for specialised vascular surgical education. Students, graduates and stakeholders consistently recognise its practical and clinical importance.

However, the EEAP considers that the programme currently appears more strongly positioned as an advanced professionally oriented postgraduate specialisation programme than as a fully research-intensive MSc programme aligned consistently with Level 7 expectations.

The principal challenge moving forward concerns not the legitimacy or importance of the clinical field itself, but the extent to which the current

educational structure provides sufficient sustained academic engagement, methodological training, scholarly immersion and research depth appropriate for a postgraduate MSc qualification.

Particular concerns relate to the compressed 75 ECTS structure, variability in dissertation quality and methodological depth, the high proportion of narrative reviews, a research culture that, while demonstrably present through graduate publication activity and progression to doctoral studies, remains unevenly embedded across the entire student cohort, a relatively decentralised educational engagement, and insufficient operational maturity of programme-specific QA and KPI utilisation.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Strengthen the research-intensive dimension of the curriculum and dissertation component to ensure clearer alignment with Level 7 MSc expectations.

Introduce clearer minimum methodological standards for diploma theses, progressively prioritising original clinical research, systematic reviews and meta-analyses over narrative reviews.

Develop mechanisms that promote more continuous academic engagement throughout the programme, including increased structured interaction between students and faculty, more frequent scholarly activities, formative assignments, journal-based discussion and sustained postgraduate learning engagement beyond concentrated teaching weekends.

Consider extending the programme to a more conventional 90 ECTS and 1.5-year structure in order to provide sufficient time for sustained research engagement, dissertation development and acquisition of Level 7 postgraduate research competencies.

Demonstrate more explicit operational use of quality assurance data and KPIs in curriculum revision, pedagogical development and strategic programme improvement.

Further develop international benchmarking, external stakeholder engagement and systematic tracking of graduate outcomes, mobility and academic progression.

Strengthen the development of a more cohesive postgraduate academic and scientific community across all participating students and clinical environments.

PRINCIPLE 2: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

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

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

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

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

In addition, the design of PSP must consider:

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

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

Documentation

- *Senate decision for the establishment of the PSP*
- *PSP curriculum structure: courses, course categories, ECTS awarded, expected learning outcomes according to the EQF, internship, mobility opportunities*
- *Labour market data regarding the employment of graduates, international experience in a relevant scientific field*
- *PSP Student Guide*
- *Course and thesis outlines*

- *Teaching staff (name list including of areas of specialisation, its relation to the courses taught, employment relationship, and teaching assignment in hours as well as other teaching commitments in hours)*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP "Therapeutic Options and Management of Vascular Surgery Emergencies" was designed during the academic year 2018-19, approved by the AUTh Senate (Meeting no. 3000/29) and subsequently legally approved in the Government Gazette (5070/31.12.2019). It is operating for 6 years and is part of the wider PSPs offered by the School of Medicine at AUTh. The structure and organization of this PSP is fully compliant and harmonized with current legislation (Law 4957/2022, Government Gazette 141 A').

The duration of this PSP is 3 semesters (13 teaching weeks each). To obtain the PSP diploma students must complete successfully 8 courses and 2 compulsory practical training programmes. The first semester entails 4 courses (5 ECTS each) and 1 training programme (5 ECTS), all compulsory, the second semester again entails 4 courses (5 ECTS each) and 1 training programme (5 ECTS), all compulsory, and the diploma thesis (25 ECTS) must be done during the summer period. Each subject is taught 2 hours per week and the total ECTS mounts to 75 ECTS. The selection of the diploma topic and the initial preparation for the diploma work commence at the end of the second semester while the main work is done during the summer period. The thesis must be completed by a maximum of 3 months after the end of the second semester which is effectively the end of one full calendar year.

Each of the 4 theoretical subjects in the first two semesters is delivered in a whole month, twice a week, normally Fridays (midday to late afternoon) and Saturday (Morning to midday) with the subject specific exam conducted at the end of the month. The practical clinical training subjects are delivered in separate groups of students (4-6 students each group coordinated by a member of the teaching staff) on a weekly basis with 6 hours per week. Such practical clinical training can take place in 1 of 4 hospitals in Thessaloniki (Gennimatas, Papageorgiou, Ippokrateio and Axepa).

The maximum duration of studies cannot exceed 6 semesters but in exceptional circumstances (compulsory military service, illness etc) and after request by the student and relevant approvals by the PSP Coordinating Committee and the School Assembly, temporary suspension can be granted that cannot exceed two consecutive semesters.

In line with current legislation, Law 4485/2017 (114A), working students are

offered the option of part-time study that cannot exceed twice the full-time study period. The PSP is delivered in Greek, and the diploma thesis is written in Greek but there is the option of thesis writing in English if necessary. Tuition fees have been set at 2,000 euros, payable in two instalments. There is, however, the possibility for waiving the tuition fees up to 30% of students in a single cohort, according to the relevant law, based upon personal income and social factors. The maximum number of students it can recruit has been set at 25 per cohort. This current academic year (2025-26) 24 students have enrolled and are studying this PSP.

II. Analysis

This PSP was designed, developed and implemented according to well defined institutional and legal requirements. It aligns well with the AUTH wider teaching and research strategy

The student guide is comprehensive and informative, and the objectives of this PSP are articulated clearly with emphasis on specialised clinical knowledge, evidence-based practice, and development of analytical skills relevant to emergency vascular surgery. The core topics of this PSP cover an area of medicine that is rapidly evolving internationally. The PSP focuses on comprehensive theoretical training and places great emphasis on practical training through the practical programmes it offers in each of the two teaching semesters and during the diploma thesis.

It trains health professionals/scientists/medics in the fields of conservative treatment options, pre-operative management and interventional techniques, including endovascular techniques, for the treatment of patients with emergency vascular problems.

Learning outcomes are based on the European and National Qualifications Frameworks (EQF and NQF) and are aligned with established student workloads to reflect the Dublin descriptors for level 7 study programmes. The achievement of these learning outcomes is assessed and reviewed where necessary with appropriate tools (student, peer and social partners feedback, continuous reviewing of research literature and current scientific developments).

Teaching staff are highly knowledgeable and skilled led by Prof. Pitoulias, a highly experienced leading vascular expert. The PSP has demonstrated some links with research as 12 PhDs from medical students and 1 PhD from a healthcare professional have emerged from the research activities of this PSP, with a total of 103 students having taken this PSP in its 6 years of existence. The links with research can be improved further. Practical skill provisions are strong.

Practical clinical training is supported by 4 working hospitals in Thessaloniki and the AUTh and School of Medicine infrastructure is fully available to the students of this PSP.

Social partners, mainly professional bodies and organizations, were involved in the initial design of this PSP and subsequently in annual evaluations to continuously review and update the curriculum content by identifying the most recent cutting-edge developments and skills in the wider area of vascular surgery. The EEAP heard from several professional bodies and were all very enthusiastic in their support of this PSP confirming their continuous involvement in the pursue of excellence in this field.

