

Doc. Number: 300.1.1

**Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in
Higher Education**

Republic of Cyprus

**External Evaluation Report
Program of Study**

Institution: ...University of Nicosia (Cyprus).....

**Program of Study: ...Master of Science in Health Services
Administration (MHSA)**

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INSTRUCTIONS:

The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws of 2015 to 2016” [N. 136 (I)/2015].

The document is duly completed by the External Evaluation Committee for each program of study. The ANNEX (Doc. Number 300.1) constitutes an integral part of the external evaluation report for the external evaluation accreditation of a program of study.

EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE:

NAME	TITLE	UNIVERSITY / INSTITUTION
Gianluca Veronesi	Professor	University of Bristol (UK)
Veronica Swallow	Professor	University of Leeds (UK)
Angelique Dimitracopoulou	Professor	University of Aegean (GR)
Georgia Salanti	Professor	University of Bern (CH)
Egli Costi	Medical Student	University of Cyprus (CY)

INTRODUCTION:

I. The External Evaluation procedure

- Short description of the documents that have been studied, of the on-site visit meetings, and of the on-site visit to the infrastructures.

The EEC panel was briefed by Mrs Marina Malakouna, Educational officer of the Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, who accompanied the panel at the University of Nicosia.

An on-site visit took place on Thursday 21 June (9:00 am) and lasted approximately 8 hours. The purpose of this visit was to assess the accuracy of information and findings included in the Application for Evaluation of the Master in Science in Health Services Administration (MHSA) (Doc. Number 200.1) submitted by the University of Nicosia (Cyprus), and to identify further issues which were identified in the text of the Application.

During the on-site visit the EEC completed the following activities:

- A meeting with the Head of the Institution (Rector), other members of the senior management team including the Vice Rector, Deans of the School of Business and Medical School, the Executive Dean of DL, the Chief Operating Officer, the Registrar, Director of Administration, and Director of Quality Assurance.
- Examination of the School's structure, including where the program sits.
- A meeting with the Head of the relevant department and the Program Coordinator which included a presentation of the Program curriculum (allocation of courses per semester, weekly content of each course, teaching methodology, teaching material, evaluation, samples of papers, samples of written examinations, admission criteria for prospective students and so forth).
- Presentation of program's feasibility study.
- Discussion of the program as a whole and information relevant to its response to the University mission and aspirational criteria.
- Presentation of the equipment used in teaching and learning (software, hardware, materials, online platforms etc.).
- Presentation of the academic teaching staff (six individuals) on the program.
- A meeting and a brief examination of the curriculum vitae of the teaching staff (academic qualifications, publications, research interests, research activity etc.) and their relationship with the institution as teachers in connection with any other duties they may have in the institution or/and other programs.
- A meeting only with four students (from other programs, one conventional and three DL).
- A meeting with members of the administrative staff.
- It was decided to not conduct an on-site visit to the premises of the institution (library, computer labs, research facilities etc.) as MHSA is a DL program and so not relevant for the purpose of the examination.

In addition to the on-site visit the EEC made a thorough examination of all key documentation including:

- Application Document 200.1
- Program Management Plan
- Program Handbook
- Program Regulations
- Program Quality Manual
- Program Scheme of Assessment
- Program Study Guides
- Courses Syllabi
- Postgraduate Mentor Handbook
- DL Assessments and Procedures

II. The Internal Evaluation procedure

- Comments concerning the quality and the completeness of the application submitted by the institution of higher education (Doc. Number 200.1), as well as concerning the overall acceptance of and participation in the quality assurance procedures, by the institution in general and by the program of study under evaluation in particular.

The EEC's overall view of the Application Document (200.1) and the other relevant material is very positive. The documents provided a wealth of information and are in line with the guidelines of the Agency. There are not major deficiencies to be noted and all the requested information was readily available or promptly provided on request. However, to an extent the amount of information submitted was excessive and some of the documentation was only made available in proximity of the visit, not giving the EEC sufficient time to thoroughly analyze the supplementary information.

During the on-site visit, all the personnel of the University were extremely accommodating and collaborative. The visit was organized very efficiently and the hospitality of the team was remarkable. Generally, the culture and environment of the University is very positive and there is a clear ambition to reach high standards of teaching and research.

FINDINGS:

1. EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING WORK – AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Organization of Teaching Work

Student admissions procedures are in place, set at a satisfactory level and adhered to. The qualification requirements are adequate. The number of expected students on the program is relatively low and in line with Higher Education standards, which will allow for meaningful and effective learning procedures. The academic calendar is organised prior to the beginning of the programme and publicised.

The teaching procedures and curriculum are thoroughly described on the Application Document and will be made available to students once the accreditation is granted. The procedures for the conduct and the format of assessment and examination are set according to the required standards and are well specified and organised. Procedures are in place for the involvement of students in the improvement of educational processes at the course and program levels. Learning resources and facilities available to students are seen very positively.

