

Doc. 300.3.2

Date: 14/4/2025

# Higher Education Institution's Response

(Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
European University Cyprus  
School of Medicine-Frankfurt Branch
- **Town:** Frankfurt
- **School/Faculty:** School of Medicine
- **Department:** Medicine
- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation**  
**Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

## Programme 1

**In Greek:**

Πτυχίο Ιατρικής (6 Έτη/360 ECTS, Πτυχίο M.D.)

**In English:**

Doctor of Medicine (6 years/360 ECTS, M.D.)

## Programme 2

**In Greek:**

Διδακτορικό στις Ιατρικές Επιστήμες (3-8 Έτη/180 ECTS, Ph.D.)

**In English:**

Medical Sciences (3-8 Years/180 ECTS, Ph.D.)

## Programme 3

**In Greek:**

N/A

**In English:**

Programme Name

- **Department's Status:** Currently Operating



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 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

## A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.3.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the department in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*
  - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
  - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*
  - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.3.1).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

## 1. Department's academic profile and orientation

### Sub-areas

- 1.1 Mission and strategic planning
- 1.2 Connecting with society
- 1.3 Development processes

	Sub-area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
1.1	Mission and strategic planning	compliant
1.2	Connecting with society	compliant
1.3	Development processes	compliant

### Findings

The EEC was provided with papers describing the recruitment strategy. The process and criteria for promotion were explained. These are transparent, appropriate and understandable. EUC also engages in activities with the (Frankfurt) public as an orderly outreach to society, e.g. with information days ("Open House"). Specifically, they call upon the Hellenic Medical Society Hessen. Recruited Frankfurt faculty spend time at Nicosia for an onboarding to be aligned with the EUC's values and mission.

### Strengths

Frankfurt branch (like Nicosia) manages to balance the expansion of the work of the department in the first 2 ½ years effectively, while still keeping the "family feel" of the department.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

There would be a benefit to the department in the recruitment of high-profile academics to strengthen the acceptance and profile of EUC in Frankfurt. Further mid-level career appointments would enable necessary opportunities for research and potentially "Dr. med" pathways, and are highly recommended.

### **EUC Response:**

We thank the Committee for their suggestion. The Department is actively advancing its faculty recruitment and development efforts in alignment with its strategic priorities.

As noted in the MD Program Response (300.1.2.1, Section Teaching Staff), while we welcome visiting faculty, we are also committed to strengthening the program through new full-time hires. Below are the newly recruited full-time faculty for the Frankfurt Branch:

- **Dr. Vasiliki Papadopoulou** – Assistant Professor of Haematology with focus on Molecular Signalling in Cancer, leukaemia, and genetics. (contract pending, starting Fall 2025)

- **Dr. Anne Freund** – Lecturer in Surgery with focus on General Surgery, Minimally Invasive Techniques, Surgical Education, Patient Safety, Obesity, Metabolism, Biochemical Pathways and Clinical Nutrition (starting Fall 2025)
- **Prof. Karim Dib** – Professor in Immunology/Microbiology with focus on the molecular mechanisms of cancer and infection. (starting Fall 2025)
- **Dr. Christina Karantanou** – Lecturer in Immunology/Microbiology with expertise in immunology and cancer biology and leukemia. (started Spring 2025)
- **Dr. Ahmed Elsanhoury** – Assistant Professor in Pharmacology with focus in immunomodulation and antiviral therapies. (starting Fall 2025)
- **Dr. Katrina Augustin** – Assistant Professor in Public Health, with a broad background in Public health, as well as Neuroscience, Pharmacology, Metabolic and Neurological Disorders. (contract pending, starting Fall 2025)
- **PD Prof. Anastasia Athanasoulia-Kaspar** – Professor in Endocrinology with expertise in Thyroid Cancer, Diabetes Mellitus, and Hormonal Regulation. PD Dr. Athanasoulia-Kaspar, received her habilitation from LMU, Germany. (contract pending, starting Fall 2025)

At the Frankfurt Branch, we are very pleased with the clinical faculty from the teaching hospitals, and their eagerness to engage with our students. As we noted in the Ph.D. Response (300.1.2, Teaching Staff, Section 3.1), we follow a careful recruitment strategy of our clinical faculty, not only to promote the MD program, but to optimize with their involvement in research, namely as supervisors of clinically oriented Ph.D. students. As noted previously and as suggested by the EEC, we anticipate that clinical faculty who are affiliated faculty with German Institutions will also be able to serve as Dr. med. Thesis supervisors, in addition to Ph.D. supervisors. We anticipate that this could serve as an important steppingstone for Dr. med. Students to pursue a Ph.D. in the future.