III. Conclusions

This is a professionally focused PSP emphasising practical clinical training and/or developing further clinical skills and promoting further research at doctoral level. It is an established PSP with highly focused student population who are interested in specialized practical/clinical training in the field of vascular treatment and surgery. Research links have been demonstrated emerging directly from the research activities of this PSP, but these can be improved further. Evidence provided during and after the review demonstrates encouraging rates of graduate publication and progression to doctoral studies, supporting the existence of meaningful research pathways within the programme.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The annual programme revisions and corrective actions, if appropriate, must be made more visible to the public via the PSP website.

Strengthen further direct links of this PSP with research (clinical or basic).

PRINCIPLE 3: STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE THAT POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES PROVIDE THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE LEARNING PROCESS. THE ASSESSMENT METHODS SHOULD REFLECT THIS APPROACH.

Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in enhancing students' motivation, their self-evaluation, and their active participation in the learning process. The above entail continuous consideration of the programme's delivery and the assessment of the related outcomes.

The student-centred learning and teaching process

- *respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs by adopting flexible learning paths*
- *considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate*
- *flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods*
- *regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods aiming at improvement*
- *regularly evaluates the quality and effectiveness of teaching, as documented especially through student surveys*
- *strengthens the student's sense of autonomy, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teaching staff*
- *promotes mutual respect in the student-teacher relationship*
- *applies appropriate procedures for dealing with the students' complaints*
- *provides counselling and guidance for the preparation of the thesis*

In addition

- *The academic staff are familiar with the existing examination system and methods and are supported in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The assessment criteria and methods are published in advance. The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Student assessment is conducted by more than one examiner, where possible.*
- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and conducted in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *The function of the academic advisor runs smoothly.*

Documentation

- *Sample of a fully completed questionnaire for the evaluation of the PSP by the students*
- *Regulations for dealing with students' complaints and appeals*
- *Regulation for the function of academic advisor*
- *Reference to the teaching modes and assessment methods*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The programme exposes students to a learning environment that is shaped by a diverse group of educational activities. Students are encouraged to engage with original research and are provided with opportunities to contribute to the development of new scientific knowledge. By the end of the course, students are supported to transition from theoretical instruction to independent research work.

Assessments are both formal and informal. Assessment methods include exams, presentations, the analysis of published academic work, and the writing-up of a thesis in a topic of choice. The Course Director and Leads periodically seek for student feedback and reflect on those remarks to consider the possibility of making changes in the programme. The Course Director and Leads consider the views of the students throughout the academic year. However, the implementation of the lessons that they learn remains only partially formalised signalling that student feedback mechanisms are rather underdeveloped.

The main outcome measure of student achievement is reflected in end-of-semester exams. Other measures include data obtained through questionnaires. Combined, these methods provide formative insights, although their scope appears somewhat limited.

This programme supports the development of scientific and professional competencies. Students are exposed to various laboratory methodologies, activities that promote critical and analytical thinking, scientific communication (both in writing and verbally), and interdisciplinary collaboration. The research-focused arm of the programme encourages a degree of independence and enables students to develop their problem-solving skills in preparation for further academic studies, if they wish to continue with a PhD and/or a pursue a research-focused career.

Students described during interviews a generally positive educational experience that is characterised by active participation in laboratories, scientific discussions, and involvement in original research. However, evidence regarding formal mechanisms supporting student participation in broader pedagogical planning and the improvement of the programme per se is in development.

The EEAP members found limited explicit evidence regarding the systematic publication of detailed assessment criteria and grading expectations across all modules and research components. The EEAP members found limited evidence regarding the systematic implementation of regular student satisfaction surveys designed to evaluate teaching effectiveness, supervision quality, and overall student experience at programme level. Limitations were similarly observed in formal student appeals procedures, complaints mechanisms, and structured academic advising systems.

Students as well as graduates reported positive experiences regarding supervisor accessibility, laboratory integration, and peer collaboration. Yet, support mechanisms appear to rely to a considerable extent on individual laboratory practices rather than to harmonised programme-wide structures.

The additional documentation provided by the PSP following the initial report demonstrates a more structured approach to tutorial supervision, progression monitoring and practical training standardisation than was fully apparent during the review process.

II. Analysis

The programme demonstrates its strengths in research-based scientific training and provides students with access to participate in a diverse academic environment. This model allows students to reach independence, acquire competence and self-confidence.

The large number of lecturers contributes to scientific diversity but at the same time may reduce coherence and indirectly impact on the quality of teaching delivery. Similarly, the dependence on individual supervisors/laboratories may create a high intra-student variability in what students' experience limiting a part of the programme consistency. The programme has established identifiable supervisory and tutorial structures, including small-group clinical teaching, designated academic advisors and documented practical-training milestones. The opportunity moving forward is to make these arrangements more explicit, visible and consistently documented at programme level.

Overall, the programme demonstrates a solid base to enable substantial research outcomes, noting that certain domains specific to student-centred learning may remain less mature.

III. Conclusions

The programme provides a research-orientated educational environment that supports the development of advanced scientific and research competencies. Yet, research engagement is not consistently delivered at scale. Students benefit from laboratory integration, active participation in research, and positive supervision. However, the implementation of student-centred learning principles remains only partially formalised at programme level. The EEAP concludes that the programme performs well in research-based scientific training, and that further pedagogical and organisational development could strengthen to ensure a stronger student-learning approach.

Panel Judgement

Principle 3: Student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment

Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	**X**
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Strengthen continuous and formative assessment practices.

Improve pedagogical co-ordination across modules and lecturers.

Further formalise and document existing supervision guidelines, progression milestones and feedback expectations at programme level to ensure consistency and transparency.

Implement a higher level of progression monitoring in a systematic way.

Strengthen formal student feedback and satisfaction monitoring mechanisms.

Enhance visibility and documentation of existing academic advising and student-support procedures.

PRINCIPLE 4: STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AND CERTIFICATION.

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP AND APPLY PUBLISHED REGULATIONS COVERING ALL ASPECTS AND PHASES OF STUDIES (ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, THESIS DRAFTING, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION).

All the issues from the beginning to the end of studies should be governed by the internal regulations of the academic units. Indicatively:

- *the student admission procedures and the required supporting documents*
- *student rights and obligations, and monitoring of student progression*
- *internship issues, if applicable, and granting of scholarships*
- *the procedures and terms for the drafting of assignments and the thesis*
- *the procedure of award and recognition of degrees, the duration of studies, the conditions for progression and for the assurance of the progress of students in their studies*
- *the terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility*

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

Documentation

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the Postgraduate Study Programme*
- *Research Ethics Regulation*
- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility, and student assignments*
- *Degree certificate template*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP has established formal admission procedures based on predefined criteria and personal interviews. Admission is competitive, with up to 25 students admitted annually. Tuition fees are relatively moderate and partial or full exemptions are available according to national legislation and socioeconomic criteria. The programme also offers the possibility of part-time study.