Feedback and control mechanisms for the quality of teaching are in place and appeared to be adhered to from the comments made by teaching staff and the feedback received by students on other programmes. Monitoring, plagiarism and generic student support processes are well-specified.

The number of expected Cypriot and international students in the program is perceived as appropriate and reasonably well balanced. It is expected that Cypriot students will represent around a third of the cohort while applications are likely to come from Middle Eastern countries and South and South East Asia.

- Teaching

The teaching methods and the planned courses content is suitable for the specified degree, conforming to comparative programs. Feedback and assessment criteria have been put in place and will be made available to students in the module handbook. Content and intended learning outcomes are set for each of the course taught on the program, compulsory and elective.

For a DL program, teaching approaches and the use of technology and different means of communication are satisfactory and aligned with standard international practice. The learning and teaching materials meet the general requirements set by the methodology of the program's individual courses and encourage student interaction in online activities. An effort could be made to formally link part of the course final mark to participation in interactive processes.

- Teaching personnel

The number of exclusively occupied full-time academic personnel adequately supports the program of study and is within the set guidelines. It is noted that a member of staff with a specialised degree in biostatistics or in evidence-based medicine could be

recruited if the opportunity arises. Furthermore, the current teaching load - above 200 hours per year - is relatively high compared to common practice in research-led universities in Europe and elsewhere. On the other hand, the ratio of students to the total number of teaching personnel is very positive and facilitates the delivery of a program of quality and relevance. The program coordinator has the necessary qualifications and relevant experience ensuring the efficient lead and coordination of the program of study.

2. PROGRAM OF STUDY AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

- Purpose and Objectives and learning outcomes of the Program of Study

The purpose, objectives and learning outcomes are clearly presented and are appropriate for the proposed program of study. There is a clearly detailed outline of the learning outcomes that the students will be able to demonstrate upon completion of the MHSA.

- Structure and Content of the Program of studies

The curriculum is to be delivered across three semesters, over 18 months and comprises six compulsory courses in semesters 1 and 2 totaling 60 ECTS; semester 3 offers three option pathways to achieve the remaining 30 ECTS. Currently the elective courses offers: option 1 (Elective course path), option 2 (Applied field project path) and option 3 (Research project path).

The EEC believes that HSA-590 (Research methodology in primary care and public health) should be redefined as Research methods and methodology and should become a compulsory part of the program. This would ensure that all students on MHSA acquire adequate knowledge and skills to be able to critically evaluate and conduct research. With regard to HAS-596, it is noted that requiring students to produce a paper to be submitted to a peer-reviewed academic journal might not be suitable for all students. Therefore, consideration could be given to offering an option of either writing a manuscript or a more traditional dissertation.

- Quality Assurance of the Program of studies

The University has a clearly outlined structure for quality assurance and the internal procedures will be followed for the program of study. In particular, the Distance Learning Unit will collect the appropriate feedback for this program and the academic staff will ensure that the program will be regularly evaluated, and that student feedback will be addressed, in order to maintain the overall quality of the learning experience for all students. UNic has obtained accreditations from several international bodies including the prestigious QS five star excellence and these processes have resulted in the adoption of high quality assurances methods and tools

- Management of the Program of Study

Effective management of the program of study with regard to its design, its approval, its monitoring and its review, is in place. The EEC is confident that all proposed learning outcomes can be achieved within the allocated timeframe.

- International Dimension of the Program of Study

The EEC recognizes that the academic profile of the program of study is compatible with corresponding programs of study in Cyprus and internationally. In addition, MHSA adequately compares to corresponding programs of higher education institutions of the same rank.

However, the existing cadre of Visiting Professors could be complemented with individuals with an even higher international research profile.

- **Connection with the labor market and the society**

The procedures applied, so that the program conforms to the scientific and professional activities of the graduates, are adequate and effective. Furthermore, according to the feasibility study, indicators for the employability of graduates are satisfactory and adequate consideration is given to the potential needs of students regarding future employment and their contribution to society.

3. RESEARCH WORK AND SYNERGIES WITH TEACHING

- **Research Teaching Synergies**

The teaching content reflects recent research in the field and the recommended literature is up-to-date. The fact that students have the option to write an article in the end was perceived as a positive aspect of the program, steering students and lectures towards research, outreach and impact (although we recommend that the option of a traditional thesis should be offered to). However, synergy between research and teaching needs improvement in the following aspects:

1. In the organization and sequence of the modules: Research methods and their association with the adoption of evidence-based decision making are not well placed in the curriculum. Concepts around research methods, identification of information and studies, synthesis of evidence provided and critical evaluation of the identified information should be taught and mastered in the beginning of the program and not in the end. These skills should be associated with a formal teaching module compulsory for all students (either as a stand-alone module or embedded in the existing Epidemiology course). Our rationale is that research methods and evidence-based techniques are necessary not only for undertaking research but for any decision-making process.
2. In the qualifications and future development of the teaching personnel: The personnel is qualified in the topics taught in the course, but their research output is, altogether, below average (judging from the number of publications, their impact, the journals published and the amount of competitive research funding secured). This is not surprising as the tutors are, in their majority, in the beginning of their career and we felt that they do have the potential to enhance the research part of their CVs. This will also improve the education offered with respect to research and tutors will be in a better position to supervise students in the writing of articles. To achieve this aim, the Medical School needs to take specific measures to ensure that the tutors are given incentives and are

motivated to dedicate time and effort to research. Funding for research is also important – see also our comments on section 3.1.

