



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

**Republic of Cyprus**

**External Evaluation Report  
Program of Study**

**Institution: Frederick University.....**

**Program of Study: ...Master of Science in Community  
Health Care – Distance Learning**



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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 APPENDIX (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:**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>UNIVERSITY / INSTITUTION</b>
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 Dr Eleni Deligianni, Educational officer of the Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, who accompanied the panel at Frederick University.

An on-site visit took place on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June (09:00 am) and lasted approximately 8 hours. The purpose of the visit was to assess the accuracy of the information and findings included in the Application for Evaluation Accreditation of the Master of Sciences in Community Health Care – Distance Learning (Doc. Number 200.1) submitted by Frederick University and to explore further issues which were identified in the content of the Application.

During the on-site Visit the EEC met with the following individuals:

1. Prof. George Demosthenous – Rector of University
2. Dr Christoforos Charalambous – Director of Administration and Finance
3. Prof. Christos Lionis – Program Coordinator
4. Dr Alexandros Argyriades – Faculty Member
5. Prof. Maritsa Gourni – Dean of School of Health Sciences
6. Prof. Despina Sapountzi – Head of Department of Nursing
7. Sophie Papatheocharous – Translator
8. Dr Niklia Eteokleous – Head of Distance Learning Committee
9. Stefanos Tsorakis – Director of Operations and Infrastructure
10. Andrea Athanasiou – Director of Student Welfare, Support and Studies
11. Dr Costas Kyriakou – Head of Internal Quality Committee
12. Program's Teaching Staff
13. Two students from the conventional MSc in Community Health Care
14. Dr Constantinos Kouroupis GDPR Responsible

In addition to the on-site visit, the EEC undertook a thorough examination of all key documentation including as well as additional material related to the DL administrative structure, policies, QA tools and so forth:

- Application Document 200.1
- Appendix 1 Compulsory and Elective Courses
- Appendix 2 Course Description
- Appendix 3 Detailed CVs of teaching staff
- Appendix 4 Infrastructure
- Appendix 5 Quality Standards and Indicators
- Appendix 6 Sample of Certificate
- Appendix 7 Feasibility Study
- Appendix 8 Study Guides Form 200.1.3

## 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) was in the main positive. The document was fairly complete (but with some gaps and several typos throughout) and in line with the guidelines of the Agency. Mostly there were not major deficiencies, and most of the requested information was available, although not always easy to retrieve due to information overload.

For example, it would be more sensible to prepare the CVs according to the standard EU format (max two pages). When prompted, the University was proactive in terms of providing additional material, policies and so forth.

During the on-site visit, the Rector and the relevant personnel of the University were very accommodating and collaborative. The visit was organized with great attention to detail and the hospitality of the team was commendable and much appreciated. The general environment and overall culture at Frederick University is warm and collegiate, and the friendliness and candor of its employees made the EEC's work pleasant.

## **FINDINGS:**

### **1. EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING WORK – AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

#### **- Organization of Teaching Work**

Student admissions procedures are set but no specific classification standards have been employed. The students are also required to have a working knowledge of the English language but no formal certificate is required. However, it seems that the existing procedures are generally adhered to. The expected number of students is relatively modest and, in this sense, is in observance of international Higher Education standards. This ensures that meaningful and effective learning will take place and access to teaching staff will be relatively easy to obtain.

1. *The criteria for student admission have been reformatted according to the comments and suggestions of the External Evaluation Committee as shown below:*

#### *General Criteria for Distance Learning Program*

*All distance learning programs of the University are offered using the e-learning method. Therefore, students applying to distance learning programs, apart from the academic requirements, they are required to meet the following: (a) have satisfactory level of digital literacy including use of computer and basic applications, file managing, text editing, searching the Internet, sending and receiving emails using a web browser, (b) access to a computer with speakers and ideally but not necessarily, a camera connected to their computer, (c) have broadband access to the Internet.*

*Student admission requirements (See Specific Instructions):*

*Candidates for the Programme must submit a recognized Bachelor degree or equivalent qualifications, including original certificates and transcripts. certificates and undergraduate transcripts.*

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to a computer with speakers and ideally but not necessarily, a camera connected to their computer, (c) have broadband access to the Internet.

### Specific Criteria

*The admission criteria and admission procedure specified in the General Student Regulations, as well as in the Frederick University Regulations.*

*The main admission requirements for the program are the possession of a recognized degree in any field or subject (eg Health Sciences, Nursing, Medicine, Psychology, Social Work) and very good knowledge of Greek and English (instruction language will Greek). The educational experience in Community Health Care is not a requirement, but will be considered an advantage. Candidates are expected to submit their application and all relevant documents: copies of certificates, undergraduate degree transcripts, two letters of recommendation (academic or professional) and a statement of research interests. The knowledge of the English language will be determined by a written test run by the University. In case the Evaluation Program Committee sees necessary, candidates may be asked for a personal interview.*

*All candidate applications will be assessed by the Evaluation Program Committee after the submission deadline on the basis of specific criteria such as study performance, letters of recommendation, digital literacy, research interests, interview, professional experience, knowledge of Greek and/or English etc. The Committee's decisions will be communicated by e-mail or mail to all candidates.*

The teaching procedures and curriculum are clearly highlighted in detail in Appendixes 1 and 2. The procedures for the conduct and the format of examinations are made available, however the marking scheme and the grading criteria are not clearly presented to students. This gap should be filled in line with standard international practices.