The programme regulations, study guide and administrative procedures are formally documented within the submitted material. Students are informed about the programme through the Study Guide, introductory meetings and digital communication systems. Academic performance and progression are monitored through the university electronic platforms and registrar systems, while mechanisms for academic advising and progression support are formally included within the quality framework of the programme.

The programme is primarily targeted toward healthcare professionals seeking

specialised vascular emergency training and advanced clinical knowledge. Students and graduates consistently described the programme as professionally useful and clinically relevant, while faculty were considered highly accessible and supportive.

The PSP includes compulsory practical clinical training through Practical Clinical Training I and II, delivered across four vascular surgery departments in Thessaloniki. Students also reported exposure to clinical techniques, including ultrasound applications and observation of vascular surgical procedures. In addition, students are encouraged to participate in research projects conducted by faculty members or collaborating organisations.

Teaching is delivered through a blended-learning model, primarily online, supported by the university e-learning platform. Tutorials and discussion forums are also available. The programme includes dissertation preparation support, guidance on scientific writing and literature review skills, and a formal research ethics framework.

At the same time, the EEAP identified important concerns regarding the consistency, structure and academic depth of student progression and educational engagement. Students described the educational model as highly flexible and largely organised around concentrated monthly teaching sessions delivered mainly online, combined with tutorials and locally arranged practical activities.

The practical and clinical components appear only partly structured and, in several cases, dependent on local professional circumstances, institutional proximity and existing clinical placement of students. Students located within participating AUTH clinics reported substantially greater interaction and educational exposure compared with students located elsewhere.

The EEAP also observed that the programme-level academic experience appears relatively fragmented. Students frequently interact mainly within small tutorial groups and with individual coordinators rather than through sustained participation in a cohesive postgraduate academic environment.

The dissertation process similarly appears variable and highly dependent on individual supervisor arrangements. During interviews, teaching staff acknowledged that most students undertake reviews rather than substantial research projects because of time limitations associated with clinical work. Students themselves reported relatively limited independent research activity and variable levels of practical and scholarly engagement. Although a research ethics framework exists, interviews suggested that students were not always sufficiently familiar with it.

Student mobility opportunities through Erasmus+ formally exist, and some Erasmus students have participated in vascular surgery clinical placements. However, participation by PSP students remains limited, mainly due to professional obligations and restricted availability.

The study guide and supporting documentation also remain relatively underdeveloped in several operational areas, including detailed dissertation expectations, assessment criteria for practical training, structured research competencies, and formal guidance regarding progression through the research component of the programme.

II. Analysis

The programme demonstrates satisfactory procedural organisation regarding admissions, progression and certification. The admission process appears transparent and aligned with institutional regulations, while the relatively small cohort size may support closer interaction between students and faculty.

The EEAP notes positively the accessibility of the programme to working clinicians, the availability of tuition fee exemptions, the existence of practical clinical exposure, and the supportive attitude of teaching staff toward students and graduates.

However, the principal concern identified by the Panel relates to the extent to which the actual educational experience consistently corresponds to the expectations of a Level 7 postgraduate MSc programme.

Although the programme formally allocates 75 ECTS, the educational model described during interviews suggests substantially lower continuous academic engagement than would normally be expected for a full postgraduate MSc of this intensity. The once-monthly block teaching structure, combined with relatively limited continuous scholarly interaction between sessions, raises concerns regarding the consistency between nominal workload allocation, sustained independent learning activity and actual student academic immersion.

The EEAP fully recognises the operational realities associated with professionally active clinicians and understands the rationale for the highly flexible educational structure adopted by the programme. Nevertheless, flexibility should not progressively transform a postgraduate MSc into a predominantly decentralised or intermittently engaged educational experience resembling continuing professional development rather than sustained postgraduate academic study.

The EEAP also considers that the current educational model creates substantial variability in student experience. Practical exposure, interaction with faculty, clinical participation and dissertation support appear highly dependent on local professional circumstances and institutional proximity. As a result, equivalence of educational experience across students cannot be fully assured.

The dissertation component remains a further important concern in relation to progression and attainment of Level 7 competencies. While some diploma theses demonstrate clinically relevant analytical work, many appear closer to descriptive or narrative review assignments with more limited methodological depth and scholarly independence. The compressed timeframe available for dissertation development further limits opportunities for sustained research engagement and progressive development of advanced research competencies.

The EEAP notes positively the existence of dissertation guidance, scientific writing support and research ethics regulations. However, student familiarity with research ethics and academic integrity procedures appears uneven and requires strengthening.

Finally, although academic advising mechanisms formally exist, the EEAP found limited evidence of highly structured progression monitoring, harmonised dissertation supervision, or systematic tracking of attainment of postgraduate research and analytical learning outcomes across students.

III. Conclusions

The programme has established appropriate formal procedures governing student admission, progression, recognition and certification, and administrative organisation appears satisfactory. Students value the professional relevance of the programme and benefit from supportive relationships with experienced clinical faculty. The programme demonstrates strengths in practical clinical orientation, blended delivery methods, dissertation support structures and accessibility for professionally active clinicians. However, important concerns remain regarding consistency of educational experience, structure and assessment of practical training, continuity of academic engagement, harmonisation of supervision, student familiarity with research ethics, and the extent to which the actual student experience consistently reflects the expectations of a Level 7 MSc corresponding to 75 ECTS. The principal challenge concerns not admissions or procedural governance themselves, but whether the operational educational model provides sufficient sustained scholarly engagement, independent learning activity and research immersion to support robust postgraduate academic progression.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Strengthen student training and awareness regarding research ethics and academic integrity.

Further strengthen the research component of the programme and encourage greater engagement with original clinical and experimental research projects.

Strengthen monitoring of dissertation quality, methodological rigour and attainment of Level 7 learning outcomes across all students.

Develop clearer common learning objectives and assessment criteria for practical and clinical educational activities.

Further structure and harmonise dissertation supervision, research support and progression monitoring processes.

Develop mechanisms that increase continuous academic engagement, independent learning activity and sustained scholarly interaction throughout the duration of the programme.

Ensure greater consistency and equity of educational experience across students regardless of geographical location or clinical placement environment.

Further develop the study guide with clearer operational detail regarding dissertation expectations, practical assessment, progression requirements and research competencies.

Increase promotion and support for participation in Erasmus+ and other mobility opportunities.

Develop more systematic graduate tracking mechanisms, including doctoral progression, research productivity, publications and broader professional outcomes.

PRINCIPLE 5: TEACHING STAFF OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ASSURE THEMSELVES OF THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF THEIR TEACHING STAFF, AND APPLY FAIR AND TRANSPARENT PROCESSES FOR THEIR RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.

The Institution should attend to the adequacy of the teaching staff of the academic unit teaching at the PSP, the appropriate staff-student ratio, the appropriate staff categories, the appropriate subject areas, the fair and objective recruitment process, the high research performance, the training-development, the staff development policy (including participation in mobility schemes, conferences, and educational leaves-as mandated by law).