4. ADMINISTRATION SERVICES, STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT OF TEACHING WORK

- Administrative Mechanisms

The mechanisms for the support of the students consist of the Centre for Research & Counselling Services (KESY), which seems to be effective regarding the psychological support of the students that might face any kind of academic or personal challenges. Student Advising & Support also plays a big part on the guidance of the students. Given the information the EEC had, both of the infrastructures mentioned above seem to be working effectively and instantly. However, despite the existence of a Special Needs policy, and of expert human support infrastructure, it was not made clear whether these services are available for DL students with special needs or disabilities. UNic should adopt a similar policy for DL students as well.

- Infrastructures / Support

UNic uses the Moodle online platform for its DL students. Regarding the library facilities, the university provides access to thousands of electronic resources; e.g. Cambridge e-journals, Wiley e-journals, and Sage e-journals. According to the “Mentor Handbook and Guidelines” which was provided to the EEC, an academic mentor is a staff member who is in contact with the students for: academic manners, feedback on assessments, health problems and study plans. The mentoring service seems to be very helpful for the students, in all the categories mentioned above, especially on the feedback on assessments. The EEC strongly believes that the frequency to which the mentor has a meeting with the student is of great importance for the guidance of the student (the meetings take place at least once per semester, the first meeting within the first two weeks of the first semester).

- Financial Resources

The tuition fees for the MHSA, for the students who will register during the academic year 2018-2019, are €14 400 for the entire programme. The tuition fees are higher than other comparable institutions, however, opportunities are available for students to apply for scholarships on the basis of needs. Unfortunately, no scholarship is awarded for academic excellence.

5. DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS

The EEC has referred to the “Quality Standards and Indicators” mentioned in the current template as well as to the additional ‘Criteria for the Distance Learning Programmes of Study’ of DIPAE.

(A) Regarding the General Distance Learning Institution Structure and Infrastructure:

UNic, regarding DL programs, has specifically developed:

- I. A defined General Model of Distance Education via on line technologies, involving courses delivered completely by distance learning and services and face to face final exams that take place in exams centers around the world.
- II. An elaborated Organizational Structure, including Academic roles (e.g. Distance Learning Executive Dean), as well as appropriate administrative units (Admission, Operations, Students Administration, DL Program Management). The corresponding units involve experienced administrative staff devoted to the support of DL students.
- III. An appropriate infrastructure especially in terms of building (a specially dedicated floor), technological infrastructure (teleconferencing rooms, PC laboratories rooms, servers, etc.) and qualified IT personnel.
- IV. Electronic Libraries that are rich and they include resources appropriate for the specific program.
- V. Policies related to the needs of DL via technologies. In particular, EEC would like to mention that UNic has:
 - a) produced a new, more concrete and elaborated Distance Learning Faculty Handbook (March 2018). This handbook provides the General Guidelines for DL programs, Course Design Guidelines, Guidelines for DL Teachers as well as an example of a sufficiently designed DL Course, that provide a good practice.
 - b) elaborated a well-structured and detailed written exams system, according to high level quality assurance criteria, that is to be applied in exams centers around the world. In parallel, UNic participates in an important European project focusing on how to design and develop technological provisions, tools and mechanisms that could substitute the need of physical presence in written exams.

The “Pedagogical Planning/Support Unit for Distance Education”: UNic is in the process of properly establishing this Unit. It has already recruited the head of this Unit (a specialist on Adult Education).

It is recommended by the EEC the functioning of this Pedagogical Planning Unit as soon as possible, as this will allow the university to: (a) Prepare appropriate teaching training methods and material for advanced learning methods (according to the DIPAE criteria), especially on the domain of adults’ education, DL collaborative methods etc. (b) Support teachers to produce appropriate learning material, learning activities, and various assessment methods appropriate for high level learning objectives, and collaborative learning that are important for the professional as well as the scientific dimensions of future students’ working life (c) Support Lecturers in the learning approaches problems resolution.

B) Regarding the Program Study Guide:

The Study Guide of the proposed program can be considered as completely developed. According to the corresponding DIPAE, the Study Guide for each Course, includes on a weekly basis (and for the 13 weeks) at least the following:

- Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes;
- Presentation of the main educational material of the week;
- Outline as well as concrete set of activities (self-assessment activities: quiz), formative assignments;
- Planning of the online lectures, the online discussions (Webinars via Webex), the discussions on forums (asynchronously), the chat based exchanges or discussions (synchronously) etc.;
- Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study.