2. The academic staff informs the students from the very first day with the tracking module and a detailed table that presents the evaluation methods and criteria for the course. Attached is the special form which defines the criteria for the evaluation of student assignments with a marking scheme (see Annex 02- Student Evaluation, part 2.1). Also, attached is a final exam sample. (see Annex 02- Student Evaluation, part 2.2) A similar thesis assessment form is also distributed to the students. (see Annex 02- Student Evaluation, part 2.3).

At the beginning of each semester, students are informed for the assessment method of the course which is continuous (by participating in group activities, group or individual work and presentations, exercises or Quiz, self-assessment, presentation of produced product, etc ).

The written assessment might be a mid-term exam or and the final examination. Before preparing a test, a specifications table is applied which measures students' knowledge, understanding and their skills.

The final evaluation is always consistent with the objectives of each course, which are described in detail in each course's guide and offers flexibility with the ability to conduct computer examinations or open book exams, in specific cases.

Looking at the program policy documentation and the further explanations provided during the on-site visit, it is clear that student involvement in the improvement of educational processes is expected and sought after, both at the course level (via tutor evaluations) and the more general program level. Overall learning resources and facilities seem in line with similar DL programs. Student and staff testimonials during the visit suggested that feedback and control mechanisms exist and are adhered in the other programs, including the conventional MSc in Community Health Care. Monitoring, plagiarism and student support processes are referred to in the Application Document and the other Appendixes and were confirmed during the visit. The EEC was able to identify the existence of formal mechanisms for complaint management and dispute resolution.

Given that the program will be taught in Greek, all the expected students will be recruited from Greek speaking countries with a greater majority from Greece. The expected number of students is at around 60 individuals, but the planned number of students per class-section is to be kept at a maximum of 30, which is in line with CYQAA (Δ.Ι.Π.Α.Ε.) guidelines.

#### - Teaching

Teaching methods employed and the planned course content are mostly suitable for the proposed program. The general model of methodology is adequate for adult DL education, however it has to be pointed out that inconsistencies exist between the courses taught and within the weekly presentations of some of the course's study guides.

3. All course syllabi have been reshaped to have a common format in terms of videoconferences, references, collaborative activities and programming for overall consistency. The program's structure has also been improved with the necessary reevaluation of courses. This ensures a connection among courses in the same semester, such as "Biostatistics – Epidemiology" or "Evidence based health care-Theory and Research" (see Annex 03 – Study Guides and Annex 04 – Courses Description).

Feedback opportunities are provided and clarified to students at the beginning of each course, nevertheless the assessment criteria, as previously highlighted, have not been formalized and made available to students. The use of technology and electronic support is adequate for a DL program and aligned with common practice. In several cases the reading materials were adequate for the requirements of the subject but evidently outdated, including textbooks and published peer review articles. More emphasis should be put on directing students towards the use of relevant systematic reviews of the literature. Finally, suggested readings should be offered in the original language especially if written in English.

4. As to the evaluation criteria, refer to answer point 2.

Taking all the suggestions of the External Evaluation Committee into consideration, the bibliographic sources (publications and books) and detailed guides for courses have been renewed and updated. The recommendations of the Evaluation Committee have been implemented into the application. In addition, the students are proposed original readings written in English. The bibliography used is the most recent and relevant to the subject taught, and the readings have been carefully selected to fully meet the needs, requirements and capabilities of the students (see Annex 03 – Study Guides and Annex 04 – Courses Description). Such changes are indicative in the courses on Family Health Care with the code MCHC103.1 and MCHC103.2, in MCHC105 and 106. Also, taken into consideration is the External Evaluation Committee's suggestion to encourage students to seek systematic literature reviews and research sources published in prestigious scientific journals and also scientific writings in their original form.

The University has proceeded with library enrichment orders based on the discussion with the External Evaluation Committee. Students through the electronic library have access to over 5,000 books on the topic of Community Health Care (see Annex 05 - Books).

- **Teaching personnel**

The number of exclusively occupied full-time academic personnel supports in the main the program of study. The large majority of teaching staff indeed hold a PhD. However, there appears to be an in-house gap in terms of necessary expertise in core subjects such as biostatistics, advanced epidemiology and evidence-based health care. Teaching of these subjects heavily relies on the expertise of visiting lecturers.

5. As shown in Annex 06 – Teaching Staff, the permanent academic staff in the postgraduate Program of Study is 77%, while the remaining 23% consists of visiting staff. The teaching load of the visiting staff in no case exceeds the teaching load of

permanent staff. The visiting staff enrich the Program of Study with their specialized expertise and support the permanent academic staff of similar specializations. The delivery of courses such as “Biostatistics – Epidemiology” and “Evidence-based Health care - From theory to practice” is supported through the collaboration of Frederick University and the Social Medicine Department of the University of Crete (Annex 07 – Memorandums of Understanding). The teaching of the course “Biostatistics-Epidemiology” has been enriched with the participation and specialized expertise of Dr. Gregory Hlouverakis. Dr. Hlouverakis is an Assoc. Professor at University of Crete with over 12 years of academic experience in teaching biostatistics and a plethora of publications on this subject (see Annex 08 – CVs – Recruitment Applications). Dr Hlouverakis has expressed his willingness for a sabbatical leave and employment as permanent staff of Frederick University upon the program’s accreditation and if the needs of the program of study demand it. The University adopted the suggestion by the External Evaluation committee and has already placed recruitment applications for permanent staff position with specialization in Biostatistics. subject (see Annex 08 – CVs – Recruitment Applications).