More specifically, the academic unit should set up and follow clear, transparent and fair processes for the recruitment of properly qualified staff for the PSP and offer them conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching and research; offer opportunities and promote the professional development of the teaching staff; encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research; encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies; promote the increase of the volume and quality of the research output within the academic unit; follow quality assurance processes for all staff (with respect to attendance requirements, performance, self-assessment, training, etc.); develop policies to attract highly qualified academic staff.

Documentation

- *Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment*
- *Employment regulations or contracts, and obligations of the teaching staff*
- *Policy for staff support and development*
- *Individual performance of the teaching staff in scientific-research and teaching work, based on internationally recognised systems of scientific evaluation (e.g. Google Scholar, Scopus, etc.)*
- *List of teaching staff including subject areas, employment relationship, Institution of origin, Department of origin*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The programme appears to follow a generally structured and merit-based approach to the recruitment of teaching staff. External lecturers are selected based on academic qualifications, evaluation of CVs, and their capacity to contribute to both theoretical and practical components of the curriculum.

The teaching body consists of a diverse group of teaching staff (reported to be 21 academics) from AUTH and collaborating institutions. The group of teaching staff appears relatively diverse across gender and career stages. This comment acknowledges the historic limitations of the Greek academic ecosystem to not have been highly inclusive in recruitment in the past decades.

Faculty members presented themselves as active researchers in the interviews. By reviewing individual CVs and personal professional pages (e.g. Google Schoolar profiles), many faculty members appear to be involved in national and international research projects and consortia, and as delegates in conferences and congresses. These activities may contribute to the continued academic engagement of teaching staff and enrich the programme with new concepts and ideas. However, there is rather limited evidence regarding formal programme-specific mechanisms that aim to improve the pedagogical skills of those involved in teaching.

Teaching staff are leaders in several research collaborations and demonstrate some degree of mobility. Nevertheless, staff mobility appears to rely primarily on individual initiatives and less on formally structured mobility actions such as Erasmus+ opportunities.

Teaching workload allocation was clearly communicated to the EEAP members. Although the workload appears demanding, faculty members maintain research productivity and continued participation in research. Faculty members incorporate insights from novel research and global trends and appear to update aspects of lecture content and supervision.

Teaching quality is primarily evaluated through the completion of formal questionnaires by students. Student participation rates (in these evaluations) were deemed as moderate by the EEAP members who questioned the reasons for feedback data not being complete/being missing.

Although the programme has a broad portfolio of research studies across multiple scientific domains both clinical and non-clinical, the EEAP members could not identify a single point of scientific focus that would facilitate programme priority-setting.

II. Analysis

The programme is supported by highly qualified and competent academics who integrate various professional, research and teaching skills into a unified high-performing team. Recruitment procedures appear merit-based, while the integration of research into teaching significantly enhances the academic quality of the student experience.

Faculty members maintain substantial research activity despite demanding professional responsibilities. Participation in scientific collaborations and conferences contributes positively to academic development and implies mobility. The programme benefits from regular student evaluation of teaching; however, participation rates remain moderate. The EEAP was not provided with sufficient evidence regarding how feedback data is systematically analysed and incorporated into programme improvement. In addition, despite moderate-to-strong research performance in staff, the absence of a formal programme-specific

research strategy may limit individuals to follow through their plans and career aspirations in the long term.

III. Conclusions

The programme benefits from a large, highly qualified, and research-active teaching team who independently, and as a group, deliver an effective integration between teaching and research. Further development is needed regarding the formal strategy of the programme aiming for increased staff mobility and student participation in evaluations.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Categorise the large group of teaching staff into [a]. a core team (course Leads) and [b]. lecturers from other institutions/any invited speakers, whereas appropriate.

Develop a formal programme-specific research strategy with well-defined priorities.

Strengthen the support for mobility for staff including the possibility of short exchange programmes with colleagues overseas (e.g. Erasmus+ joint modules, summer schools etc)

Enhance formal pedagogical development opportunities for teaching staff.

Enhance the role and involvement of visiting lecturers beyond occasional or limited teaching contributions; clear role descriptions and expectations.

Monitor and periodically ensure that teaching workload is as evenly as possible distributed to ensure that individual members of staff (core team) have a healthy weekly job plan.

PRINCIPLE 6: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER THE TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS OF THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMME. THEY SHOULD –ON THE ONE HAND- PROVIDE SATISFACTORY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR LEARING AND STUDENT SUPPORT, AND – ON THE OTHER HAND- FACILITATE DIRECT ACCESS TO THEM BY ESTABLISHING INTERNAL RULES TO THIS END (E.G. LECTURE ROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, NETWORKS, CAREER AND SOCIAL POLICY SERVICES ETC.).

Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient resources and means, on a planned and long-term basis, to support learning and academic activity in general, so as to offer PSP students the best possible level of studies. The above means include facilities such as the necessary general and more specialised libraries and possibilities for access to electronic databases, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, IT and communication services, support and counselling services.

When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed students, students with disabilities), in addition to the shift towards student-centred learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the institutional context. However, the internal quality assurance proves -on the one hand- the quantity and quality of the available facilities and services, and -on the other hand- that students are aware of all available services.

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The programme provides access to the broader infrastructure and support systems of AUTH and the Medical School, including library services, digital systems, administrative support and institutional quality management infrastructure.

The programme benefits from substantial clinical and educational infrastructure associated with the School of Medicine and affiliated university hospitals. Teaching facilities include classrooms equipped with modern audiovisual systems, amphitheatres, online teaching platforms and access to specialised vascular

surgery departments across four major hospitals in Thessaloniki.

Students have access to facilities and equipment from several departments including Radiology, Anatomy, Pathological Anatomy, Medical Technologies, Physiology, Pharmacology, Biological Sciences and Preventive Medicine. Outpatient emergency clinics and vascular surgery departments support the practical dimension of the programme.

Students also benefit from extensive institutional digital infrastructure, including the e-learning platform, the electronic registrar system, institutional repositories, wireless internet access and broader university support services. The e-learning platform hosts recorded lectures, educational material, clinical guidelines, reviews and meta-analyses.

The programme also provides access to broader student support services including counselling and psychological support, accommodation, accessibility services, practical training support and career guidance.

An Academic Advisor system has been established whereby students are assigned to faculty coordinators in small groups for individualised academic support and mentoring. The programme also has designated coordinators for Erasmus and mobility programmes.

Students and graduates consistently highlighted the accessibility, commitment and expertise of faculty, as well as the flexibility of the programme structure. Tutorials, journal club discussions and small-group interaction with coordinators were positively viewed.

At the same time, the EEAP identified important variability in the organisation, consistency and educational structure of practical and clinical learning experiences. Practical training appears in several cases to be loosely organised, discussion-based and partly observational rather than systematically competency-based and formally assessed.

Students reported that practical exposure and interaction with faculty varied significantly depending on whether they were professionally embedded within participating AUTH clinics or located elsewhere. Students outside Thessaloniki or outside participating clinical environments appeared to experience substantially less direct engagement with programme activities and faculty interaction.