The School implements an annual recruitment strategy, during which Departmental needs are systematically assessed to identify priority areas for faculty expansion. This deliberate approach ensures that new appointments are aligned with the School's overarching goal of advancing its academic profile and reputation. As needed, we advertise for full-time faculty positions in key areas critical to the School's growth and seek to recruit individuals who are established in their field and are active in research. These positions, most of which are open to applicants at any academic rank, are widely promoted through leading international platforms, such as "Academic Positions", "Euraxess", "ResearchGate", "Job.ac.uk" and "LinkedIn", among others, to attract a diverse and highly qualified candidate pool. These recruitment efforts are part of a comprehensive strategy to enhance our clinical training excellence, expand research capabilities, and strengthen our global visibility.

## 2. Quality Assurance

### Sub-areas

- 2.1 System and quality assurance strategy
- 2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study

	Sub-area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
2.1	System and quality assurance strategy	compliant
2.2	Quality assurance for the programmes of study	compliant

### Findings

The effective running of the department and quality assurance of programmes was readily transparent and of high quality. An excellent campus director ensures the day-by-day business.

### Strengths

Student support also includes grievance counselling. Compulsory meetings are in place if GPA drops. The logbook was transferred from paper to electronic (shown to us in Nicosia). Also, the open-door policy is highly commendable.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

We could not identify any areas for Departmental improvement at present.

### **EUC Response:**

We thank the Committee for their positive feedback on our quality assurance mechanisms. We will continue to ensure maintenance and continuous improvement of our quality assurance mechanisms.

### 3. Administration

	Sub-area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
3	Administration	compliant

#### Findings

There is considerable overlap in the administrative staff across the two campuses. Their passion for the success and students at both sites is readily demonstrated. The EEC congratulates the department on providing culture and structures for this development.

#### Strengths

We anticipate that the knowledge from the process in Nicosia carried by the administrative team has been a major part of the success of the new department growing and succeeding so rapidly.

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

We could not identify any areas for improvement at present.

#### **EUC Response:**

We take immense pride in our administrative team, whose exceptional contributions have been integral to our growth and success. We are delighted that no recommendations for improvement were noted at this time, and we remain steadfast in our commitment in upholding and continually enhancing our standards.

#### 4. Learning and Teaching

##### **Sub-areas**

**4.1 Planning the programmes of study**

**4.2 Organisation of teaching**

	Sub-area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
4.1	Planning the programmes of study	compliant
4.2	Organisation of teaching	compliant

##### **Findings**

The system for assessments was demonstrated and explained in great detail at the visit in Nicosia. We have heard that Frankfurt follows the same rules. However, as students are currently only in year three, there are no OSCEs/MiniCEX, etc. running yet. We understand that plans are in place for the OSCEs to run in English using simulated patients.

##### **Strengths**

We have heard how the Department's open-door policy is recognised by all as a position of strength. It was highlighted by both staff and students alike as a key feature of the department.

##### **Areas of improvement and recommendations**

None identified

##### **EUC Response:**

We would like to thank the Committee for their positive comments and we would like to stress our commitment to maintaining strong standards for the students' learning experience.



## 5. Teaching Staff

	Sub-area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
	Teaching staff number, adequacy and suitability	compliant
	Teaching staff recruitment and development	compliant
	Synergies of teaching and research	compliant

### Findings

The faculty - full-time, affiliated, and visiting faculty - was demonstrated. Still to be staffed vacant positions were outlined and time windows for respective interviews given.

### Strengths

Full-time faculty were well-qualified, enthusiastic and committed. We also commend the enthusiasm of the prospective clinical educators at hospital sites who recognise the need of all doctors to contribute to the future worldwide workforce.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

#### **EEC Recommendation:**

We recognise that the potential clinical teachers are highly motivated, however, long-term motivation beyond personal finance may be necessary. The EEC suggest to follow German practice and also pay the affiliated hospital a certain amount of FTE to allow some latitude for the level of registrars/junior doctors who will stem lots of the actual teaching. Adhering to local practice will aid in all nearby schools being treated equally in the future.

