

CYQAA STATEMENT ON COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA), is closely monitoring the situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact that this has on higher education institutions and on higher education as a whole. Within the framework of its competencies CYQAA has taken action to support higher education institutions, students and academic personnel, during this period of crisis.

The measures taken by the Agency are the following:

Postponement of all scheduled external evaluations and site-visits:

Taking into account the high risks from the spread of COVID-19, as well as the travel restrictions imposed on both EU countries and third-party countries, CYQAA postponed all on-site visits for external evaluation which were scheduled for March, April and May.

Recommendation of alternative forms of teaching:

As higher education institutions remain closed, CYQAA suggested and provides guidance in regard to alternative forms of teaching, including e-courses, in accordance with its set quality criteria.

The Agency requires from institutions which are going to use e-learning to videotape courses and ascertain student attendance and participation.

Conduct of Midterm exams:

Due to the measures taken the Agency instructed institutions to carry out midterms exams remotely, taking measures to safeguard their objectivity and credibility. Another recommendation is to conduct open-book exams and problem-solving exercises with application scenarios. For small student groups, the Agency recommended the assignment of different scenarios or scenarios with different questions per student. The Agency also suggested the use of virtual labs where available.

Conduct of final exams:

The Agency will monitor the situation and the experience which will be gained from the conduct of the midterm examinations at higher education institutions will help develop more effective methodologies to be implemented after the end of April.

The main purpose is to keep higher education institutions academically active and to ensure that students will achieve their qualifications on time being equally valuable.

The Agency:

Here at the Agency we are very aware of the public health challenge posed by coronavirus (COVID-19) and its effects on the lives of everyone. We are in a rapidly changing environment, with new developments emerging constantly.

As we all adjust to this situation, the CYQAA Agency is open for business. We are fully operational and well-positioned to continue our work.

At the same time, the Agency's top priority is the health and safety of our staff and their family members as well as our community. With this in mind, a number of staff members are working remotely until further notice. A smaller number of staff continue to work in the office for the time being, unless circumstances dictate otherwise.