The educational model also appears highly decentralised. Students frequently interact mainly within small tutorial groups and with individual coordinators rather than through sustained participation in a cohesive postgraduate academic and scientific community.

The EEAP further observed that research support structures remain relatively limited and uneven. Teaching staff openly acknowledged that most students do not undertake substantial research because of professional time constraints, while many dissertations consist of narrative reviews. Students themselves described research exposure primarily as introductory training in reading and interpreting scientific literature rather than sustained independent research activity.

The study guide and supporting documentation also remain relatively limited in operational detail regarding practical training expectations and assessment, dissertation methodological standards, research support pathways, academic integrity procedures, and structured student mentoring mechanisms.

Finally, although academic advising formally exists, mentoring, stakeholder engagement, alumni participation and mobility opportunities appear largely informal and insufficiently institutionalised. Participation in mobility activities remains limited, while the relatively small allocation of programme resources toward scholarships and mobility support may further constrain student development and internationalisation opportunities.

II. Analysis

The programme benefits from strong institutional infrastructure, experienced clinical faculty and access to specialised vascular surgical environments, all of which represent important strengths for professionally oriented postgraduate education.

The integration of clinical environments, digital systems, library resources and institutional student support services provides an important foundation for postgraduate education and clinical training.

However, the EEAP considers that learning resources and student support systems currently remain more clinically oriented than fully integrated into a cohesive MSc-level postgraduate academic environment.

The principal concern identified by the Panel is not lack of clinical expertise or institutional infrastructure, but rather the degree of structure, consistency, coordination and academic integration surrounding the student learning experience.

Practical and clinical experiences appear variable and insufficiently standardised across students. The educational value of practical training currently depends heavily on local professional circumstances, institutional proximity and individual supervisor engagement. The largely observational and discussion-based nature of some practical activities limits assurance that all students achieve equivalent learning outcomes and postgraduate competencies.

Similarly, research support structures and methodological training appear relatively underdeveloped and insufficiently embedded within a sustained postgraduate scholarly culture. The programme currently appears to support introduction to research literacy and evidence interpretation rather than consistently providing the level of structured research immersion, methodological sophistication and independent scholarly activity expected within a Level 7 MSc environment.

The EEAP also considers that the current educational model, while understandably flexible for professionally active clinicians, may not sufficiently support the sustained academic interaction, scholarly immersion and cohesive postgraduate community expected for a 75 ECTS postgraduate MSc. The predominance of online participation and the highly decentralised interaction model reduce opportunities for continuous intellectual exchange, collaborative learning and development of a shared academic culture.

The Panel additionally identified unrealised potential regarding alumni, stakeholder and mobility engagement. While stakeholders and graduates appear supportive and willing to contribute, their participation in mentoring, networking, programme development and academic support structures remains largely informal.

Finally, although the programme formally provides academic advising and institutional student support mechanisms, more structured and operationally mature mentoring, research support and progression guidance systems would strengthen consistency of student experience and support postgraduate academic development.

III. Conclusions

The programme benefits from strong institutional and clinical infrastructure, broad access to university support services and committed teaching staff. Its integration within the Medical School and associated vascular surgical services represents a significant educational advantage.

However, the operational structure of learning resources and student support requires further maturation and academic integration in order fully to support a cohesive postgraduate MSc environment aligned with Level 7 expectations.

The principal areas requiring improvement concern structured and competency-based practical training, consistency of clinical exposure, research support and methodological guidance, continuous scholarly engagement, operational detail in student support documentation, and formalisation of mentoring, alumni and stakeholder involvement.

The programme would particularly benefit from development of a more cohesive postgraduate academic and scientific community extending beyond periodic

teaching weekends, predominantly online participation and local clinical interactions.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

More clearly define, structure and assess practical clinical training and experiential learning activities through harmonised competency-based approaches.

Ensure greater consistency and equity of practical and clinical educational experiences across all students regardless of geographical or institutional location.

Strengthen dedicated support for student research activity, including methodological guidance, research mentoring and scientific writing support.

Further develop the study guide and supporting documentation with clearer operational detail regarding practical assessment, dissertation expectations, academic integrity and research methodology requirements.

Develop mechanisms that promote more continuous academic engagement, scholarly interaction and sustained postgraduate learning throughout the duration of the programme.

Strengthen the development of a more cohesive postgraduate academic and scientific community through increased structured tutorials, journal clubs, case discussions, research seminars and collaborative scholarly activities throughout the academic year.

Further formalise alumni, stakeholder and mobility engagement mechanisms supporting mentoring, networking, international exposure and programme development.

Encourage greater in-person participation and interaction where feasible.

Continue strengthening collaborations with university hospitals and associated clinical departments.

Explore opportunities to strengthen scholarship and mobility support resources where feasible.

PRINCIPLE 7: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

INSTITUTIONS BEAR FULL RESPONISBILITY FOR COLLECTING, ANALYSING AND USING INFORMATION, AIMED AT THE EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED ACTIVITIES, IN AN INTEGRATED, EFFECTIVE AND EASLILY ACCESSIBLE WAY.

Institutions are expected to establish and operate an information system for the management and monitoring of data concerning students, teaching staff, course structure and organisation, teaching and provision of services to students.

Reliable data is essential for accurate information and decision-making, as well as for identifying areas of smooth operation and areas for improvement. Effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on postgraduate study programmes and other activities feed data into the internal system of quality assurance.

The information collected depends, to some extent, on the type and mission of the Institution. The following are of interest:

- *key performance indicators*
- *student population profile*
- *student progression, success, and drop-out rates*
- *student satisfaction with their programmes*
- *availability of learning resources and student support*

A number of methods may be used to collect information. It is important that students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.

Documentation

- *Report from the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) at the level of the Institution, the department, and the PSP*
- *Operation of an information management system for the collection of administrative data for the implementation of the PSP (Students' Record)*
- *Other tools and procedures designed to collect data on the academic and administrative functions of the academic unit and the PSP*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The EEAP conducted a thorough assessment of the documentation provided through HAHE regarding the information management policy and digital infrastructure supporting the PSP. The representatives of the programme provided all requested documents, and the EEAP held extensive discussions with programme leadership, teaching staff and institutional representatives during the accreditation visit.

The programme uses the Student Information System (SIS) of AUTH, a fully integrated institutional platform managing major components of the student lifecycle, including applications and enrolment, academic records, course and examination management, grading and certification, diploma thesis

administration, and anonymous student evaluations.

The programme also benefits from integration within the wider institutional digital ecosystem of AUTH, including the MODIP Quality Management System, the IKEE institutional repository, WebResCom research management infrastructure, hybrid and digital learning platforms, multimedia teaching support systems, and institutional accessibility and single sign-on services.

The EEAP found that the programme formally collects a substantial amount of administrative and educational data, including student progression indicators, completion rates, course evaluations, dissertation records, and selected quality assurance KPIs.

However, despite this technically robust infrastructure, the EEAP identified important limitations in the operational and strategic use of programme-level data.