The course «Interdisciplinary Management of Chronic Diseases» is enriched with the participation of Dr Maria Kapritsiou, in a permanent staff position. Dr Maria Kapritsiou holds a PhD from National & Kapodistrian University of Athens with specialization in Medical / Surgical Nursing and a plethora of publications and research projects in the domain. (see Annex 08 – CVs – Recruitment Applications)

Furthermore, apart from a number of individuals who are mostly visiting staff, the quantity and impact of the research output is below international standards and the role of lead or senior authors is not sufficiently represented. This gap is also observed in relation to the development of competitive grants, which is again mostly restricted to visiting staff.

6. Recognizing the need, for the academic staff to develop research action and scientific publications, in order to meet and exceed international standards, we have included this issue in the Strategic Development Plan of the School of Health Sciences for the next five years. This research policy involves the development of research activities that involve both academic / research staff and students through

ideas that are within the field of health sciences. The department's policy focuses on promoting high quality scientific research and creating a favourable environment for innovation.

In particular, research policy aims at:

- The creation of an appropriate research environment for all researchers with supporting actions for the submission and management of research projects.
- The reinforcement of the research infrastructure.
- The establishment of a network of cooperation with other research centers, Universities and Institutions.
- Expanding both basic and applied research. Through applied research, the goal is also to connect with the health sector and society in general
- In attracting funding in the field of research, the development of innovation and the diffusion of new knowledge.

This period of time, a series of publications have been approved, that came out from the collaboration between instructors and students of the conventional postgraduate Program of Study in Community Health Care (see Annex 09 – Certificates of Publications). Indicatively, the following headlines are listed: "High-risk behaviors in teens. The role of nurses", "The prevalence of depression in patients with cardiac insufficiency and correlation with determinants", "The development of depression in adolescence and the role of health professionals", "Presentation of risk assessment models of cardiovascular disease", "The quality of life of patients with colostomy and the effects of the disease in their daily life", "Financial crisis: What is the impact on suicidal rates?", "Depression screening in orphaned children: A systematic review" and many more.

Additional publications have already been submitted and internal funding has been secured for small-scale research. With the recent invitation of the Research Promotion Foundation (IPF) in Cyprus and the invitations of Horizon and Erasmus+, to submit research proposals, the teaching and research staff of the School of Health Sciences is preparing research proposals with goal to attract further external funding for the research development.

Some examples of titles that are ready for submission are: Healthy Cyprus - Health Promotion Application for mobile phones for people with disabilities, Cyprus, Frederick Simulation Labs (Erasmus +) and others under preparation.

An effort is also made to increase the impact of research through the collaboration

with other universities such as the University of Crete, the University of Patras, University of West Attica, the University of South Wales and the Haute Ecole Libre de Bruxelles - Ilya Prigogine.

The proposed program is taught mainly by full time staff, following the guidelines. However, the teaching load of the academic personnel is above 200 hours per year which makes it complicated to conduct high quality research and prepare external grants. Almost all teaching staff are also burdened with additional teaching duties.

7. The University, as part of its strategic planning, offers incentives for research and collaborations with other scientific bodies. In example, reduction of the teaching load for staff involved in research projects has already been implemented, as well as a reduction in the teaching hours for the Deans and Head of the schools who also carry out administrative tasks. In particular, the Dean of the School of Health Sciences, Professor Panagiota Bellou-Milona, has a 6-hour reduction, the Deputy Dean Professor Maritsa Gourni 3 hours, Dr. Alexandros Argyriadis, 3 hours reduction, and Dr. Georgios Charalambous also 3 hours.

## 2. PROGRAM OF STUDY AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

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

The purpose and objectives of the program and the learning outcomes are utilized as a guide for the design of the program of study, are formulated in terms of expected learning outcomes and are consistent with the mission and the strategy of the university. The expected learning outcomes of the program are known to the students and to the members of the academic and teaching personnel.

### - Structure and Content of the Program of studies

The committee were impressed that the course curricula clearly defines the expected learning outcomes, the content, the teaching and learning approaches and the methods of assessing student performance. However, a major weakness was noted in relation to the acquisition of relevant research skills prior to engaging with the dissertation. Moreover, support should be provided more systematically to prepare the students to develop key transferable skills and competencies such as academic writing at Masters level.

8. To complement and strengthen the students' skills in the Community Health Care Master's Program at the research methodology level, we have modified the program according to the suggestions of the Evaluation Committee. These is as follows: In the first semester, students will attend three thematic modules, one of which is the

"Research Methodology", which offers students the opportunity to acquire specific knowledge regarding both quantitative and qualitative research methods, triangulation and acquire academic writing skills. In the second semester, the compulsory course entitled "Biostatistics - Epidemiology" has been added, aiming to develop basic knowledge in the quantitative approach and discussion of issues related to health and life sciences. The teaching of the course "Biostatistics-Epidemiology" has been enriched with the participation and specialized expertise of Dr. Gregory Hlouverakis. Dr. Hlouverakis is an Assoc. Professor at University of Crete with over 12 years of academic experience in teaching biostatistics and a plethora of publications on this subject (see Annex 08 – CVs – Recruitment Applications). Dr Hlouverakis has expressed his willingness for a sabbatical leave and employment as permanent staff of Frederick University upon the program's accreditation and if the needs of the program of study demand it. The University adopted the suggestion by the External Evaluation committee and has already placed recruitment applications for permanent staff position with specialization in Biostatistics. subject (see Annex 08 – CVs – Recruitment Applications).

In the third semester, the compulsory course "Evidence based Health care – From theory to practice" is offered, which strengthens the students' skills in academic research and writing.

Therefore, there are three compulsory courses, one in each semester, which aim to enhance the knowledge and develop skills of students in research and academic writing. Special consideration is given to the preparation of students for the development of basic skills in academic writing, which is done through the MCHC112 (Research Methodology) module, but also by the preparation of students for their assignments on each course (see Annex 10 – Courses per Semester and Annex 04 – Courses Description).

