

Rules of Procedure for the MSc "IMMUNOBIOLOGY"

ARTICLE 1

General Provisions

The Postgraduate Programme in "**Immunobiology**" is organized and operated by the Department of Biology of the University of Crete from the academic year 2024-2025 (hereafter referred to as the Programme or the Postgraduate Programme) in accordance with the provisions of this regulation and the provisions of Law 4957/2022. The MSc may enter into cooperation agreements with research institutions, other academic organizations, etc., for the realization of its objectives, following decisions of the Steering Committee (SC).

The structure, organisation and operation of the postgraduate studies of the MSc are governed by the provisions of the relevant laws, by the applicable decision approving its operation, by the Internal Regulations of the University of Crete and by these Regulations of the MSc.

The language of instruction is English.

ARTICLE 2

Postgraduate Degree

The MSc in "**Immunobiology**" awards a Diploma of Postgraduate Studies (MSc) in "**Immunobiology**" of 120 credit units (ECTS), corresponding to level seven (7) of the National and European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area.

The total number of ECTS as well as the degree will be indicated on the diploma awarded. The diploma is awarded by the University of Crete and is co-signed by the Rector of the University of Crete, the President of the Department, and the Head of the Secretariat of the Department of Biology.

ARTICLE 3

Subject-Objective-Purpose-Learning Outcomes-Results-Requirements

The Department of Biology of the University of Crete offers a postgraduate programme entitled "**Immunobiology**" with the participation of lecturers from other departments of the University of Crete (School of Medicine, Department of Chemistry, Department of Materials Science and Engineering), other Greek Universities (University of Patras, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), as well as the Foundation for Research & Technology.

The aim of the MSc is to provide graduates with an advanced understanding of the immune system and its functions. This field of study delves into the biological and biochemical mechanisms used by the immune system to protect the organism from pathogens, as well as its role in disease, disorders and therapeutic or defensive interventions, and spans from mammals to plants. The main objectives of the MSc programme are:

- **Fundamental Knowledge:** to deepen the understanding of the fundamental principles of immunology, including the cellular and molecular processes that underpin innate and acquired immunity.

- **Research skills:** Develop practical and analytical skills necessary to conduct scientific research. This includes learning techniques for studying immune responses, handling biological data and using advanced laboratory equipment.
- **Critical Thinking:** to enhance critical evaluation skills of current research and literature in immunobiology, facilitating the understanding of cutting-edge issues and technological advances in the field.
- **Understanding Disease:** studying the role of the immune system in health and morbidity, and understanding the mechanisms by which the immune response may contribute to the pathogenesis of diseases, including autoimmune diseases, allergies and cancer.
- **Therapeutic Applications:** Investigating the development of immunological approaches for disease prevention and treatment, such as vaccines and immunotherapies.
- **Professional Skills:** Preparing students for professional roles in academic research, biotechnology and pharmaceutical industry, clinical application, and general positions requiring expertise in immunobiology.
- **Ethical and social implications:** discuss the ethical, legal and social implications of research in immunobiology, particularly in relation to new and emerging technologies such as genetic engineering and personalized medicine.

Overall, graduates of the MSc in Immunobiology programme are expected to emerge as individuals with deep knowledge and expertise, well prepared to make significant contributions to the field of immunology and related fields.

Graduates can be employed in positions related to their specialization, either in the public (hospitals, secondary education, municipalities, etc.) or private (diagnostic laboratories, pharmaceutical companies, etc.) sector or they can continue in academic- research careers in Universities or Research Organizations.

ARTICLE 4

Duration of the Programme

The MSc will operate at least until the academic year 2029-2030 with the possibility of extension, subject to its non-certification during the periodic evaluation of the Department.

ARTICLE 5

Management bodies

According to Article 81 of Law 4957/2022, the competent bodies for the organization and operation of the MSc are:

1. The General Assembly of the Department of Biology of the University of Crete
2. The Steering Committee (SC) of the MSc.
3. The Director of the MSc.

The responsibilities of the institutions are defined as follows:

General Assembly of the Department of Biology of the University of Crete

The responsibilities of the General Assembly (GA) of the Department of Biology are defined according to article 30 of Law 4957/2022.

Steering Committee (SC)

The Committee of the Program consists of five (5) faculty members of the Department of Biology with a two-year term of office. The five-member Board of the program is composed of five members, including the Director of the MSc.

The SC of the Programme has the following responsibilities:

- a) the monitoring and coordination of the operation of the Programme.
- b) the preparation of an analytical report, at the end of the term of office of the Board, under the responsibility of the outgoing Director, on the research and educational work of the Programme, as well as on its other activities, with the aim of upgrading studies, better utilization of human resources, optimization of the existing infrastructure and the socially beneficial use of the available resources of the Programme.

Director of the MSc.

The Director of the MSc is a member of the Board and chairs it. He/she shall be appointed for a two-year term of office, renewable without limitation. He/she shall be a member of the teaching staff with priority at the rank of professor or associate professor.

The Programme Director may:

- recommend to the SC any matter relating to the proper functioning of the Programme and the effective implementation of these Rules
- appoint ad hoc committees for the organisation and operation of the Programme
- is responsible for the preparation of the agenda and the convening of the SC, as well as for the implementation of the decisions of these Bodies.

The Director shall not be entitled to any additional remuneration for his/her administrative work as Director.