During interviews and review of the documentation, there was limited evidence that collected data are systematically analysed and operationalised to support strategic programme development, pedagogical redesign, monitoring of Level 7 learning outcomes, or enhancement of the student learning experience.

In particular, the programme does not appear systematically to monitor or analyse dissertation typology and methodological quality, publications arising from diploma theses, conference participation, graduate trajectories, mobility participation, research productivity or broader scholarly outcomes.

Similarly, student evaluations appear primarily collected rather than systematically translated into documented action plans or measurable programme modifications.

The EEAP also observed limited evidence of integrated tracking of practical competencies, research competencies, dissertation progression, or broader postgraduate scholarly development across students.

Finally, although the institutional infrastructure technically supports interoperability and internationalisation, the programme itself currently demonstrates limited operational integration with broader European mobility, benchmarking and qualification frameworks.

II. Analysis

The programme clearly benefits from a strong institutional digital infrastructure and technically advanced administrative systems. The AUTH information ecosystem provides an important foundation for efficient management of student records, educational processes and quality assurance data.

However, the EEAP considers that the programme currently uses this infrastructure primarily for administrative and procedural purposes rather than as a strategic academic and quality enhancement tool.

The principal issue identified by the Panel is therefore not absence of data collection capacity, but rather insufficient programme-level analysis, interpretation and operational use of the available data.

Although formal KPIs exist, evidence remains limited that programme data are systematically utilised to evaluate achievement of Level 7 learning outcomes, monitor consistency of dissertation quality, assess practical and research competencies, identify patterns in student progression, or support evidence-based curricular and pedagogical development.

The programme also appears to rely heavily on informal communication and personal interaction rather than on mature, data-driven quality management processes. Several important academic dimensions, including dissertation categories, methodological standards, publication outputs, conference participation and graduate trajectories, are not yet systematically monitored or integrated into strategic programme evaluation.

The EEAP additionally considers that the current information management approach insufficiently supports student-centred monitoring of progression and academic development. The system currently functions mainly as a repository of administrative information rather than as an integrated educational analytics and programme enhancement framework.

Finally, despite the institutional availability of interoperability tools and international platforms, the programme demonstrates limited operational integration with broader European mobility and benchmarking structures. This limits opportunities for international visibility, structured benchmarking and academic internationalisation.

III. Conclusions

The PSP benefits from a robust institutional information infrastructure and technically advanced digital management systems that adequately support administrative, educational and quality assurance procedures. Additional information provided by the programme demonstrates that these data are actively maintained and readily accessible. However, opportunities remain to strengthen the systematic analysis, strategic use and public reporting of these data in support of long-term curriculum development, quality enhancement and programme planning.

The principal weaknesses concern limited operational use of KPIs, insufficient systematic monitoring of research and dissertation outcomes, limited tracking of postgraduate competencies and scholarly development, absence of mature

feedback-action cycles, and limited integration of programme data into strategic academic planning and continuous quality improvement.

The programme would benefit from evolving from a predominantly administrative information management approach toward a more mature, data-driven and student-centred academic quality management culture.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Strengthen systematic analysis and operational use of programme-level KPIs to support evidence-based curriculum development and strategic planning.

Further systematise the analysis and reporting of existing data relating to dissertation outputs, graduate progression, publication activity and student achievement, and demonstrate more explicitly how these data inform programme development.

Make more visible and systematically document how student evaluations, quality assurance findings and performance indicators lead to specific programme improvements.

Continue strengthening the documentation and monitoring of clinical, practical and research competencies across the programme.

Further develop student-centred progression monitoring and academic support analytics capable of identifying students requiring additional support.

Increase operational integration with European mobility, benchmarking and internationalisation frameworks, including Erasmus+ and broader ECTS-aligned structures.

Develop public-facing reporting mechanisms presenting selected programme outcomes, quality indicators and academic achievements.

Strengthen integration between information management systems and broader strategic programme development, quality enhancement and academic governance processes.

PRINCIPLE 8: PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES IN A DIRECT AND READILY ACCESSIBLE WAY. THE RELEVANT INFORMATION SHOULD BE UP-TO-DATE, OBJECTIVE AND CLEAR.

Information on the Institutions' activities is useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders, and the public.

Therefore, Institutions and their academic units must provide information about their activities, including the PSP they offer, the intended learning outcomes, the degrees awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures applied, the pass rates, and the learning opportunities available to their students. Information is also provided on the employment perspectives of PSP graduates.

Documentation

- *Dedicated segment on the website of the department for the promotion of the PSP*
- *Bilingual version of the PSP website with complete, clear and objective information*
- *Provision for website maintenance and updating*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The EEAP conducted a thorough assessment of the public information policy and digital presence of the PSP through review of its official website and publicly available documentation. The programme website provides information regarding the structure, duration, objectives, curriculum, admission procedures, study regulations, diploma thesis framework, and broader institutional regulations of the programme.

The programme appears appropriately integrated within the broader digital environment of AUTH and the Medical School, with links to institutional services, regulations, library resources and quality assurance structures.

Key elements of the programme's formal internal quality assurance framework are publicly available, including study regulations, curriculum structure, admissions procedures, tuition fee policies, student obligations, and institutional regulations concerning postgraduate studies.

Communication with students appears operationally effective through email communication and digital platforms supporting educational activities.

However, the EEAP identified important limitations regarding the quality, completeness, consistency and strategic presentation of programme-specific public information.

The English-language version of the website remains incomplete and substantially less developed than the Greek version, limiting accessibility and international

visibility.

The EEAP also found that several critical academic dimensions are insufficiently documented publicly. In particular learning outcomes are not always presented in sufficiently explicit and measurable Level 7 terms, assessment methods and dissertation expectations are not described in adequate operational detail, practical training structures and assessment criteria remain unclear, and there is limited publicly available information regarding research expectations, supervision processes, graduate outcomes, mobility opportunities, publications, conference participation, or broader scholarly activities.

Similarly, although the programme formally presents quality assurance structures, there is limited evidence of publicly available outcome data demonstrating how student evaluations, KPIs or QA findings lead to programme improvement.

The EEAP additionally observed that the programme's public communication remains heavily descriptive and administratively oriented, with relatively limited strategic presentation of the programme's academic identity, research culture, scholarly environment and postgraduate learning expectations.

II. Analysis

The programme demonstrates satisfactory formal compliance with institutional requirements regarding public information provision and transparency of basic administrative and regulatory information.

The website provides essential procedural information and allows prospective students to access the core organisational structure of the programme. Institutional integration and access to broader AUTH digital infrastructure constitute additional strengths.

However, the EEAP considers that the current public information strategy remains predominantly administrative rather than academically strategic and student-centred.

The principal weakness concerns the limited communication of the programme's Level 7 academic expectations, research orientation, learning outcomes, assessment philosophy, scholarly culture, and educational methodology. As a result, prospective students may not obtain a sufficiently clear understanding of the expected level of academic engagement, the balance between professional and research-oriented training, dissertation expectations, practical training structure or the broader academic identity of the programme.