#### - **Quality Assurance of the Program of studies**

The committee were impressed by the arrangements regarding the program's quality assurance which define clear competencies and procedures. However no specific QA guidance with detailed regulations was provided to the committee

9. In order to ensure the quality of the program, procedures were presented in detail

during the evaluation process. However, for a better and more detailed presentation of these criteria. (see Annex 11 – Quality Assurance Criteria).

#### - **Management of the Program of Study**

The procedures detailed for management of the program were generally of a very high standard. 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. 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.

#### - **International Dimension of the Program**

The proposed program meets an identified need in the targeted population and compares positively with corresponding programs operating in Cyprus and abroad in higher education institutions of the same rank. The program positively compares to corresponding programs of the same rank internationally. The program's collaborations with other institutions are compared positively with corresponding collaborations of other departments / programs of study in Europe and internationally.

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

There is a convincing case for the potential of the program to provide a productive connection with the labor market and Cypriot society. Procedures mean that the program conforms to the scientific and professional activities of the graduates, and are adequate and effective. According to the feasibility study, indicators for the employability of graduates are satisfactory. Benefits, for the society, deriving from the program are significant. The program will support the development of the new health system in Cyprus (GESY).

### **3. RESEARCH WORK AND SYNERGIES WITH TEACHING**

#### - **Research Teaching Synergies**

There is a great variability in the research output (in amount, impact and quality) across the lecturers. The current teaching collaboration between Frederick and the research hubs in Crete and Athens should be seen also as an opportunity to enhance the research portfolio of the Frederick staff. Specific measures to facilitate this should be put in place.

The teaching content of the program does not always reflect recent research in the field and the recommended literature is not always up-to-date. Research methods and their association with the adoption of evidence-based decision making are not well placed in the curriculum. Concepts around the research methods, identification of information and studies, synthesis of evidence provided and critical evaluation of the

identified information should be taught and mastered at the beginning of the program and not at the end. These skills should be associated with a formal teaching course compulsory for all students (either as a stand-alone unit like course 112 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 primarily* for any decision-making process.

10. Advocating fully the need of giving emphasis on student research and education and considering the recommendations of the evaluation committee, the curriculum has been enriched as mentioned in answer point 8. The course, Research Methodology, is a compulsory one and the content of the course of "Evidence Based Health Care- From Theory to Practice" has been strengthened and enhanced, as per the External Evaluation Committees suggestions, to further ensure students' research orientation. (see Annex 04 – Courses Description and Annex 08 – Courses per Semester)

The personnel is broadly qualified in the topics taught in the course (or relevant topics), but their research output is, for several of the lecturers, below average (judging from the number of publications, their impact, the journals published and the amount of competitive research funding secured). Also, for the lecturers with a good overall publication record, they do not have methodological research output. We recommend that the proposed program is used as a springboard to motivate and enhance the research part of their CVs and stimulate applied but also methodological research. Improving the research output of the lecturers will indirectly improve the education offered and tutors will be in a better position to supervise students in the writing of their theses and in potential publication of articles. To achieve this aim Frederick University needs to adopt 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 to provide.

11. The University, as part of its strategic planning, offers incentives for developing research projects and collaborating with other scientific bodies for the benefit of postgraduate students in Community Health Care. Recognizing the need, for the academic staff to develop research action and scientific publications, in order to meet and exceed international standards, we have included this issue in the Strategic Development Plan of the School of Health Sciences for the next three years. During the evaluation of the program, a series of publications were approved, Publications that were collaborations between teachers and students of the conventional postgraduate Program of Study in Community Health Care (see Annex 09 – Certificates of Publications). Additional publications have already been submitted and internal funding has been secured for small-scale research. With the

recent invitation of the Research Promotion Foundation (IPF) in Cyprus to submit research proposals, the teaching and research staff of the School of Health Sciences is preparing research proposals with goal to attract further external funding for the research development.

In addition, the University has taken various measures to promote research such as the reduction of teaching load for the submission of research proposals, the inclusion in the assessment process of academics of indicators such as: (a) number of publications - citations and (b) impact factor.

We agree with the evaluation committee that this Program of study functions as a mechanism for the promotion of both theoretical and applied research.

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

##### **- Administrative Mechanisms**

According to the application for the evaluation of the institution (Doc. 200.1), all DL students have access to the same services that students of conventional studies do. These services are provided by the Studies and Student Welfare Service (SSWS) and help the students with any academic or personal problems. Given the information that was collected by the EEC, these mechanisms do in fact seem to be working quite effectively, even in the cases of people with disabilities (the institution mentioned the example of giving a student with a disability more time during an examination).

Also, the EEC would like to compliment the university for the following services:

- a) The student's ombudsman. A mechanism designed for the students, so that their problems and suggestions will be handled objectively.
- b) Academic probation. When students have a GPA less than 6, they are under academic probation by the SSWS which means that for the next semester the student might be counselled to decrease his/her work load.

##### **- Infrastructures / Support**

Frederick University, and particularly the Learning Services Unit, has created an electronic platform exclusively for the DL programs, the EEC believes that this is one of the strong points of the infrastructures for the DL program, since the platform can support up to 10 000 students. Also, the university uses a plagiarism detecting software, Turn-it-in. Finally, all DL students have access to the facilities of the Library, which gives access to many online academic sources, via VPN.

