

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: Date.

## Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
Cyprus University of Technology (CUT)

- **Town:** Limassol

- **Programme of study**  
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

**In Greek:**

Μάστερ στη Δημόσια Υγεία

**In English:**

Master in Public Health (MPH)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**

**In Greek: (1) Επιδημιολογία & Βιοστατιστική και (2) Περιβαλλοντική Υγεία**

**In English: (1) Epidemiology & Biostatistics and (2) Environmental Health**



**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.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area. The answers' documentation should be brief and accurate and supported by the relevant documentation. Referral to annexes should be made only when necessary.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area and by using the 2<sup>nd</sup> column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:*
  - *the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
  - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report **without any interference** in the content.*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in \*.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.*

## 1. Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>A SWOT analysis has been performed by the faculty regarding the sustainability and feasibility of the programme. Weaknesses primarily revolve around resource constraints, and a lack of community awareness about many of the programmes. Threats include difficulties in attracting faculty and experts, as well as potential regulatory and accreditation changes. There is a small number of candidates for the MPH programme as potential students may be more easily attracted to the MPH programmes offered by the private universities in Cyprus. There is little evidence of the academic advisor's effect on undergraduate students but the effect seems to increase as the level of studies increases.</p>	<p>We thank the EEC for the constructive comment.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>We acknowledge that the implementation of a new health system in Cyprus requires professional training in public health. Even though the department already has collaboration with the health sector, it appears to be based on individual contacts rather than institutional agreements. The EEC proposes closer collaboration with the health sector, which could attract more students and at the same give them real-life experiences. This was also emphasised by the students.</p>	<p>We thank the EEC for the suggestion. We acknowledge the importance of the collaboration with the health sector and to that effect we have several collaborations with other organizations both at individual and at an institutional level. Some examples of these are the collaborations with German Oncology Center, the Cyprus National Committee on Environment and Health, the Diabetes Association, the Endocrinological Society, the State General Lab, the Cancer Registry, the Ministry of Health Medical Services and Public Health Department, and also with the private sector, such as the ClinBay Ltd and others. These are constantly pursued and will continue to be pursued. A number of our students have worked (or are currently working) with these institutions for their thesis, gaining valuable real-life experience, and several of these collaborations have resulted in peer-reviewed publications.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>The department offers an inclusive work and study environment for the students with opportunities for lab internship and teaching assistantships.</p>	<p>All communication with the students within the programme is done in English. We have further alerted the services of the university of the need to</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>