The incomplete English-language content further limits internationalisation and external visibility. This is particularly important given the programme's stated aspirations regarding international orientation and potential future expansion.

The EEAP also considers that public information currently places greater emphasis on institutional structures and technical infrastructure than on educational substance, programme outcomes and scholarly achievements.

Limited publication of programme-level outcomes, graduate trajectories, research productivity, conference participation and QA-driven improvements reduces transparency and weakens evidence of continuous quality enhancement.

III. Conclusions

The programme provides adequate public access to essential administrative and regulatory information and demonstrates satisfactory institutional transparency regarding its formal operation. However, significant improvements are required regarding the depth, coherence and strategic presentation of programme-specific academic information. The principal weaknesses concern limited communication of Level 7 learning expectations, insufficiently detailed presentation of assessment and dissertation processes, limited visibility of research culture and scholarly activity, underdeveloped English-language content, and insufficient publication of programme outcomes and quality enhancement processes. The programme would benefit from a more academically focused, internationally oriented and student-centred public information strategy that better reflects its postgraduate educational identity and scholarly objectives.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Further develop the English-language version of the website to improve international accessibility and visibility.

Present programme learning outcomes more explicitly and clearly aligned with Level 7 postgraduate expectations.

Provide clearer and more detailed public information regarding assessment methods, dissertation requirements, practical training structure, supervision processes, and academic integrity expectations.

Publish more systematic information regarding programme outcomes, including graduate trajectories, publications, conference participation, doctoral progression, and broader scholarly achievements.

Strengthen public communication of the programme's research orientation, scholarly environment and postgraduate academic identity.

Demonstrate more explicitly how student feedback, KPIs and QA processes contribute to programme improvement and strategic development.

Increase visibility of mobility opportunities, international collaborations and broader academic networking activities.

Further develop student-centred public information resources, including clearer guidance regarding academic support, mentoring, research expectations and progression pathways.

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

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

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

The above comprise the evaluation of:

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

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

Documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The annual internal evaluation of this PSP is conducted in collaboration by the internal evaluation group of the School of Medicine (OMEA) and the quality assurance unit of AUTH (MODIP), and is based largely on regular evaluation of teaching by the PSP students through relevant questionnaires that have been developed by MODIP after the completion of teaching for each course. Data are collected by OMEA forwarded to MODIP, analysed and communicated to the Organising Committee of this PSP, and discussed at the School Assembly in the presence of student representatives. The annual internal evaluation report is prepared by MODIP, and any emerging future corrective actions are decided and presented in this report. OMEA and the PSP Organizing Committee are

responsible for the continuous monitoring and the implementation of corrective actions that have been suggested in the internal annual evaluation report. The latest internal evaluation report with relevant data were made available to EEAP in the submitted document M9.1.

II. Analysis

The PSP follows all the recommended processes annually to review and re-evaluate all aspects of its operation. The latest internal review conducted by MODIP highlighted as weaknesses the completeness of the information provided on the PSP website, the continuous updating of this information and the lack of mobility opportunities for students. Several actions were recommended such as strengthening of the systematic feedback from students and the evaluation process, better data collection for graduates (especially regarding their professional development), increase student mobility opportunities, reinforce the operation of the Academic Advisor, more systematic monitoring and collection of documentation, monitoring of the corrective actions required to ensure their implementation, systematic updating of the PSP website with emphasis on completing the English website, better communication of evaluation results to all interested parties.

The additional information provided by the PSP demonstrates that student feedback has informed a number of programme modifications, including changes to group sizes, teaching delivery arrangements and consideration of programme duration. This provides evidence that internal evaluation processes are contributing to programme development.

III. Conclusions

The PSP follows all recommended processes and actions in relation to continuous internal evaluations. The PSP demonstrates a functioning internal evaluation process aligned with institutional quality assurance procedures. Internal reviews identify areas requiring improvement and there is evidence that student feedback and quality assurance findings have informed specific modifications to programme delivery. Continued emphasis should be placed on documenting corrective actions, monitoring their implementation and evaluating their long-term impact on programme quality.

Panel Judgement

Principle 9: On-going monitoring and periodic internal evaluation of postgraduate study programmes

Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	**X**
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Improve and update the PSP website and harmonize the Greek and English websites.

Continue annual internal evaluations and maintain systematic documentation of how recommendations are translated into corrective actions and subsequent programme improvements.

Consider publishing summary reports of internal evaluation outcomes and key corrective actions through the programme website.

Strengthen mobility opportunities for students and staff.

PRINCIPLE 10: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

THE POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY PANELS OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HAHE, AIMING AT ACCREDITATION. THE TERM OF VALIDITY OF THE ACCREDITATION IS DETERMINED BY HAHE.

HAHE is responsible for administrating the PSP accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by panels of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, based on the Reports delivered by the panels of external experts, with a specific term of validity, following to which, revision is required. The quality accreditation of the PSP acts as a means for the determination of the degree of compliance of the programme to the Standards, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees. Both academic units and Institutions must consistently consider the conclusions and the recommendations submitted by the panels of experts for the continuous improvement of the programme.

Documentation

- *Progress report of the PSP in question, on the results from the utilisation of possible recommendations included in the External Evaluation Report of the Institution, and in the IQAS Accreditation Report, with relation to the postgraduate study programmes*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The PSP is subject to the external evaluation and accreditation procedures established by HAHE for postgraduate study programmes in Greece. This accreditation process constitutes the first formal external evaluation of the PSP "Treatment Options and Management of Vascular Surgery Emergencies" by an External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) appointed by HAHE.

The programme provided the EEAP with the documentation required for the accreditation process, including the accreditation material of the Department of Medicine, institutional quality assurance documentation, programme regulations, internal evaluation procedures, and previous institutional external evaluation reports relating to AUTH and its Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS/ESDP).

The programme leadership and representatives of MODIP confirmed during the meetings that recommendations arising from the current accreditation process will be incorporated into future action plans and monitored through institutional quality assurance procedures.

The EEAP also reviewed references to previous institutional evaluations of AUTH and the certification of the IQAS.

However, despite the existence of institutional quality assurance structures and prior evaluations, the EEAP identified several programme-level weaknesses that do not appear to have been adequately recognised, monitored, or addressed

previously through the operational quality assurance mechanisms of the institution and the programme.

These include limited research intensity and methodological depth, insufficiently structured practical training, limited systematic use of KPIs, weak internationalisation, limited continuous academic engagement, variability in dissertation quality, and insufficiently mature programme-specific QA processes.

The programme also appears to rely predominantly on informal rather than systematically documented mechanisms for implementing improvements arising from evaluations, stakeholder feedback, or student input.

II. Analysis

The EEAP acknowledges positively the existence of formal institutional external evaluation structures and the willingness of programme leadership to engage constructively with the accreditation process and future quality improvement.

The integration of the programme within the broader AUTH quality assurance framework constitutes an important strength and provides an appropriate institutional basis for future development.

However, the current evaluation revealed that several substantive programme-level issues persisted despite the existence of institutional QA mechanisms and previous external evaluations.

