

Medical Programmes' Accreditation



THE CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



ENQA
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION
FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

June, 2019

The Agency

2

- ❖ Established in November 2015
- ❖ Fully independent authority in processes and decisions
- ❖ Steered by a Council of eleven members, appointed by the Council of Ministers for a five-year period



Website: <https://www.dipae.ac.cy>

VISION

3

The Agency and stakeholders' aspires to contribute towards the efforts for the establishment of Cyprus as a district centre of high quality higher education.

As a Council, along with a number of experienced staff, we share common values and philosophical views, which are grounded on the principle that:

Higher education's quality is measured by the students' rewarding experiences during their studies and also by their academic, ethical and attitudinal preparation to meet the expectations of their professional mission.



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In Cyprus' higher education sector, programmes of study are offered by 8 universities (3 public and 5 private) and 45 higher education schools (colleges, non-university).

The operation of each programme of study is not permitted unless it has received programmatic evaluation/accreditation, which is repeated every five (5) years.

Medical programmes are offered by 3 universities:

1 Public - [University of Cyprus](#)

2 Private - [University of Nicosia](#) and [European University of Cyprus](#)

The University of Nicosia Medical School is also offering in Cyprus the St George, University of London Medical Programme (franchised programme).





According to the Law for the Establishment and Operation of the CYQAA:

The Agency should pursue external evaluation and accreditation by ENQA (The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) and EQAR (The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education)

“in order to ensure the quality of its work and this evaluation shall be an integral part of its broader self-awareness and accountability”.

In 2019, the CYQAA became a full member of ENQA and it is waiting for the decision of EQAR. Henceforth, European standards are applied onto the CYQAA policies and European guidelines are followed (ESG).



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- » **The Council** decided to activate all the necessary procedures for its external evaluation by the WFME experts and to become its accredited member.
- » **The CYQAA** has fully adopted the WFME procedures and standards for medical schools and programme accreditation.

ESG and WFME standards are available to the public via the [CYQAA's website](https://www.dipae.ac.cy)



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Quality Standards

7

The evaluation of the programmes of study is conducted based on predetermined:

- » CYQAA generic standards, quality indicators and European standards and guidelines (ESG) applied for all the programmes of study including distance learning, doctoral and joint programmes

[Doc. 300.1.1: External evaluation report- Programme of study](#)

- » Standards for medical programmes (WFME)

[Doc 300.1.1/1: External evaluation report for basic medical education](#)

both docs are found on [CYQAA's website](#)



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Quality Standards

8

The evaluation of the programmes of study mainly focuses on the following assessment areas:

» **Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.8, 1.9)**

Policy for quality assurance, design, monitor and review of the programme, programme's purpose, objectives and expected learning outcomes, programme's structure, ECTS allocation, international dimension of the programme, information made public

» **Teaching, learning and student assessment (ESG 1.3)**

Teaching and learning methodology, learner-teacher relationship, criteria and methods of student assessment, synergy of research with teaching

both docs are found on [CYQAA's website](https://www.cyqaa.ac.cy)



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Quality Standards

9

The evaluation of the programmes of study mainly focuses on the following assessment areas:

» **Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)**

Recruitment and development, adequacy, qualifications, teaching staff involvement in research, publications, teaching performance assessment, mobility

» **Students (ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7)**

Admission criteria, progression, recognition and certification regulations, mobility, success and drop-out rates, graduates employability

» **Resources (ESG 1.6)**

Financial resources (funds), physical resources (laboratories, libraries, equipment, study facilities, teaching materials), human resources (student welfare services, mentors/tutors)



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The evaluation of the medical programmes focuses on the following assessment areas:

1. Mission and Outcomes

Mission, Institutional autonomy and academic freedom, Educational outcomes, Participation in formulation of mission and outcomes

2. Educational Programme

Framework of the programme, Scientific method, Basic biomedical sciences, behavioural and social sciences, medical ethics and jurisprudence, Clinical sciences and skills, Programme structure, composition and duration, Programme management, Linkage with medical practice and the health sector.

The evaluation of the medical programmes focuses on the following assessment areas:

3. Assessment of Students

Assessment methods, Formative and Summative Assessment, Relation between assessment and learning, Feedback

4. Students

Admission policy and selection, Student intake, Counselling and support, Representation, Rewarding experiences

The evaluation of the medical programmes focuses on the following assessment areas:

5. Academic Staff / Faculty

Recruitment and selection policy, Staff activity and staff development, adequacy, qualifications, teaching staff involvement in research, publications, teaching performance assessment, mobility

6. Educational Resources

Physical facilities, Clinical training resources, Information technology, Medical research and scholarship Educational expertise, Educational exchanges

The evaluation of the medical programmes focuses on the following assessment areas:

7. Programme Evaluation

Mechanisms for programme monitoring and evaluation, Teacher and student feedback, Performance of students and graduates, Involvement of stakeholders

8. Governance and Administration

Physical facilities, Clinical training resources, Information technology, Medical research and scholarship Educational expertise, Educational exchanges

9. Continuous Renewal

There is a compliance between the generic CYQAA standards, the ESG and the WFME standards, as evidenced by the assessment areas.

The CYQAA succeeds to evaluate all the programmes of study on the basis of main and analogous assessment areas, with a further deepening in medical programmes' evaluation.