<p>However, the international students emphasized the need to have all information and communication from the university in English as well, as many emails are only in Greek.</p>	<p>communicate all relevant information in English, in addition to Greek used for the students in the other programmes which are offered in Greek.</p>	
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## 2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>While the strength of the programme is its strong focus on epidemiology &amp; biostatistics and environmental health, primarily based on quantitative methods, the programme could benefit from adding a short introductory course on concepts and theories in public health in the 1st semester, as well as introducing/incorporating a broader range of research methodologies into the programme, most importantly qualitative research, including document analysis, etc. The students appeared to be genuinely interested in learning more about the qualitative methods in particular.</p>	<p>Even though prior to the introduction of the MPH a course titled <i>Introduction to Environmental and Public Health</i> was offered, the course has not been offered the last few years due to an overlap with other courses of the MPH, such as <i>Health Education and Promotion</i> and <i>Global Health</i>, and now the new course introduced (<i>Special Topics in Public Health</i>). We further agree that certain aspects on concepts and theories in public health would be beneficial to be introduced earlier in the curriculum and this will be done in the form of seminars. Two sessions have been added in the month of September and October with titles <i>Introduction in Environmental and Public Health</i> and <i>Environmental and Public Health Research</i> taught by Professor Konstantinos Makris to cover that need.</p> <p>We acknowledge the importance of incorporating qualitative approaches in the curriculum - <i>Special Topics in Public Health</i> which is going to be introduced this coming academic year has sessions on qualitative research approaches (<i>Health risk communication and qualitative research approaches</i>) and we have now added a new session titled <i>The value of qualitative methods to public health research</i> to be taught by Dr. Eliada Pampoulou; furthermore, the <i>Applied Methods for Public Health</i> course (MPH 607) goes over questionnaire design and talks briefly about different methods, such as focus groups and structured interviews.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>Students asked for more exposure to real-life public health work, therefore the institution could increase their external collaborators and the way students can benefit from them (by practical training, and thesis research).</p>	<p>We thank the EEC for the suggestion. We acknowledge the importance of the collaboration with the health sector and to that effect we have several collaborations with other organizations both at individual and at an institutional level. Some examples of these are the collaborations with German Oncology Center, the Cyprus National Committee</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	<p>on Environment and Health, the Diabetes Association, the Endocrinological Society, the State General Lab, the Cancer Registry, the Ministry of Health Medical Services and Public Health Department, and also with the private sector, such as the ClinBay Ltd and others. These are constantly pursued and will continue to be pursued. A number of our students have worked (or are currently working) with these institutions for their thesis, gaining valuable real-life experience, and several of these collaborations have resulted in peer-reviewed publications.</p>	
<p>Although most of the learning material can be considered largely up to date, and the materials are available online, promoting sustainability, some of the learning materials are rather old, especially some of the textbooks dating back to 1987, and need to be updated.</p>	<p>We have upgraded the learning material (see Appendix 1).</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

### 3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>To improve student-centred teaching, a mandatory course for all teachers, who do not have prior pedagogical experiences, not just the newly recruited ones, could be beneficial. To sustain the programme, it will be beneficial to attract more students, and in particular more students from other countries outside Cyprus. It might be helpful to clearly specify how this programme is different from other Master programmes in Public Health, and consider more efficient means to promote and market the programme, and think about its branding. Such efforts should be supported by the university. The pandemic made public health more visible worldwide but other areas could also be used to brand the programme, for example the climate changes.</p>	<p>All new faculty, including Special Teaching Staff, will be obliged to take a new university-wide 4 ECTS course on teaching (see Appendix 2). The course will be also strongly recommended to existing faculty, Special Teaching Staff, and Special Scientists of the MPH.</p> <p>We agree on the importance of attracting students, especially from countries outside Cyprus. Efforts have been done to advertise the program in a wider audience and we are in continued discussions with the Communication, Marketing and International Relations Services of the university as well as the Student Services to assist in those efforts. Examples of these efforts include radio advertising, social media and use of Unique Selling Points, Google Ads, participation in exhibitions locally and internationally, organization of Open Days (both physically and online).</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>The students come from heterogeneous educational backgrounds with different knowledge on the key focus areas. This is challenging for the teachers as some students already have a lot of previous experience from their prior studies while others have less experience. The programme provides additional support for these students. To ease the teachers' workload, a solution could be to add certain admission requirements regarding students' previous skills and competence within quantitative methods or provide a crash course for students with no or limited previous skills and competence in this area.</p>	<p>Given the interdisciplinary nature of the MPH this is a challenge. To mitigate this, we have established a thorough review process with at least two reviewers, reviewing the totality of the application that includes diplomas, transcripts, personal statement, recommendation letters, prior experience, and the English language knowledge. In the case where an applicant lacks adequate scientific background but is considered a good applicant to the program with the potential for success then a basic course or background reading is recommended before the start of the program. In addition, most courses start from the very basic and build on that ensuring that all students are taught or reminded of this fundamental knowledge.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>As we have suggested incorporating a short introductory course on concepts and theories in public health as well as</p>	<p>Even though prior to the introduction of the MPH a course titled <i>Introduction to Environmental and Public Health</i> was</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>