The EEAP therefore considers that the challenge is not the absence of formal QA structures, but rather the operational effectiveness, programme-level maturity, and systematic implementation of external evaluation findings and quality improvement processes.

While the programme demonstrates professional relevance and committed academic leadership, evidence remains limited regarding systematic follow-up of previous recommendations, documented action plans linked to measurable outcomes, structured monitoring of research and dissertation quality, strategic curriculum redesign, and operational use of QA data for programme development.

The programme also appears to lack a sufficiently developed culture of continuous scholarly and academic enhancement expected within a postgraduate MSc environment.

The EEAP further notes that external evaluation should function not merely as a formal accreditation exercise but as a mechanism supporting continuous strategic development, academic maturation and strengthening of Level 7 postgraduate characteristics.

At present, several important structural issues identified during this accreditation process suggest that internal QA monitoring and institutional oversight mechanisms have not yet been sufficiently proactive or programme-specific in identifying and addressing emerging weaknesses.

III. Conclusions

The PSP formally participates in the institutional and national framework of periodic external evaluation and quality assurance established by HAHE and AUTH.

The programme leadership demonstrated willingness to engage constructively with the accreditation process and expressed commitment to implementing future recommendations.

Nevertheless, the EEAP considers that the operational maturity and programme-level effectiveness of external evaluation follow-up mechanisms remain insufficiently developed.

The current accreditation process identified several structural and academic weaknesses that appear not to have been adequately recognised or systematically addressed through existing QA mechanisms.

The programme would benefit from stronger operationalisation of QA processes, clearer documentation of corrective actions, more systematic strategic planning, and closer monitoring of programme development through measurable academic and educational indicators.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Develop a formal, documented and measurable action plan for implementation of the recommendations arising from the present accreditation process.

Strengthen the operational role of MODIP and OMEA in programme-level monitoring, strategic development and follow-up of quality indicators.

Establish more systematic mechanisms linking external evaluation findings with curriculum revision, dissertation quality enhancement, research development, and student learning outcomes.

Ensure that programme-level KPIs are regularly analysed and operationally utilised for continuous improvement.

Strengthen documentation and transparency regarding implementation of QA actions and resulting programme modifications.

Develop a more mature culture of continuous academic and scholarly enhancement beyond formal accreditation compliance.

Increase monitoring of dissertation quality, methodological standards and research outcomes as central indicators of MSc-level performance.

Further strengthen internationalisation, research engagement and continuous scholarly interaction as part of the long-term strategic development of the programme.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

The programme demonstrates strong professional and clinical relevance within the specialised field of vascular surgery emergencies and clearly addresses important workforce and healthcare system needs.

The PSP benefits from committed and experienced clinical leadership, highly qualified teaching staff, and positive relationships between students, graduates and faculty.

The curriculum provides substantial exposure to specialised vascular surgery practice, including contemporary open and endovascular approaches and clinically relevant emergency management scenarios.

The programme is well integrated within the broader clinical and institutional infrastructure of AUTH and affiliated university hospitals, providing access to specialised clinical environments, digital systems and university support services.

The programme has established a formal quality assurance structure aligned with institutional and national requirements, including annual internal evaluation procedures and measurable KPIs.

The practical clinical orientation of the programme, including exposure to vascular surgical departments and tutorials with experienced clinicians, was highly valued by students, graduates and stakeholders.

The programme demonstrates flexibility and accessibility for professionally active clinicians while maintaining strong engagement from stakeholders and professional bodies within the vascular surgery community.

The teaching staff demonstrate substantial clinical expertise and maintain engagement with broader scientific and professional developments in vascular surgery and related disciplines.

Strong graduate progression into doctoral studies and academic careers, with evidence of sustained publication activity among a substantial proportion of graduates.

II. Areas of Weakness

The programme remains more strongly oriented toward advanced professional and clinical specialisation than toward a consistently research-intensive Level 7 MSc environment.

The compressed structure of 75 ECTS delivered over one calendar year may limit opportunities for sustained scholarly immersion, progressive research development and broader academic engagement compared with more conventional MSc structures.

The dissertation portfolio demonstrates variability in methodological sophistication and analytical depth. While a number of dissertations show strong clinical relevance and scholarly engagement, a substantial proportion consist of narrative reviews rather than original research studies, systematic reviews or meta-analyses.

Although the programme provides structured training in research methodology and scientific writing, research engagement and research outputs remain unevenly distributed across the student cohort.

The educational model relies heavily on concentrated monthly teaching blocks and flexible arrangements designed to accommodate professionally active clinicians. While this model is highly valued by students, opportunities for broader programme-wide scholarly interaction and continuous academic engagement could be strengthened.

Practical and clinical training is supported by structured supervision and documented training activities across multiple hospitals. Nevertheless, variability in clinical exposure and learning experiences may arise from differences in institutional settings and local clinical environments.

The programme-level academic environment remains relatively decentralised, limiting opportunities for the development of a more cohesive postgraduate scholarly and scientific community across the entire student body.

The programme collects a range of quality assurance indicators, including student feedback and graduate outcomes. However, the strategic use of these data to inform curriculum development, long-term planning and programme enhancement could be further strengthened and more clearly documented.

Public information concerning learning outcomes, dissertation expectations, graduate outcomes and scholarly activities could be further developed, particularly within the English-language sections of the programme website.

Opportunities for student mobility, international engagement and the systematic integration of alumni and external stakeholders into long-term programme development remain relatively limited.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

Strengthen the MSc-level academic and research identity of the programme through greater emphasis on methodological training, analytical thinking, evidence-based scientific inquiry and sustained scholarly engagement.

Introduce clearer minimum methodological standards for diploma theses and progressively increase the proportion of original clinical research, systematic reviews and meta-analyses.

Reassess whether the current 75 ECTS and one-year structure provides sufficient time and workload distribution to support Level 7 postgraduate research competencies and sustained academic immersion.

Develop mechanisms that enhance continuous academic interaction throughout the programme, including structured tutorials, journal clubs, case-based discussions, formative assignments, research seminars and collaborative scholarly activities.

Further structure and harmonise practical clinical training through clearer competency-based learning objectives, assessment criteria and supervision expectations across all participating clinical environments.

Strengthen programme-level monitoring of dissertation quality, methodological rigour, research outcomes, publications, conference participation, graduate trajectories and mobility participation through systematic KPI analysis.

Develop more mature and operationally integrated QA processes demonstrating clearer linkage between evaluations, feedback, strategic planning and documented programme improvements.

Further develop the study guide and public information resources with clearer operational detail regarding assessment, dissertation expectations, practical training, progression requirements, research ethics and academic integrity.

Strengthen formal mentoring, academic advising, alumni engagement and stakeholder participation mechanisms supporting student development, networking and programme governance.

Increase internationalisation efforts, including mobility opportunities, international collaborations, English-language visibility and participation in broader European academic networks.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

None

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

2, 3, 4, 9, 10

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

1, 5, 6, 7, 8

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

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