The Study Guides provide also an overview of the organization of each course, via appropriate tables that underpin the course method, the number of the interactive sessions (e.g. 4 teleconferences/webinars), the number of assignments, the mode of the final grade calculation [e.g. 40% continuous assessment, + 60% final exam).

Furthermore, the course that was completely developed on LMS platform (moodle) and was shown to the EEC, provides indications of how is responsible for the course and relevant lecturers intention to elaborate in a detailed way their course materials.

However, it is noted that with reference to the DIPAE criteria 2, the study guides of all courses include predicted interactive activities with the teacher and among the students, via on-line discussion (chat based), or forum asynchronous discussions. It is suggested to continue the effort, so as to conceive and add some collaborative learning among small group of students that goes beyond some simple wiki based written activities that are already mentioned in some cases.

In summary, UNic has well established structures, services and policies for DL programs. The design of the present program has taken them into account. There is a space for further improvements that UNic and faculty could make, especially in terms of: (a) initial and continuous teachers' pedagogical support especially regarding teaching strategies (during interactive activities), (b) learning activities design.

6. DOCTORAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY

Not applicable.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE¹

- The present situation of the program, good practices, weaknesses that have been detected during the external evaluation procedure by the external evaluation committee, suggestions for improvement.

This is a well-designed and accomplished DL MSc program with clear aims and purpose that covers all expected scientific aspects and learning objectives. The presentation of the program to the EEC was very clear and the information that will be provided to future students and the courses material are meticulously prepared with remarkable attention to detail. The lecturers have adequate professional and educational backgrounds and are in a position to support students. All quality assurance aspects, student welfare services and administrative structures and procedures are of high standards.

A number of suggestions and requests for improvements were made by the EEC throughout the report. In particular, UNic should focus, in the short term, on the research skills training the students receive and, in the long term, on the research opportunities for the teaching staff as a whole.

The EEC recommends accrediting the MHSA, provided that the important issues presented in this report are adequately addressed.

¹ It is highlighted, at this point, that the External Evaluation Committee is expected to justify its findings and its suggestions on the basis of the Document num.: 300.1. The External Evaluation Committee is not expected to submit a suggestion for the approval or the rejection of the program of study under evaluation. This decision falls under the competencies of the Council of the Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation of higher education.

Quality Standards and Indicators

External Evaluation of a Program of Study

Institution: ...University of Nicosia (Cyprus).....
Program of Study: ...Master of Science in Health Services Administration...
Duration of the Program of Study: ...18 months.....
Evaluation Date:...21/06/2018.....

The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws of 2015 to 2016”.

The document describes the quality standards and indicators, which will be applied for the external evaluation of programs of study of institutions of higher education, by the External Evaluation Committee.

DIRECTIONS: Note what is applicable for each quality standard/indicator.

1. Applicable to a minimum degree
2. Applicable to a non satisfactory degree
3. Applicable to a satisfactory degree
4. Applicable to a very satisfactory degree
5. It applies and it constitutes a good practice

It is pointed out that, in the case of standards and indicators that cannot be applied due to the status of the institution and/or of the program of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted and a detailed explanation should be provided on the institution’s corresponding policy regarding the specific quality standard or indicator.

Members of the External Evaluation Committee

NAME	TITLE	UNIVERSITY / INSTITUTION
Gianluca Veronesi	Professor	University of Bristol (UK)
Veronica Swallow	Professor	University of Leeds (UK)
Angelique Dimitracopoulou	Professor	University of Aegean (Greece)
Georgia Salanti	Professor	University of Bern (CH)
Egli Costi	Medical Student	University of Cyprus (CY)

Date and Time of the On-Site Visit: ...21/06/2018 09:00.....

Duration of the On-Site Visit: ...1 day.....

1. EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING WORK – AVAILABLE RESOURCES						
1.1	Organization of teaching work	1	2	3	4	5
1.1.1	The student admission requirements to the program of study, are based on specific regulations which are adhered to in a consistent manner.					X
1.1.2	The number of students in each class allows for constructive teaching and communication, and it compares positively to the current international standards and/or practices.				X	
1.1.3	The organization of the educational process safeguards the quality implementation of the program's purpose and objectives and the achievement of the learning outcomes. Particularly, the following are taken into consideration:					
1.1.3.1	The implementation of a specific academic calendar and its timely publication.				X	
1.1.3.2	The disclosure of the program's curricula to the students, and their implementation by the teaching personnel				X	
1.1.3.3	The course web-pages, updated with the relevant supplementary material				X	
1.1.3.4	The procedures for the fulfillment of undergraduate and postgraduate assignments / practical training					X
1.1.3.5	The procedures for the conduct and the format of the examinations and for student assessment					X
1.1.3.6	The effective provision of information to the students and the enhancement of their participation in the procedures for the improvement of the educational process.					X
1.1.4	Adequate and modern learning resources, are available to the students, including the following:					
1.1.4.1	facilities					X
1.1.4.2	Library					X
1.1.4.3	Infrastructure					X
1.1.4.4	student welfare					X