#### **EUC Response:**

Clinical Instructors and Clinical Faculty play an essential role in the success of our program, and we are pleased that the EEC acknowledges their exceptional motivation and dedication. Clinical Faculty enjoy access to University recourses, receive a University Business Card and have opportunities for rank advancement. As practiced at the main campus in Nicosia, both Clinical Instructors and Clinical Faculty will be compensated for their contributions to clinical training and instruction. This reimbursement is provided directly by EUC or through their affiliated hospital, depending on the specific agreement established with our partnered institution.

#### **EEC Recommendation:**

There is benefit to be gained from educating clinical students from different universities in the same department, for shared best practice, but the impact this may have on clinical educator demand must be balanced.

## EUC Response:

We appreciate the EEC's observation regarding the benefits of educating clinical students from different universities within the same Department, particularly for fostering best practice sharing. As the teaching hospitals to be used in Frankfurt accept students from the local universities, with the onset of the clinical training in the Fall 2025, EUC students, in some cases, will train alongside students from other institutions, which has proven valuable for collaborative learning. While we are in favor of promoting collaborative learning while prioritizing the sustainability and excellence of our clinical training programs, such arrangements are subject to the availability of clinical educators and resources, which must be carefully managed to ensure the quality of training is not compromised. We therefore work closely with clinical partners to balance these opportunities with educator capacity and resource demands.

## EEC Recommendation:

Clinical teachers (particularly those early in the careers) should be encouraged and enabled to pursue a further academic career with EUC, and the opportunity for research collaborations should be taken into consideration.

## EUC Response:

Indeed, we as well firmly believe Clinical Instructors play a vital role in the Medical School's teaching team by guiding students through the transition from classroom learning to hands-on application, effectively bridging the gap between the theoretical knowledge and clinical practice. For Clinical Instructors who hold external clinical positions and who seek a more formal academic affiliation, the School therefore offers the opportunity to serve as "Clinical Faculty".

Clinical Faculty members contribute to the advancement of teaching excellence, educational leadership and clinical scholarship. They engage in clinical teaching, service and scholarly activities, while primarily practicing their professions outside the University, and in affiliated partnered hospitals or clinics. Clinical Faculty appointments are available at the ranks of Clinical Lecturer, Clinical Assistant Professor, Clinical Associate Professor and Clinical Professor with clear criteria for selection and promotion. Appointments are made by the School of Medicine and subject to ratification by the University Senate (this is similar what is practiced at the main campus in Nicosia.)

Regarding clinical faculty engagement in research, they will engage with students during their clinical rotations and get them involved in research. Hence, we encourage our students when they take the research methods course in Year 3 to engage with clinical faculty in deeper discussions and discuss research opportunities when they do their clinical rotations so that they can get involved in medical research and also potentially identify topics for their MD thesis in Year 6. We have therefore been seeing a growing number of students in Nicosia requesting to become engaged in research after they take the research methods course and go onto their clinical rotations in Year 4. We expect now that the Frankfurt students will be entering clinical years, we will see a similar interest and research engagement.

## 6. Research

	Sub-area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
	Research mechanisms and regulations	compliant
	External and internal funding	compliant
	Motives for research	compliant
	Publications	compliant

### Findings

Research opportunities for MD and PhD students were presented at the Nicosia visit. Principles in Frankfurt follow the same lines, however - as there is not a strongly developed research profile (projects, cooperations, supervisors) such opportunities are currently scarce.

### Strengths

There is a clear policy to foster research - including recruiting the right clinical faculty.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

We see opportunities for improvement in the development of research skills in MD students during the three-year preclinical programme - which would benefit MD students and supervisors alike. The possibility to pursue an “Dr. med.” academic degree (explained elsewhere) need to be exploited.

### **EEC Recommendation:**

We are grateful that the EEC identified in the Institutional Response (300.2.2, Conclusions) that research as a strategic area for future development and one of our institution’s unique selling points. In addition to the recruitment of faculty who can augment the Frankfurt Branch research profile, we actively promote student research development, by integrating research and data interpretation skills from the first year, such as through hands-on labs in biochemistry, genetics, and biostatistics, alongside courses in epidemiology and research methods. These courses not only build foundational research skills but also prepare students to apply scientific inquiry to clinical practice.

To further encourage research involvement, we have launched initiatives such as the Research Day, where faculty present ongoing projects and highlight opportunities for student participation. Additionally, our Summer Externship Program offers students valuable research experiences at leading international institutions, including Oxford University and Johns Hopkins, further strengthening their exposure to cutting-edge research and clinical environments. These efforts, along with the required Medical Thesis, provide our students with the skills and experiences necessary to pursue advanced research opportunities, reinforcing our commitment to developing their research acumen and supporting our evolving research profile.