## - Financial Resources

In the Application Document (Doc. 200.1) it is stated that the tuition fees for the proposed program are €100 per ECTS. However, in the feasibility study document, the suggested fees amount ranges from €5 000 to €8 000. Everything considered, the EEC believes that in comparison with similar programmes in other universities, the tuition fees are in a reasonable price range.

## 5. DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS

The EEC refers 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. Frederick University has already implemented 14 DL programs, most of them at the Master degree level.

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

Frederick University has developed:

- (I) A General Model of Distance Education via on line technologies, involving completely by distance courses and services and face to face, final exams that take place in exams centers.
- (II) An Organizational Administrative Structure that comprises: (a) a “Distance Learning Unit”, devoted to support teachers as well as to the Studies and Students Welfare Services, (b) a “Distance Learning Committee” related to the Senate, responsible for relevant quality assurance mechanisms etc. (c) a “Learning Services Unit”, linked to the Information Systems Services, to technical training and support etc.
- (III) An appropriate Infrastructure especially in terms of technological infrastructure (teleconferencing rooms, PC laboratories rooms, Media Production lab, servers, etc.) and qualified IT personnel.
- (IV) Electronic Libraries are rich and appropriate for the specific Program as well as to other programs, as is the case for most of the Universities in Cyprus
- (V) Policies, Regulations and procedures related to the needs of Distance Learning via Technologies. In particular, EEC would like to mention the following:
  - (1) They have defined a Distance Learning Programs Code of Practice
  - (2) They have defined General Guidelines for the Development of Distance Learning Programs via online technologies
  - (3) They have produced Distance Learning Instructors Guidelines (Pedagogical Framework, detailed guidelines, Good practice principles and examples)
  - (4) They have defined an “Ethics and Academic Conduct Code” for DL students

- (5) They have produced and apply a multidimensional system (including various questionnaires) for the evaluation by the students of course quality, faculty and services quality

Regarding the DIPAE criteria of the “Pedagogical Planning Unit for Distance Learning Programs”, it is clear that Frederick University has established such a unit. **The related unit functions and produces material and activities, however in order to guide and follow all the teachers working on DL courses, it is suggested that the university recruit additional personnel to support the Head of the Unit.**

12. The University has already employed Mrs Rafaella Neofytou (see Annex 08 – CVs) for the needs of the Open and Distance Learning Unit and plans to provide additional staff posts in the near future. With the strategy of developing a high level of distance learning courses comparable to major international European universities, Frederick University has put great emphasis on the development of the Distance Learning Unit.

#### B) Regarding the Program Study Guide:

According to the corresponding DIPAE criteria, 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;
- Students’ evaluation plan (e.g. an individual written work =20%, a case study analysis = 20/%, participation in on-line interaction =10%, final written exams= 50%)
- Presentation of the main educational material of each week
- Planning of teleconferences (called “Group Advisory meeting”) =~4+1 per course
- Planning of on-line interactions (synchronous and asynchronous ones)
- Various modes of learning activities and eventual assignments
- Bibliographic References and suggestions for further study.

The Courses Study Guides contain also in the beginning an introduction explaining to students the Course Method.

However, it is noted that:

- **Regarding the DIPAE criteria 7.4: There are predicted an important number of self-assessment activities/exercises. In some cases, it is needed to characterize them as assignments. In the case of real self-assessment exercises it is necessary to add the self-corrections guides.**
- **Regarding the DIPAE criteria 7.3: The study guides have predicted interaction with the teacher and among the students, mostly via on-line discussion, forum asynchronous discussions and chat/synchronous discussions. It is suggested to conceive and add some collaborative learning activities that would enrich the professional and scientific value of**

the program output.

13. We accept the recommendations of the external evaluation committee. The evaluation activities and the work submitted every six months in conjunction with students' self-assessment are described in the detailed course guides. They serve as a model of flexibility and adaptability to the needs of each department that are planned each semester. The evaluation of the course, initially begins with reference to the analytical course's and study guides, and it is flexible enough to design improved and tailored assessment procedures according to the groups formed in order to meet required needs (see Annex 03 - Study Guides and Annex 04 – Courses Description).

With regard to the Evaluation Committee's suggestions, improvements have already been made to several activities, and special emphasis has been put on how each lesson is to be evaluated. The evaluation points are distributed, at least 50% to the final examinations and 50% to mid-term evaluations. As per the University's Distance Learning Unit's pedagogical framework, interactive activities, such as participations to the forum and chat platform, students' participation in teleconferencing etc, are deemed compulsory in order to reward, evaluate and promote student interaction. The student's overall assessment is continuous and includes, in addition to the mid-term and final examinations, activities involving open-ended critical thinking questions, analysis and synthesis of ideas, short assignments, presentations, multiple choice questions, etc. This promotes the involvement of students in the learning process, which is deemed necessary to achieve the expected learning outcomes for each course.

Finally, it is to be noted that the university have started to address the issue of compliance with GDPR regulations, appointing a specialist (data protection expert from the Law Department) to monitor all the related procedures.

## 6. DOCTORAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY

N/A

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE<sup>1</sup>

- 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.

The proposed program builds on the successful experience of the conventional MSc in Community Health Care. The EEC was impressed with the program curriculum which presented a number of good practices in terms of its overall aims, purpose and the learning outcomes for students. The program quality assurance arrangements were clear and well-defined overall. The procedures detailed for the management of the program were also of high standards. Furthermore, the program greatly benefits from the strong collaboration between Frederick University and the University of Crete and the University of Athens, where there is a recognized peak of expertise and research excellence in relevant subjects around community health care. Frederick University has established a well-developed DL structure and infrastructure including appropriate policies, regulations, procedures and tools. A pedagogical planning unit has been successfully developed as well as DL Program Study Guide that fulfills the relevant DIPAE criteria.