	1.1.4.5	academic mentoring						X
1.1.5	A policy for regular and effective communication, between the teaching personnel and the students, is applied.							X
1.1.6	The teaching personnel, for each course, provide timely and effective feedback to the students.							X
1.1.7	Statutory mechanisms, for the support of students and the communication with the teaching personnel, are effective.					X		
1.1.8	Control mechanisms for student performance are effective.							X
1.1.9	Support mechanisms for students with problematic academic performance are effective.							X
1.1.10	Academic mentoring processes are transparent and effective for undergraduate and postgraduate programs and are taken into consideration for the calculation of academic work load.					X		
1.1.11	The program of study applies an effective policy for the prevention and detection of plagiarism.							X
1.1.12	The program of study provides satisfactory mechanisms for complaint management and for dispute resolution.							X

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

1.1.1 The admission criteria are clearly set and include a number of important requirements and regulations which will be adhered to.

Note, additionally:

α) the expected number of Cypriot and International Students in the program of study.

UNic expects to recruit between 5 and 15 Cypriot students at the beginning of the program. The expected number of international students is in between 5 and 35.

β) the countries of origin of the majority of students.

Cyprus, Lebanon and other Middle Eastern Countries, Greece, South and South East Asia.

γ) the maximum planned number of students per class-section.

Following best practices in DL, the maximum number of students per class is 30.

1.2	Teaching	1	2	3	4	5
1.2.1	The methodology utilized in each course is suitable for achieving the course's purpose and objectives and those of the individual modules.				X	
1.2.2	The methodology of each course is suitable for adults.				X	
1.2.3	Continuous-formative assessment and feedback are provided to the students regularly.					X
1.2.4	The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance, are clear, adequate, and known to the students.					X
1.2.5	Educational activities which encourage students' active participation in the learning process, are implemented.			X		
1.2.6	Teaching incorporates the use of modern educational technologies that are consistent with international standards, including a platform for the electronic support of learning.					X
1.2.7	Teaching materials (books, manuals, journals, databases, and teaching notes) meet the requirements set by the methodology of the program's individual courses, and are updated regularly.					X

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

1.2.5 UNic could explore the possibility to assign part of the mark (e.g. 10%) to active participation in the course material that are interactive. However, a positive aspect of the course material is related to the design of the online lectures and power point presentations which encourages student interaction.

1.3	Teaching Personnel	1	2	3	4	5
1.3.1	The number of full-time academic personnel, occupied exclusively at the institution, and their fields of expertise, adequately support the program of study.				X	
1.3.2	The members of teaching personnel for each course have the relevant formal and fundamental qualifications for teaching the course, as described by the legislation, including the following:					

	1.3.2.1	Subject specialization, preferably with a doctorate, in the discipline.					X
	1.3.2.2	Publications within the discipline.		X			
1.3.3		The specializations of Visiting Professors adequately support the program of study.				X	
1.3.4 N/A		Special Teaching Personnel and Special Scientists have the necessary qualifications, adequate work experience and specialization to teach a limited number of courses in the program of study.					
1.3.5 N/A		In every program of study the Special Teaching Personnel does not exceed 30% of the Teaching Research Personnel.					
1.3.6		The teaching personnel of each private institution of tertiary education, to a percentage of at least 70%, has recognized academic qualification, by one level higher than that of the program of study in which he/she teaches.					X
1.3.7		In the program of study, the ratio of the number of courses taught by full-time personnel, occupied exclusively at the institution, to the number of courses taught by part-time personnel, ensures the quality of the program of study.					X
1.3.8		The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching personnel is adequate for the support and safeguarding of the program's quality.					X
1.3.9		The academic personnel's teaching load does not limit the conduct of research, writing, and contribution to the society.		X			
1.3.10		Future redundancies / retirements, expected recruitment and promotions of academic personnel safeguard the unimpeded implementation of the program of study within a five-year span.					X
1.3.11		The program's Coordinator has the qualifications and experience to efficiently coordinate the program of study.					X
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p>1.3.2.2 Some of the core teaching staff have not yet started to accrue a portfolio of publications relevant within the disciplines so there should be clear plans in place to address this.</p>							

1.3.9 The academic personnel teaching load and capacity to undertake research does limit the conduct of research writing and consequently contribution to the program and society.

2. PROGRAM OF STUDY AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS						
2.1	Purpose and Objectives and learning outcomes of the Program of Study	1	2	3	4	5
2.1.1	The purpose and objectives of the program of study are formulated in terms of expected learning outcomes and are consistent with the mission and the strategy of the institution.					X
2.1.2	The purpose and objectives of the program and the learning outcomes are utilized as a guide for the design of the program of study.					X
2.1.3 N/A	The higher education qualification and the program of study, conform to the provisions of their corresponding Professional and Vocational Bodies for the purpose of registration to these bodies.					
2.1.4	The program's content, the methods of assessment, the teaching materials and the equipment, lead to the achievement of the program's purpose and objectives and ensure the expected learning outcomes.				X	
2.1.5	The expected learning outcomes of the program are known to the students and to the members of the academic and teaching personnel.					X
2.1.6	The learning process is properly designed to achieve the expected learning outcomes.					X
2.1.7	The higher education qualification awarded to the students, corresponds to the purpose and objectives and the learning outcomes of the program.					X
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p>2.1 UNic should be complemented for ensuring that the purpose and objective and learning outcomes of the Program of Study were consistent with internationally recognized standards of quality.</p>						
2.2	Structure and Content of the Program of Study	1	2	3	4	5