<p>introducing/incorporating a broader range of research methodologies into the programme, most importantly qualitative research, a recruitment of a new faculty staff member holding these competences would be advised.</p>	<p>offered, the course has not been offered the last few years due to an overlap with other courses of the MPH, such as <i>Health Education and Promotion</i> and <i>Global Health</i>, and now the new course introduced (<i>Special Topics in Public Health</i>). We further agree that certain aspects on concepts and theories in public health would be beneficial to be introduced earlier in the curriculum and this will be done in the form of seminars. Two sessions have been added in the month of September and October with titles <i>Introduction in Environmental and Public Health</i> and <i>Environmental and Public Health Research</i> taught by Professor Konstantinos Makris to cover that need.</p> <p>We acknowledge the importance of incorporating qualitative approaches in the curriculum - <i>Special Topics in Public Health</i> which is going to be introduced this coming academic year has sessions on qualitative research approaches (<i>Health risk communication and qualitative research approaches</i>) and we have now added a new session titled <i>The value of qualitative methods to public health research</i> to be taught by Dr. Eliada Pampoulou; furthermore, the <i>Applied Methods for Public Health</i> course (MPH 607) goes over questionnaire design and talks briefly about different methods, such as focus groups and structured interviews.</p>	
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**4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification**  
 (ESG 1.4)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The EEC finds no particular areas of improvement. Current admission process works really well and could serve as an inspiration for other programmes in the area.	We thank the EEC for the positive remark.	Choose level of compliance:

## 5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>While the programme always makes sure that information is available in English to the students, international students not speaking Greek have a difficult time accessing the online information at the university level and emails from the university level, which are normally only in Greek. The university should make sure to provide all information in both Greek and in English to make information accessible to all students.</p>	<p>All communication with the students within the programme is done in English. We have further alerted the services of the university of the need to communicate all relevant information in English, in addition to Greek used for the students in the other programmes which are offered in Greek.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

**6. Additional for doctoral programmes**  
 (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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## 7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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## B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>The Master of Public Health at CUT has been founded on preexisting similar programs on epidemiology and environmental health, and the overall structure of the program is clear and well structured. While the programme excels in its emphasis on epidemiology, biostatistics, and environmental health, predominantly utilising quantitative methods, enhancing the MPH curriculum could involve a brief introductory course on fundamental concepts and theories in public health during the first semester. Expanding the range of research methodologies, particularly qualitative research, would further enrich the program, ensuring a coverage of core public health elements. This provides the students with a more comprehensive take on both quantitative and qualitative methods.</p>	<p>Even though prior to the introduction of the MPH a course titled <i>Introduction to Environmental and Public Health</i> was offered, the course has not been offered the last few years due to an overlap with other courses of the MPH, such as <i>Health Education and Promotion</i> and <i>Global Health</i>, and now the new course introduced (<i>Special Topics in Public Health</i>). We further agree that certain aspects on concepts and theories in public health would be beneficial to be introduced earlier in the curriculum and this will be done in the form of seminars. Two sessions have been added in the month of September and October with titles <i>Introduction in Environmental and Public Health</i> and <i>Environmental and Public Health Research</i> taught by Professor Konstantinos Makris to cover that need.</p> <p>We acknowledge the importance of incorporating qualitative approaches in the curriculum - <i>Special Topics in Public Health</i> which is going to be introduced this coming academic year has sessions on qualitative research approaches (<i>Health risk communication and qualitative research approaches</i>) and we have now added a new session titled <i>The value of qualitative methods to public health research</i> to be taught by Dr. Eliada Pampoulou; furthermore, the <i>Applied Methods for Public Health</i> course (MPH 607) goes over questionnaire design and talks briefly about different methods, such as focus groups and structured interviews.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>The quality assurance and management of the programme seem to be appropriate. The faculty has a multidisciplinary background with strong research records which ensures up-to-date research-based education for the students. This is a clear strength as public health is multidisciplinary by nature. The teachers are dedicated, approachable, friendly, and readily</p>	<p>We thank the EEC for the positive remark. All new faculty, including Special Teaching Staff, will be obliged to take a new university-wide 4 ECTS course on teaching (see Appendix 2). The course will be also strongly recommended to existing faculty, Special Teaching Staff, and Special Scientists of the MPH.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