However, the EEC noticed a number of limitations that they wish to bring to the attention of DIPAE and the program team. These include:

- The acquisition of relevant research skills by the students in the early stages of the program as these skills are foundational to the student experience and possibility to fully engage with the learning material. So the research becomes an essential requirement of the first semester and hence to be embedded throughout the whole program.
- A second limitation was identified in relation to the research capacity and capability of some of the members of the teaching staff that were also recognized by the program team during the on-site visit. The teaching staff have the appropriate qualifications in the topic area in relation to their clinical background and experience of health care services, but support needs to be provided in terms of the writing of competitive research grants and preparing publications to be submitted to high quality international academic journals, which will feed directly into the curriculum and improve student experience.
- Third, Frederick University should better support the teaching staff throughout the delivery of the DL program and hence it is suggested that

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

investment in human resources should be undertaken to improve the pedagogical development of the program. Finally, it is worth pointing out that Frederick University and the program team could have prepared the overall application with better attention to detail and with a better presentation of all the structure and procedures in place.

To conclude, the EEC recommends accrediting the proposed program, provided that all key specified recommendations are adequately addressed and fully implemented by Frederick University.

14. We accept and implement the suggestions and comments of the External Evaluation Committee. The curriculum provides compulsory courses for the development of research skills, as discussed in point 08. The coordinating team, in collaboration with the Nursing Department, the School of Health Sciences, the instructors who undertook the design of the guides for each lesson, the Distance Learning Unit, the Frederick University Internal Quality Committee and the University Authorities have all discussed extensively the results of this evaluation and made important changes to remodeling and improving the courses and their basic application. Special emphasis has been placed on the editing of the application and the analytical study guides at writing and content level. Special emphasis has also been placed on the development of students' research methodology skills. The content of the courses is largely supported and enriched through recent international references so that students will have the opportunity to study and critically evaluate the most recent literature. (see Annex 03 - Study Guides and Annex 04 – Courses Description).

Finally, in addition to the above, the team developed and improved the assessment system by emphasizing the dynamic interaction activities and cooperative activities among students as well as adding assessment rubrics that include the criteria that students should focus on when designing and preparing their assignments. Moreover, the workload of the academic staff was reduced (see Annex 06 - Teaching Staff).

Within the framework of the Distance Learning Unit, the Audio Visual Lab has also been furthered developed and strengthened, which supports distance learning in all offered curricula. The Audio Visual Lab checks the material presented to the students and makes corrections and suggestions to the academic staff, in terms of content and form. It also supports the academic staff in developing interactive

educational materials, e-books, interactive presentations, narrative presentations and notes and other tools and file types in order to be flexible and friendly to the student. At the beginning of each academic semester the Distance Learning Committee undertakes the training of the academic staff involved in distance learning. The trainees have the opportunity to gain knowledge about adult education and the philosophy of the distance learning method as well as the pedagogical background developed by the Committee and adopted in distance learning programs and is extensively informed about the use of e- platform, the technological tools provided by the university, the teleconference tool, the Committee's remarks and decisions. They are also informed about any kind of legislation that directives by CYQAA.

## Quality Standards and Indicators

### External Evaluation of a Program of Study

Institution: ...Frederick University.....
Program of Study: ...Master of Science in Community Health Care – Distance Learning
Duration of the Program of Study: ...14 Months.....
Evaluation Date:...20/06/2018.....

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 (GR)
Georgia Salanti	Professor	University of Bern (CH)
Egli Costi	Medical Student	University of Cyprus (CY)

**Date and Time of the On-Site Visit: ...20/06/2018 09:00**

**am..... 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 complainzt management and for dispute resolution.							X

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

**1.1.2 Provision was made to split students into smaller groups if required which will improve the students experience.**

15.As it has been pointed out by the External Evaluation Committee, relevant provisions have been made for separating students into groups of 30 so as to improve the quality of learning of the curriculum.

**1.1.3.1 Assurance should exist that the curriculum is made available to the students in a timely fashion.**

16.During the first week of each semester in each course, students are informed about the module guide and all necessary and important information about the course (course content, student obligations, evaluation methods, days and hours of meetings) on the online course platform at (<http://lms.frederick.ac.cy>). Also, students can access the academic calendar (<http://www.frederick.ac.cy/quick-links/academic-calendar>) where they can see information about the exam periods, holidays, beginning and end classes.

1.1.3.4 and 1.1.3.5 The marking scheme and the grading criteria are not clearly presented to the students.

17. Students are informed about the evaluation methods both during the presentations by the teacher and electronically through the course diagram posted on the website of each course. In each course the evaluation criteria for the assignments, as well as the rating scale are clearly presented.

The exams follow a common format that includes questions of graded difficulty and varied form (multiple choice, true-false, short and extensive analysis, critical thinking questions). (see Annex 02 - Student Evaluation, part 2.1 and part 2.2).

The final evaluation is always consistent with the objectives and learning outcomes of each course, which are described in detail, in each module guide.

Note, additionally:

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

40 Greeks and 20 Cypriots

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

Greece and Cyprus

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

30 per group

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.

1.2.1 and 1.2.2 The general model of methodology is adequate for adult DL education, however there are inconsistencies between the courses taught and in the weekly presentations of some of the courses study guides.