Evaluation Process

It includes four phases:

1. The Application
2. The External Evaluation
3. The Institution's Response
4. The Council's Decision

1. The Application

16

- Application for evaluation accompanied by the medical programme's self-evaluation study. (Docs. 200.1, 200.1.2)

200.1	Application for Evaluation - Accreditation of Programme of Study Αίτηση για Αξιολόγηση - Πιστοποίηση Προγράμματος Σπουδών
200.1.2	Self-evaluation report for Basic Medical Education Έκθεση αυτοαξιολόγησης στη Βασική Ιατρική Εκπαίδευση

1. The Application

17

- In the self-evaluation study, the medical school provides evidence of the fulfilment of basic standards and quality development standards for medical programmes.

Basic Standards are expressed by a '**must**'. This means that the standard in principle must be met by every medical school and fulfilment demonstrated during evaluation of the school.

Quality Development Standards are expressed by a '**should**'. This means that the standard is in accordance with international consensus about best practice for medical schools and basic medical education. Fulfilment of – or initiatives to fulfil – some or all of such standards should be documented by medical schools. Fulfilment of these standards will vary with the stage of development of the medical schools, available resources and educational policy and other local conditions influencing relevance, priorities and possibilities. Even the most advanced schools might not comply with all standards.



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2. The External Evaluation

18

- Carried out by the panel of independent experts.
- This process includes:
 1. The study of the application
 2. The self-study
 3. A site-visit and
 4. The writing of the experts' report.
- The EEC completes the 'External Evaluation Report' (Doc. 300.1.1/1).

300.1.1/1 | External Evaluation Report for Basic Medical Education
Έκθεση Εξωτερικής Αξιολόγησης Προγράμματος Σπουδών στη Βασική Ιατρική Εκπαίδευση

- A printed copy of the report is delivered to the CYQAA after it is completed, after being signed by all members of the EEC.
- An electronic *.pdf copy is sent by the chair of the committee to the responsible CYQAA officer without signatures, in order to be uploaded on CYQAA's web site with all other related documents.

2. The External Evaluation

19

- The External Evaluation report for basic medical education follows the structure of assessment areas. Each assessment area is divided into sub-areas with Basic and Quality Development Standards.
- Under each assessment area, the EEC must provide feedback regarding the degree of compliance with the requirements. In particular, the EEC is expected to write findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations.
- It is clarified that the evaluation of the medical school mainly focuses on basic standards and comments, whereas quality development standards indicate the need for the medical school's actions to extend beyond basic requirements.



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2. The External Evaluation

20

- The EEC should also state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-Compliant, Partially Compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of basic and quality development standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.
- During the site-visit, the EEC must request for any information and documentation they deem necessary. The CYQAA' s Council needs strong evidence and facts for justifying its decision – not just assumptions and deductions/ inferences.



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3. The Institution's Response

21

- The Experts' Evaluation Report is sent to the institution for its response, including the actions taken for compliance and the action plan drawn up and implemented by the institution. Compliance may need to be verified by the experts' panel.
- The HEI completes the 'Higher Education Institution's Response' (**Doc.300.1.2/1**). According to the relevant legislation, the HEI is given a period of up to 3 months to respond to the EEC's comments on the external evaluation report, and to make the necessary amendments for full compliance.

300.1.2/1	Medical School's response (Basic Medical Education) Απάντηση Ιατρικής Σχολής (Βασική Ιατρική Εκπαίδευση)
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4. The Council's Decision

22

- On the basis of the external evaluation report, the recommendations of the EEC and the HEI's response on the external evaluation report, the Council of CYQAA decides whether a programme of study:
 - a) must be accredited,
 - b) must be rejected or
 - c) a second evaluation should be carried out. The experts' opinion/ advice for compliance or not may be asked before the decision (**Doc.300.1.3/1**).

300.1.3/1	Feedback report from EEC experts (Basic medical education) Ανατροφοδότηση από ΕΕΑ (Βασική ιατρική εκπαίδευση)
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4. The Council's Decision

23

- In the case of rejection observations and recommendations for improvement are included in the final report.
- Suggestions for improvement may be also included in the Agency's Accreditation Final Report (**Doc. 400.2.1**) and a follow-up process should be activated based on a timely flexible action plan submitted by the HEI. From the Council's point of view, evaluation against standards is always considered a process of improvement.

400.2.1	Final report of CYQAA - Accreditation of Programme of study Τελική Έκθεση Φορέα - Πιστοποίηση Προγράμματος Σπουδών
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A process of appeals is provided by the legislation

24

- The institution may, within **one (1) month** from the receipt of the final report of the Agency, submit an appeal/ raise an objection requesting its review and stating the grounds which, in its opinion, justify the withdrawal and the review of the evaluation report. The appeal procedure is available on the Agency's website.
- The appeal's examination by the Agency shall be carried out based on the data contained in the evaluation file of the institution and the grounds set out in the objection in order to issue a relevant decision. A proposed amendment of the legislation provides that the Council may assign an ad hoc advisory committee to examine the appeal before the final decision by the Agency.
- The decisions of the CYQAA are subject to appeals to the court.



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A process of appeals is provided by the legislation

25

- All the forms/documents used for the process of evaluation reflect the stakeholders' observations, the experts' feedback, possible restrictions provided by the legislation's framework, and the WFME's published guides.
- Evaluation reports are published online.
- Guidance on completing all the forms is provided by the CYQAA at the beginning of each document, via briefing, via email, via phone, meetings with stakeholders.
- Information on procedures and forms can be found on CYQAA's website.



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A process of appeals is provided by the legislation

26

- EEC members are expected to implement the WFME standards and evaluate objectively and in relation to the best programmes they have in mind, based on their expertise and international experience.
- EEC members are expected to acknowledge national differences in the educational programmes and medical schools, which in any case must not endanger the universal and national mission of the medical schools and doctors.



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Any Questions?

27

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