<p>accessible to students with diverse academic backgrounds. Their commitment to accommodating individual learning needs contributes significantly to enhancing the learning outcomes of each student. The mandatory evaluation of courses and the close relationship between teachers and students support the curriculum developments. While a new mandatory course in pedagogical training will be in place for newly recruited staff in the fall 2024, this could be expanded to include all teachers, who have limited pedagogical experiences, to improve student-centred teaching.</p>		
<p>We acknowledge that the implementation of a new health system in Cyprus requires professional training in public health. Even though the department already has collaboration with the health sector, it seems to be based on individual contacts rather than institutional agreements. We propose closer collaboration with the health sector, which could attract more students and at the same give them real-life experiences.</p>	<p>We thank the EEC for the suggestion. We acknowledge the importance of the collaboration with the health sector and to that effect we have several collaborations with other organizations both at individual and at an institutional level. Some examples of these are the collaborations with German Oncology Center, the Cyprus National Committee on Environment and Health, the Diabetes Association, the Endocrinological Society, the State General Lab, the Cancer Registry, the Ministry of Health Medical Services and Public Health Department, and also with the private sector, such as the ClinBay Ltd and others. These are constantly pursued and will continue to be pursued. A number of our students have worked (or are currently working) with these institutions for their thesis, gaining valuable real-life experience, and several of these collaborations have resulted in peer-reviewed publications.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>The department awaits approval from the parliament for establishing a research unit, which is anticipated to benefit both the PhD and MPH degree programmes and foster collaboration within the health sciences school. To bolster the programme's branding, given the importance of public health education for Cyprus as a nation, a strategic initiative could entail establishing a Department of Public Health. This endeavour not only has the potential to attract a broader student population, including international</p>	<p>We thank the EEC for the comment with which we could not agree more. We have applied within the university for the establishment of a Department in Environmental and Public Health under the School of Health Sciences. The proposal has been approved by university's Committee on Strategic Planning and Development and has been communicated to the Ministry of Health for discussion. Given that Cyprus University of Technology is a public university the final approval needs to be given by the Parliament.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

<p>students, thereby sustaining and promoting the programme, but also holds significance for other reasons, including promoting research to effectively address the nation's public health challenges, advancing evidence-based policymaking and interventions, and signalling a proactive stance toward emerging health threats and challenges, including those stemming from climate change.</p>		
<p>The wide range of student support seems to cover the needs of the students. Library services are wide-ranging and easily accessible, which is important for the MPH programme. While the programme always makes sure that information is available in English to the students, information and emails from the university regarding some potentially important information are sometimes only written in Greek. This may imply that some students miss important information. The university should ensure that important information is always available in English to the students.</p>	<p>All communication with the students within the programme is done in English. We have further alerted the services of the university of the need to communicate all relevant information in English, in addition to Greek used for the students in the other programmes which are offered in Greek.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>An alumni follow-up reveals that the graduates of the MPH programme are able to compete for positions in the public or private sector in Cyprus or abroad as well as being successful in getting national or international PhD positions. The Alumni remain active and engaged in their public health community, which underscores the success of the programme in order to foster dedicated and committed public health professionals.</p>	<p>We thank the EEC for the positive remark. We are proud of our alumni and the success they have had in their careers as well as their contributions to public health.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>





### C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
<b>Aikaterini Lambrinou</b>	Dean, School of Health Sciences	
<b>Nikos Constantinou</b>	Chair, Department of Rehabilitation Sciences	
<b>Costas Christophi</b>	MPH Programme Coordinator	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
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Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	

**Date:** 8/7/2024