Article 6

Duration of studies and organisation of the educational process

1. The duration of study for the award of the Diploma of Postgraduate Studies is set at four (4) academic semesters.
2. For exceptional reasons (e.g. for health reasons, etc.) a suspension of one (1) or two (2) semesters may be granted. During the period of suspension, the graduate student's rights are also suspended. The period of suspension shall not be counted towards the duration of study. Applications for extension or suspension of studies are accepted no later than two (2) weeks before the beginning of the teaching of the courses of the semester to which they refer, and are approved by the Board. Suspension of studies is not granted for the first semester of the MSc. In the case of an application for suspension of studies, the postgraduate student is obliged to have completed all financial obligations at the time of his/her application. Otherwise, he/she will be withdrawn. At the end of the suspension of studies, the postgraduate student shall return to the financial status in force during the last academic year of participation in the programme.
3. The courses of the MSc will be taught with physical presence at the University of Crete, but online teaching is possible, at a rate of 50% of the total teaching hours per course, if necessary, and after sufficient justification and approval by the SC for online teaching, the electronic

infrastructure of the University of Crete e-class (<https://eclass.edc.uoc.gr/>) will be used, as well as the distance learning tools Microsoft Teams, Webex, ZOOM, etc.

4. Courses will be taught at predetermined dates and times following the timetable of the MSc. Students are required to attend all classes, as well as the activities of each course, to comply with the decisions of the Board and academic ethics. Absence from more than 3 lectures automatically results in failure of that course and the student is required to attend the course again in the next semester it is offered. Failure in a course is accepted only once, and in case of a second failure the student is expected to withdraw from the program. In the event that a student, due to a course exclusion, needs to enroll in an additional semester of study, the student will be charged the semester tuition fee.
5. The SC appoints an Academic Advisor for each student, who monitors the progress and advises the student during the programme.
6. There is no provision for the Programme to be offered on a part-time basis.

Diploma Thesis & Student Internships

1. Diploma thesis

The Research Thesis corresponds to 55 ECTSs and is implemented during the third and fourth semester of the programme. It is research intensive and is supervised by a two-member committee. The committee includes the supervisor of the research thesis and comprises faculty members and researchers from the University of Crete or the collaborating organization. Professors or researchers from other academic or research institutions in Greece or abroad, that possess a PhD, can also act as co-supervisors of the student's MSc thesis. The members of the committee should have the same or similar specialty to that of the research thesis.

The students can apply for the research thesis after they have collected at least 60 ECTS. During the second semester, the interested tutors and other members of the programme present shortly the offered research topics. The students have the opportunity to discuss with the tutors and possibly start studying the topic before they undertake the thesis officially.

The implementation process of the research thesis after the approval of the PMC is as follows:

- a) Following the agreement of the supervisor the PMC approves the topic and the two-member committee for the research thesis,
- b) After the completion of the thesis, the date of the presentation/defense is announced following the agreement of the two-member committee,
- c) The thesis is handed in electronic form to the two committee members. The thesis should be handed to the committee at least ten (10) days before the defense. The defense takes place only after the agreement of all committee members.

The committee members assess the thesis in terms of its originality and innovative nature, the literature review, scientific methodology, the research perspectives and the implementation of the experiments and analysis of the results, as well as the presentation of the work by the student. The procedure is completed with the assessment of the thesis presentation and the respond of the student to the questions provided by the examiners. The research thesis is evaluated as "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory".

If a research thesis is assessed as "unsatisfactory", the student must undertake the necessary corrections/improvements following the recommendations of the examination committee. Then a second defense follows at a date that is defined by the members of the committee and within six (6) months after the date of the first defense. If the thesis is assessed again as "unsatisfactory", no third chance is given to the student. In this case the student is not awarded the MSc degree, but rather receives a certificate stating that they have successfully completed the graduate courses.

2. Student internships

After the completion of the theoretical training, the students have the opportunity to get laboratory training in two individual laboratories that participate in the programme. Via these internships the students aim to gain experience, expand their knowledge and specialize in subjects related to immunobiology and the new trends in therapeutic interventions. The internships also give the students the opportunity to adapt and function within a professional environment and to develop the skills related to teamwork. To enroll in the internship program, the students need to apply. Their record and specific requirements of different positions will be considered by the PMC which shall decide taking under consideration the first three preferences of the student for getting training in specific laboratories. Within one month upon completion of the internship, the student shall submit a written 'activity report' which will be utilized for the evaluation of the student and will be kept in the student's records. The student's overall performance shall be assessed by the PMC.

Students also have the option to participate in internship programs abroad, in Universities or Research Centers and Institutions in the context of ERASMUS+ program. The same rules apply (activity report and seminar, ECTS 5).

Mobility of teaching staff

The mobility of faculty members is mainly implemented for conferences and research purposes through collaborations developed by the members with their respective laboratories in institutions/research centres abroad or in Greece. It is estimated that these travels amount to 5-10 travels per faculty member per year. Due to the financial situation, the Department/Institution does not have the possibility of additional financial support for faculty members participating in mobility programmes, which are, however, adequately covered by the active participation of faculty members in research projects. The mobility of faculty members for educational or research purposes is also supported and funded by the ERASMUS+ (Teaching and Training) programme. The Department of Biology encourages the mobility of faculty members by providing permits (parallel employment, scientific, unpaid), in accordance with the applicable legislation, for their mobility for teaching and research activities in universities and institutions abroad, provided that the smooth functioning of the Department is not hindered.