Moreover, at the Frankfurt Branch, we are very pleased with the clinical faculty from the teaching hospitals, and their eagerness to engage with our students. As we noted in the Ph.D. Response (300.1.2, Teaching Staff, Section 3.1), we carefully recruit our clinical faculty, not only to promote the MD program, but with their involvement in research, namely as supervisors of clinically oriented

Ph.D. students. As noted previously and as suggested by the EEC, we anticipate that clinical faculty who are affiliated faculty with German Institutions will also be able to serve as Dr. med. Thesis supervisors, in addition to Ph.D. supervisors. We anticipate that this could serve as an important steppingstone for Dr. Med. Students to pursue a PhD in the future.

### EEC Recommendation:

Also, students might profit from a more structured leadership training throughout the entire program. Considering the international reach of EUS, joining and engaging in the Medical branch of AIESEC could represent a valuable option.

### EUC Response:

We agree with the EEC that leadership training is important for our medical students. As outlined in detail in Section 2 (Curriculum) of 300.1.2.1 (Response Basic Medical Education), we now will leverage on some of our existing activities (such as outreach, community service activities, and student clubs) which actively encourage our students to develop leadership skills through a variety of roles and initiatives. During these events, students not only gain organizational experience, but also engage the public through health-related activities.

Additionally, students from Frankfurt will organize a parallel Meeting with that offered by students from Nicosia campus, the **Cyprus Annual Medical Students Meeting (CAMESM)**, May 16-17, 2025. These events are by the students and for the students, serving as a platform for student-led academic discourse, helping participants hone their leadership and interpersonal skills through collaboration with faculty and external stakeholders.

While we already incorporate opportunities for developing non-technical skills (such as in the clinical practicum, and the new course “Communication Skills”, we are exploring means to provide a more **structured and comprehensive leadership training framework** tailored to medical students, including the following:

#### 1. Introduce Structured Leadership Training:

- Develop a dedicated leadership module within the MD curriculum, focusing on:
  - Team dynamics and collaboration in healthcare.
  - Ethical decision-making in clinical settings.
  - Communication skills for patient care and interdisciplinary teamwork.
  - Managing healthcare crises and public health leadership.

#### 2. Leverage Existing Platforms like AIESEC:

- **Encourage Student Membership:** Promote participation in AIESEC, a global organization specializing in leadership development for youth. Its Medical branch offers industry-specific leadership opportunities and international exposure.
- **Institutional Collaboration:** The university can establish formal partnerships with AIESEC, enabling students to participate in global healthcare projects and leadership training programs.

#### 3. Expand Peer-Teaching Roles:

- Formalize and expand peer-teaching opportunities across courses, providing a platform for students to lead, mentor, and collaborate with their peers.

**4. Community Leadership Opportunities:**

- Increase involvement in community outreach initiatives, such as public health campaigns and volunteer healthcare services, to enable students to develop leadership skills in real-world contexts.

**5. International Exposure:**

- Enhance access to leadership roles through existing externship programs and international collaborations, allowing students to gain insights into global healthcare leadership practices.

**6. Recognition of Leadership Achievements:**

- Implement a system to formally recognize leadership contributions, such as certifications, awards, or transcripts highlighting leadership roles and achievements.

With measures such as these, we believe that the MD program can provide students with the tools to emerge as competent, confident leaders in medicine and healthcare.

## 7. Resources

	Assessment area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
7	Resources	compliant

### Findings

Annual budgets were provided.

### Strengths

The provision of a balanced budget suggests that the Medical School is financially sustainable.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

With its growth, the Medical School may consider opening an office for philanthropy; soliciting donations, endowments, and foundations, eventually approaching successful alumni. The support from professional bodies such as the Hellenic Medical Society Hessen is particularly valuable.

### **EUC Response:**

We appreciate the EEC's insightful recommendation regarding the establishment of a dedicated office for philanthropy to support the continued growth of the School of Medicine. This aligns closely with our long-term strategic vision to diversify revenue streams and enhance support for research, education, and infrastructure development.

We recognize the value of building meaningful partnerships with donors, alumni, foundations, and corporate sponsors. Accordingly, we are actively exploring the creation of a philanthropy office that will lead efforts in cultivating these relationships, securing endowments, and advancing fundraising initiatives aligned with the university's mission and priorities.