2.2.1	The course curricula clearly define the expected learning outcomes, the content, the teaching and learning approaches and the method of assessing student performance.					X
2.2.2	The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is applied and there is true correspondence between credits and workload per course and per semester for the student either he / she studies in a specific program or he/she is registered and studies simultaneously in additional programs of studies according to the European practice in higher education institutions.					X
2.2.3	The program of study is structured in a consistent manner and in sequence, so that concepts operating as preconditions precede the teaching of other, more complex and cognitively more demanding, concepts.		X			
2.2.4	The higher education qualification awarded, the learning outcomes and the content of the program are consistent.					X
2.2.5	The program, in addition to the courses focusing on the specific discipline, includes an adequate number of general education courses.					X
2.2.6	The content of courses and modules, and the corresponding educational activities are suitable for achieving the desired learning outcomes with regards to the knowledge, skills, and abilities which should be acquired by students.		X			
2.2.7	The number and the content of the program's courses are sufficient for the achievement of learning outcomes.					X
2.2.8	The content of the program's courses reflects the latest achievements / developments in science, arts, research and technology.				X	
2.2.9	Flexible options / adaptable to the personal needs or to the needs of students with special needs, are provided.				X	

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

2.2.3 and 2.2.6 HSA-590 should be redefined as Research Methods and Methodology and should become a compulsory part of the program to provide students with adequate knowledge and skills to conduct research.

As a minimum evidence based methods and practices should be taught in the first semester potentially embedded in the Epidemiology course.

With regard to HAS-596, it is noted that requiring students to produce a paper to be submitted to a peer-reviewed academic journal might not be suitable for all students.

Therefore, consideration could be given to offering an option of either writing a manuscript or a more traditional dissertation.

2.2.9 Although UNic has specific policies for students with special needs, it is not entirely clear how these apply to DL students.

Note the expected number of students who will be studying simultaneously at another academic institution, based on your experience so far, regarding students who study simultaneously in the programs of your institution.

N/A.

2.3	Quality Assurance of the Program of Study	1	2	3	4	5
2.3.1	The arrangements regarding the program's quality assurance define clear competencies and procedures.					X
2.3.2	Participation in the processes of the system of quality assurance of the program, is ensured for					
	2.3.2.1 the members of the academic personnel					X
	2.3.2.2 the members of the administrative personnel					X
	2.3.2.3 the students.					X
2.3.3	The guide and / or the regulations for quality assurance, provide detailed information and data for the support and management of the program of study.					X
2.3.4	The quality assurance process constitutes an academic process and it is not restricted by non-academic factors.					X

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

2.3 UNic has obtained accreditations for a number of international bodies including the prestigious QS five star excellence and these processes have resulted in the adoption of high quality assurances methods and tools.

2.4	Management of the Program of Study	1	2	3	4	5
2.4.1	Effective management of the program of study with regard to its design, its approval, its monitoring and its review, is in place.					X

2.4.2	It is ensured that learning outcomes may be achieved within the specified timeframe.				X	
2.4.3	It is ensured that the program's management and development process is an academic process which operates without any non-academic interventions.				X	
2.4.4	The academic hierarchy of the institution, (Rector, Vice-Rectors, Deans, Chairs and Programs' Coordinators, academic personnel) have the sole responsibility for academic excellence and the development of the programs of study.					X
2.4.5	Information relating to the program of study are posted publicly and include:					
2.4.5.1	The provisions regarding unit credits					X
2.4.5.2	The expected learning outcomes					X
2.4.5.3	The methodology					X
2.4.5.4	Course descriptions					X
2.4.5.5	The program's structure					X
2.4.5.6	The admission requirements					X
2.4.5.7	The format and the procedures for student assessment					X
2.4.6	The award of the higher education qualification is accompanied by the Diploma Supplement which is in line with the European and international standards.					X
2.4.7	The effectiveness of the program's evaluation mechanism, by the students, is ensured.					X
2.4.8	The recognition and transfer of credit units from previous studies is regulated by procedures and regulations which ensure that the majority of credit units is awarded by the institution which awards the higher education qualification.					X

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

2.4 The management of the program of study appeared very effective.

In the case of practical training, note:

- The number of credit units for courses and the number of credits for practical training
- In which semester does practical training takes place?