18. All module guides have been redesigned according to the instructions of the External Evaluation Committee and any mismatches between courses have been eliminated. (see Annex 03 - Study Guides)

The methodology of each course is designed in such a way that it aims adults. The level of academic knowledge offered, the sources proposed, the methods and the educational strategies followed are the same as other Universities such as the Open University in the UK, the Open University of Greece and Open University of Cyprus. Also, the grading of difficulty and the teaching approach is such that it fully responds to the communication of knowledge with adults (see Annex 04 - Course Description)

1.2.4 see comment for 1.1.3 and 1.1.5.

19. See answers points 16 and 17

1.2.7 In many cases the reading materials were outdated including textbooks and published peer review articles. Opportunity should be taken to direct students to relevant and up to date systematic review of the literature. Given that students are assumed to have a working knowledge of English, suggested readings should be provided in the language that they were originally published.

20. The proposed bibliography has been updated (See Answer 5 and Annex 04 – Courses Description)

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

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

1.3.1 There is an in-house gap in terms of necessary expertise in core subjects such as biostatistics, advanced epidemiology and evidence-based health care. Teaching of these subjects heavily relies on the expertise of visiting lecturers.

21. See answer point 5

1.3.2.2 Beyond certain individuals, the quantity and impact of the research output is below international standards and the role of lead or senior authors is poorly represented.

22. See also answer point 6.

1.3.9 Overall, the in-house staff appears to have insufficient capacity and capability to develop competitive grants.

23. During the evaluation of the program, a series of articles (most of which are systematic reviews), came out from the collaboration between teachers and students of the conventional Master Program in Community Health Care which is offered the last 4 years (see Annex 09 – Βεβαιώσεις Δημοσιεύσεων). Additional publications have also been taxed and internal funding has been secured for short-scale research. With the recent invitation of the Research Promotion Institute in Cyprus to submit research proposals, the teaching and research staff of the School of Health Sciences has begun the process of preparing research proposals with a view to further attracting external funding for the development of research.

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

2.1.4 and 2.1.6 see comments in section 1.2.

24. The design of the postgraduate program in Community Health Care is now consistent to the learning outcomes expected during the students' studies. This is achieved both by the targeting set at the beginning of each week, as seen in all the analytical course guides, and by frequent communication between instructors and students through email, teleconferencing and communication activities such as forums, chat, etc. Assurance of desired learning outcomes is realized through continuous assessment, which draws data from the participation of students as well as from the activities that are marked, i.e. the two assignments of the semester and the final examination. Overall, the program adopts the philosophy of continuous monitoring of student activity throughout the semester by the teaching staff and takes immediate action in the event of any perceived difficulty.

The learning process is designed to achieve the learning outcomes by following all the principles, strategies and methods of distance learning. Learning processes are flexible and adaptable to the needs of each student with the aim of constantly supporting them to achieve desired learning goals in each thematic unit. As mentioned, a range of educational tools is used both on the online course platform and in the overall method used by Frederick University to conduct distance learning curricula to ensure that each learning process is appropriate and certified to allow mastery of all learning objectives set by the analytical course guides.

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 A major weakness has been noticed in relation to the acquisition of relevant research skills prior to engaging with the dissertation.

25. See answer point 8

2.2.5 Support should be provided more systematically to prepare the students to develop key transferable skills and competencies such as academic writing at master level.

26. Following the suggestions of the External Evaluation Committee and after the reorganization of the Curriculum, students have the opportunity to develop their academic writing skills at the Master's level. (see answer point 8, Annex 03 - Study Guides, Annex 04 – Courses Description)

2.2.8 The Committee expresses concerns for the considerable amount of outdated material that is included in the course guide.

27. With the reformulation of the structure and content of the thematic units as mentioned above, recent material has been added from the international scientific trends prevailing in Community Health Care over the last three years. The bibliographic references used weekly as the base material for students, have also been renewed as well as the writings that are to be used as guides for learning (see answer point 4).

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
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p>2.3.3 Quality assurance mechanisms are in place but no specific guide with detailed regulation was provided to the Committee.</p> <p>28. During the oral presentation of the quality criteria for the proposed program, to the external Evaluation Committee, a detailed description of how the University responds to each criterion as defined by the CYQAA was presented. However, to better facilitate and understand the quality criteria and the University's response, a detailed guide is provided with more information (see Annex 11 – Quality Assurance Criteria).</p>						
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
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p>2.4.5 The information related to the program will be made available once it is approved.</p> <p>In the case of practical training, note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number of credit units for courses and the number of credits for practical training</li> <li>- In which semester does practical training takes place?</li> <li>- Note if practical training is taking place in a country other than the home country of the institution which awards the higher education qualification</li> </ul> <p>N/A.</p>									
<b>2.5</b>	<b>International Dimension of the Program of Study</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>			
2.5.1	The program's collaborations with other institutions are compared positively with corresponding collaborations of other departments / programs of study in Europe and internationally.								X

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><b>2.5.4 The proposed program meets an identified need in the targeted population.</b> 29. During the design of the proposed program, issues of compatibility and comparability with similar programs operating in Cyprus, Greece and the rest of Europe were raised. It was found that no similar distance program exists in Cyprus or Greece. Some conventional programs have been operating in recent years in Greece, while some operate in other countries, too. However, this specialization is rare, and we are delighted to offer this program to students, giving them the opportunity to access this knowledge. Therefore, the design of this particular program is intended to be compatible, comparable and improved compared to other relevant programs.</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 positively compares to corresponding programs of the same rank.</p>							
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Connection with the labor market and the society</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
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.

2.6.3 The program will support the development of the new health system in Cyprus (GESY).

### 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 The program team has aspirations to become more research active. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the Frederick university facilitates the aspiration of the program team through for example greater access to internal funds.