This initiative will also seek to engage professional bodies — including the Hellenic Medical Society Hessen and other local and international organizations — whose support will be instrumental in strengthening our outreach. We are confident that this endeavor will contribute to EUC's sustainable development and amplify the impact of our academic and research efforts both locally and globally.



## B. Conclusions and final remarks

### EEC Remark:

The European University Cyprus is a relatively young university that is most certainly on an upward trajectory. The EEC was impressed by the convincing motivation of faculty and students involved as well as the excellent facilities at hand. There seemed to be distinctive structures in place to secure smoothly operated processes with maximum quality assurance.

The Medical School of EUC has developed and delivers a modern MD curriculum with a successful start 2013, and 2022 at Frankfurt branch. A PhD program with three branches was started in 2021 in Nicosia, and will start in fall 2025 pending positive evaluation. It is currently going through an episode of rapid growth that, for the time being, is managed very well.

Everybody, including faculty, students, administration and potential clinical teachers in the associated hospitals seemed to be passionate about their workplace. The three principal groups involved (see above) repeatedly mentioned considering themselves as family. EUC has embraced state-of-the art teaching and outcome measures, aligned with European (particular British) and US standards.

### EUC Response:

We are pleased that the EEC recognizes the strong motivation, passion and engagement of our students, staff and faculty. We have strived to foster a collaborative and supportive culture, and we are proud to this reflected consistently across both our preclinical and clinical environments. Maintaining the highest standards in our facilities and learning environment has always been a priority, and we take great pride in the enriching educational environment we have cultivated. We deeply appreciate the EEC's acknowledgment that these collective efforts have successfully aligned our program and educational practices with international standards.

### EEC Remark:

Students are well taken care of through selection, enrollment and the programme itself. The learning environment, especially the skills lab, is state-of-the-art with plentiful mannequins and low and high fidelity simulation. Teaching goals are transparent. The first three years provide a comprehensive preclinical curriculum. Nevertheless, the EEC feels that the education could profit from authentic face-to face contact with real patients (or at least standardized persons) during these three years - despite the excellent skills lab/mannequins, even if this were to be short.

### EUC Response:

The School deeply appreciates the Committee's positive feedback on the program's structure, learning materials, and transparency of teaching goals. As noted in the MD Response (300.1.2.1 Curriculum) and Institutional Response (300.2.2, Conclusions), our efforts are to expose students to standardized, simulated and real patient contact in the preclinical years.

We are now incorporating patient contact during the preclinical years of our program, in addition to the hospital visits that already take place in year 1 Clinical Practicum, and we will offer the possibility of scheduled visits under the peer mentoring of senior (6th year) medical students in their presidency

year. Additionally, and as part of a public outreach initiative, we are now organizing more regular outpatient clinics in several medical specialties, where accepting patient visits 'Pro bono publico'. The aim here is to serve both the need for 1–3-year students to have face to face interaction with real patients, and also society outreach (such as that in the Community Outreach Program the Frankfurt Students held for Health Prevention).

Simulated patient contact will be initiated leveraging two learning approaches adapted in the main campus:

- **AI-Based Virtual Simulations:** advanced AI-driven simulations to provide students with a controlled and interactive environment to practice diagnostic and therapeutic skills. (SimConverse)
- **Standardized Patients and Role-Playing:** Using standardized patients portraying various conditions, enabling students to gain hands-on experience in patient interviewing and diagnosis.

#### EEC Remark:

We would like to thank the EUC once again for their hospitality and the willingness to openly share and discuss all relevant issues. We strongly believe that the department and its academic and administrative staff are doing a great job of securing optimal conditions for the faculty and its students to thrive.

#### EUC Response:

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the External Evaluation Committee for sharing their valuable expertise and providing thoughtful suggestions for further improvement. We are gratified by the EEC's recognitions of the strengths of our Department and the unwavering commitment of our academic and administrative staff in fostering an optimal educational environment where students, staff and faculty can thrive and achieve their full potential.



### C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Prof. Elizabeth Johnson	Dean	<u>Elizabeth Johnson</u> Elizabeth Johnson (Apr 14, 2025 14:12 GMT+3)
Dr. Efterpi Kostareli	Chairperson	<u>Efterpi Kostareli</u> Efterpi Kostareli (Apr 14, 2025 14:52 GMT+3)
Dr. Dimitris Papadopoulos	Program Coordinator	<u>Dimitrios Papadopoulos</u> Dimitrios Papadopoulos (Apr 14, 2025 14:48 GMT+3)

Date: 14/4/2025