<p>- Note if practical training is taking place in a country other than the homecountry of the institution which awards the higher education qualification</p> <p>N/A.</p>						
2.5	International Dimension of the Program of Study	1	2	3	4	5
2.5.1 N/A	The program's collaborations with other institutions are compared positively with corresponding collaborations of other departments / programs of study in Europe and internationally.					
2.5.2	The program attracts Visiting professors of recognized academic standing.			X		
2.5.3 N/A	Students participate in exchange programs.					
2.5.4	The academic profile of the program of study is compatible with corresponding programs of study in Cyprus and internationally.				X	
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p>2.5.2 The existing cadre of Visiting Professors could be complemented with individuals with an even higher international research profile.</p> <p>Also, comment on the degree the program compares positively with corresponding programs operating in Cyprus and abroad in higher education institutions of the same rank.</p> <p>The program adequately compares to corresponding programs of higher education institutions of the same rank.</p>						
2.6	Connection with the labor market and the society	1	2	3	4	5
2.6.1	The procedures applied, so that the program conforms to the scientific and professional activities of the graduates, are adequate and effective.				X	
2.6.2	According to the feasibility study, indicators for the employability of graduates are satisfactory.					X
2.6.3	Benefits, for the society, deriving from the program are significant.				X	

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

2.6 UNic has taken into adequate consideration the potential needs of students regarding future employment and the contribution to society.

3. RESEARCH WORK AND SYNERGIES WITH TEACHING						
3.1	Research - Teaching Synergies	1	2	3	4	5
3.1.1	It is ensured that teaching and learning have been adequately enlightened by research.					X
3.1.2	New research results are embodied in the content of the program of study.				X	
3.1.3	Adequate and sufficient facilities and equipment are provided to support the research component of the program of study, which are available and accessible to the personnel and the students.					X
3.1.4	The results of the academic personnel's research activity are published in international journals with the peer-reviewing system, in international conferences, conference minutes, publications etc.		X			
3.1.5	External, non-governmental, funding for the academic personnel's research activities, is compared positively to the funding of other institutions in Cyprus and abroad.			X		
3.1.6	Internal funding, of the academic personnel's research activities, is compared positively to the funding of other institutions in Cyprus and abroad.		X			
3.1.7	The policy for, indirect or direct, internal funding of the academic personnel's research activity is satisfactory.		X			
3.1.8	The participation of students, academic, teaching and administrative personnel of the program in research activities and projects is satisfactory.		X			
3.1.9	Student training in the research process is sufficient.		X			

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

3.1 Overall, the EEC expresses concerns first on the level of training that students receive in relation to evaluating research and to use it effectively in their practice. Second, it is felt that this lack of introduction and explanation to research methods and methodologies is detrimental to the students understanding and ability to determine the quality of research underpinning the work related to the modules.

With reference to 3.1.6, 3.1.7 and 3.1.8, a formal policy related to internal funding in support of research activity should be introduced. One helpful option would be to capitalize on the income generated by the program by ring-fencing a proportion of the income from fees to be reinvested into opportunities for staff to apply for internal funding. In turn, this will enable staff to raise their international profile and consequently their contribution to the quality of the program in relation to research-teaching synergies. Research activities should be explicitly included in the career development plans of the faculty and part of the annual evaluation process.

4. ADMINISTRATION SERVICES, STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT OF TEACHING WORK

4.1	Administrative Mechanisms	1	2	3	4	5
4.1.1	There is a Student Welfare Service that supports students with regards to academic and personal problems and difficulties.				X	
4.1.2	Statutory administrative mechanisms for monitoring and supporting students are sufficient.					X
4.1.3	The efficiency of these mechanisms is assessed on the basis of specific criteria.			X		
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p>4.1.1 UNic has a number of student welfare mechanisms in place and it is believed that these can potentially support DL students, however see comment 2.2.9.</p> <p>4.1.2 The statutory administrative mechanisms for monitoring and supporting students are of high standards, for example the mentoring policies and procedures.</p> <p>4.1.3 It is not clear whether efficient mechanisms have been put in place for the continuous evaluation of these services.</p>						
4.2	Infrastructure / Support	1	2	3	4	5

4.2.1	There are suitable books and reputable journals supporting the program.					X
4.2.2	There is a supportive internal communication platform.					X
4.2.3	The facilities are adequate in number and size.					X
4.2.4	The equipment used in teaching and learning (laboratory and electronic equipment, consumables etc) are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate.					X
4.2.5	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are adequate and accessible to students.					X
4.2.6	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are updated regularly with the most recent publications.					X
4.2.7	The teaching personnel are provided with training opportunities in teaching method, in adult education, and in new technologies on the basis of a structured learning framework.			X		
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p>4.2.6 The teaching material is currently up to date with most recent publications. It is important that this will be maintained after the accreditation of the program and updated each year to keep the knowledge transferred to students relevant and current.</p> <p>4.2.7 The teaching personnel has experience of teaching on DL programm. It would be helpful for UNic to develop a full training program on DL teaching methods, interactive and collaborative learning activities specific for adult educations. A person has been specifically appointed to carry this task from autumn 2018.</p>						
4.3	Financial Resources	1	2	3	4	5
4.3.1	The management and allocation of the financial resources of the program of study, allow for the development of the program and of the academic / teaching personnel.			X		
4.3.2	The allocation of financial resources as regards to academic matters, is the responsibility of the relevant academic departments.					