30. The Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Crete and the involvement of professors from the Department of Medicine, which has already developed other research collaborations, is contributing to the academic extroversion of Frederick University and our specific postgraduate program. Students come in contact with existing research programs from other countries and are highly satisfied with fulfilling the request to undertake research courses.

3.1.7: Course 112 (Research methods) should become a compulsory part of the program to provide students with adequate knowledge and skills to understand research (and conduct, if relevant). As a minimum evidence-based methods and practices should be taught in the first semester potentially embedded in the Epidemiology course.

31. See answer point 8

#### 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>4.1.2 The statutory administrative mechanisms for monitoring and supporting students are of high standards, for example the mentoring policies and procedures.</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			X		

	<p>new technologies on the basis of a structured learning framework.</p>			
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p>4.2.1 Relevant literature should be provided in original language when English versions are available.</p> <p>32. During the initial application period for the evaluation of the specific program, several of the suggested translations were in Greek to facilitate students who preferred to receive knowledge in their mother language. At the instigation of the External Evaluation Committee, the program designing team was extensively encouraged to have students study the original texts in their written language. Students are now given the opportunity to access translated text; however, the original is proposed. To ensure the ability to use the English language, a written test has been added to the admission criteria for students, to ensure adequate knowledge for the purpose of assessing most original bibliographic sources see answer point 5, Annex 03 - Study Guides and Annex 04 – Courses Description</p> <p>4.2.6 Some outdated materials are provided and should be updated.</p> <p>33. See answer point 4, Appendix 03 - Study Guides and Annex 04 – Course Description</p>				

4.2.7 The personnel activities of the DL pedagogical unit should be more comprehensively supported by the university.

34. The Distance Learning Unit has been equipped with the creation of an Audio Visual Lab, a workshop for the support of distance learning in all offered curricula. The laboratory takes control of the material presented to students, making corrections and suggestions to academics in terms of content and form. It is interactive and contemporary and in collaboration with the academic staff's it designs the material: articles, e-books, PowerPoint files and other tools and file types that are flexible and student-friendly and that promote the learning objectives that have been set. The Distance Learning Unit undertakes at the beginning of each academic semester the training of academic staff involved in distance learning procedures. The teaching staff has the opportunity to gain knowledge of adult education and the philosophy of distance learning. Members are updated in detail about the use of the selected electronic tools provided by the University, the decisions of the distance learning committee and the new academic and legal standards and instructions by the CYQAA.

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.			X		
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		

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

**4.3.2 The information provided is not sufficient to make a justifiable assessment.**

35. The main sources of funding in this Master's program come from tuition fees paid by students. In addition, teachers' achievements at the research level often attract external funding, which is used for the internal development of academic staff and schools. Finally, a part of the funding comes under internal support from the University authorities who pay for the development of small-scale research. Overall, there is the financial support of academic staff and students in the development of research projects. In recent years, internal funding has grown steadily, and more and more processes are being taken into account to improve and provide opportunities for the development of research activity.

**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.**

36. We do not accept the Commission's comment as Frederick University is, perhaps, the only private university where the salary scale of teaching staff is competitive and comparable to the salary scale of public universities.

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.

37. The tuition fees paid by the students are comparable to other universities in Cyprus and other European countries. The University also grants scholarships to:

- a. Undergraduate Studies - Provides (full and partial) tuition scholarships to excellent secondary school graduates.
- b. Undergraduate Studies - Provides (full and partial) tuition grants to graduates of secondary education that have demonstrated talent and high performance in fields related to the curriculum that they follow at the University.
- c. Postgraduate Studies - Provides (full and partial) tuition grants to holders of a bachelor's degree with high academic performance.

Scholarships greatly reduce the cost for each student who gets a discount on tuition fees.

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.**

38. In the announcement of staff to be employed in distance learning programs, the criterion of certified knowledge in distance learning and adult education is always a priority. Such notice has already been announced and can be found on the internet and on the Frederick University website; they can be displayed on demand. A key criterion for the University is the knowledge of distance learning for those employed in the program, as this ensures the provision of a high level of knowledge and service.

**5.3 See comment 4.2.7.**

39. See answer point 34

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

**5.8 There is room for improvement in terms of the design of learning activities in particular by emphasizing the focus on interactive and collaborative activities.**

40. Following the suggestions of the External Evaluation Committee, the Curriculum was enriched with interactive and group work as shown in Appendix 02 - Student Assessment, Appendix 03 - Study Guides, and Appendix 04 - Description of Courses. The educational material used in the postgraduate program is in line with the requirements of accepted distance learning methods. The project design team uses a modern bibliography that can be viewed electronically by access to a database provided by the University. It uses modern educational tools such as videoconferencing, modern communication tools such as forum and chat, makes use of narrative presentation files and video tutorials, and uses a whole host of additional strategies that go hand in hand with remote learning.

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.	X

**The following criterion applies additionally for doctoral programs of study.**

**N/A**

## FINAL REMARKS – SUGGESTIONS

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

The program document, the facilities and resources available were thoroughly analyzed by the EEC. Extensive discussions were also undertaken with academics, students, and administrative and technical support staff.

All considered, the EEC recommends accrediting the MSc in Community Health Care – Distance Learning. However, it is felt that key issues highlighted in the Findings section and summarized in the Conclusions should be promptly tackled and that these changes are implemented by Frederick University.

The EEC believes that the extent of the changes required and the responses that will be provided to the above recommendations will require for the program to not start before the second semester of the academic year 2018-19.

*We would like to thank the External Evaluation Committee for its constructive comments and suggestions, which we have fully implemented with the view to improve significantly the quality of the curriculum.*

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

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

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