4.3.3	The remuneration of academic and other personnel is analogous to the remuneration of academic and other personnel of the respective institutions in Cyprus.			X		
4.3.4	Student tuition and fees are consistent to the tuition and fees of other respective institutions.		X			
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p>4.3.2 The information provided is not sufficient to make a justifiable assessment.</p> <p>4.3.3 It is understood that the remuneration of teaching staff is comparable to the one of staff employed by other private institutions but it is below the salary levels of academic staff employed in public universities.</p> <p>4.3.4 The tuition fees are higher than other comparable institutions however opportunities are available for students to apply for scholarships on the basis of needs. No scholarship is awarded for academic excellence.</p>						

The following criterion applies additionally for distance learning programs of study.

5.	DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS	1	2	3	4	5
5.1	Feedback processes for teaching personnel with regards to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.				X	
5.2	The process and the conditions for the recruitment of academic / teaching personnel, ensure that candidates have the necessary skills and experience for long distance education.			X		
5.3	Through established procedures, appropriate training, guidance and support, are provided to teaching personnel, to enable it to efficiently support the educational process.			X		
5.4	Student performance monitoring mechanisms are satisfactory.					X

5.5	Adequate mentoring by the teaching personnel, is provided to students, through established procedures.					X
5.6	The unimpeded long distance communication between the teaching personnel and the students, is ensured to a satisfactory degree.					X
5.7	Assessment consistency, its equivalent application to all students, and the compliance with predefined procedures, are ensured.				X	
5.8	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) comply with the requirements provided by the long distance education methodology and are updated regularly.					X
5.9	The program of study has the appropriate and adequate infrastructure for the support of learning.					X
5.10	The supporting infrastructures are easily accessible.					X
5.11	Students are informed and trained with regards to the available educational infrastructure.					X
5.12	The procedures for systematic control and improvement of the supportive services are regular and effective.			X		
5.13	Infrastructure for distance education is comparable to university infrastructure in the European Union and internationally.				X	
5.14	Electronic library services are provided according to international practice in order to support the needs of the students and of the teaching personnel.					X
5.15	The students and the teaching personnel have access to the necessary electronic sources of information, relevant to the program, the level, and the method of teaching.					X
5.16	The percentage of teaching personnel who holds a doctorate, in a program of study which is offered long distance, is not less than 75%.					X

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

5.2 It would appear that the teaching personnel has been recruited regardless of whether they are teaching or not on a DL program.

5.3 See comment 4.2.7.

5.4 As previously noted in 4.1.2, the relevant mechanisms and procedures are well developed and consistent.

If the following apply, note “√” in the appropriate space next to each statement. In case the following statements do not apply, note what is applicable:

The maximum number of students per class-section, should not exceed 30 students.	X
The conduct of written examinations with the physical presence of the students, under the supervision of the institution or under the supervision of reliable agencies which operate in the countries of the students, is compulsory.	X
The number of long distance classes taught by the academic personnel does not exceed the number of courses taught by the teaching personnel in conventional programs of study.	N/A

The following criterion applies additionally for doctoral programs of study.

Not applicable.

6.	DOCTORAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY	1	2	3	4	5
6.1	The provision of quality doctoral studies is ensured through Doctoral Studies Regulations.					
6.2	The structure and the content of a doctoral program of study are satisfactory and they ensure the quality provision of doctoral studies.					
6.3	The number of academic personnel, which is going to support the doctoral program of study, is adequate.					
6.4	The doctoral studies' supervisors have the necessary academic qualifications and experience for the supervision of the specific dissertations.					
6.5	The degree of accessibility of all interested parties to the Doctoral Studies Regulations is satisfactory.					

6.6	The number of doctoral students, under the supervision of a member of the academic personnel, is apt for the continuous and effective feedback provided to the students and it complies with the European and international standards.					
6.7	The research interests of academic advisors and supervisors are satisfactory and they adequately cover the thematic areas of research conducted by the doctoral students of the program.					
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p>Note the number of doctoral students under the supervision of each member of the academic personnel of the program and the academic rank of the supervisor.</p>						

FINAL REMARKS – SUGGESTIONS

Please note your final remarks and suggestions for the program of study and/or regarding particular aspects of the program.

The EEC examined thoroughly the program document, the facilities and resources available and had extensive discussions with academics, students, and administrative and technical support staff.

The EEC recommends accrediting the MSc in Health Services Administration provided that the important issues presented in this report and discussed in the findings section are adequately addressed.

The program will start in spring 2019 and the EEC believes that there is sufficient time to begin responding to the above recommendations.

Names and Signatures of the Chair and the Members of the External Evaluation Committee:

Name:	Signature:
Gianluca Veronesi	
Veronica Swallow	
Angelique Dimitracopoulou	
Georgia Salanti	
Egli Costi	

Date: ...23/06/2018.....