

**Higher Education Institution's Response
E-Learning Programme of Study**

Date: Date

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Frederick University
- **Campus:** -
- **School:** Education and Social Sciences
- **Department / Sector:** Department of Education
- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

Programme

In Greek: Διοίκηση και Ηγεσία Σχολικών Μονάδων (3 ακαδημαϊκά εξάμηνα, 90 ECTS, MA, Εξ αποστάσεως)

In English: Educational Administration and Leadership (3 Academic Semesters, 90 ECTS, Master MA, Distance Learning)

Language(s) of instruction: Greek

Programme's Status: Currently Operating

The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the "Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws of 2015 to 2019" [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].



A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

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

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

The Programme's Committee and the Department would like to thank the evaluation Committee for the remarks and the overall evaluation process.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

1.a. *To improve the study programmes focus and clarity, the two optional study scenarios in the same programme should be discussed. As offering is a single MA program it may be confusing that students can choose between two scenarios;*

- *scenario A: thesis option with 40 + 30 ECTS compulsory studies and 20 ECTS elective studies*
- *Scenario B: 40 ECTS compulsory studies and 50 ECTS elective studies*

Scenario A, a traditional masters programme with thesis of 30 ECTS, is potentially less attractive than scenario B, a clearly more professional programme with no thesis. Most of the students appear to choose the professional orientation.

The structure of two study scenarios, a thesis and a non-thesis study path, reflects a practice that has been established since the program's launch. As a rule, the two study scenarios are presented and explained to the interested parties through all the channels of information provision (information study brochures, website etc.). In addition, the academic advisors discuss with the students the relative advantages of each of the two

scenarios and in a detailed and explicitly way. At the same time, as coordinators, we are responsible from the very beginning of each semester to address students' concerns about the completion of a master' thesis in our program. In particular, students who are interested in completing the master' thesis are informed by the coordinators who are giving information through a prepared master's thesis document (see **Annex 1**) with all the information on students' obligations for completing the master's thesis. Overall, the experience from the operation of the program throughout its years of operation is that students understand the different study scenarios and choose, either option A or B, based on their own scientific and professional priorities and aspirations. Furthermore, in order to attract more students for completing the master' thesis (option B), at the end of each semester we reach out to students with excellent grades in order to express their interest and support them for the completion of a master's thesis. Based on that, we have a number of students who choose to complete the master' thesis and a number of students who choose to proceed with the selection of the courses.

1.b. *A student-centred approach as a mission and vision of the Frederick University is a good choice and well expressed in all levels of the organisation. The definition and idea of it could be further elaborated. At present it appears that the development of a student's full potential is the key focus along with new knowledge production and it's transfer from teachers to students, evaluation of students' performances against the programme goals through learning outcomes being of central importance. Arguably an approach that emphasises more learning processes with co-learners, more knowledge co-creation and process learning methods with students actively planning and steering the learning activities and learning environments could be equally successful. Also, research on student learning and higher education pedagogy could be an interesting opening as a field of study.*

It is true that the University's mission and vision is based on a student-centred approach orientation. In particular, we promote a philosophy that stresses the learning aspect instead of the teaching aspect (teaching, as in a traditional behaviouristic sense) and comprehends learning environments as settings to build learning communities where all members, teachers and students, are viewed as active learners and researchers in order to enhance the programme's aim and goals. In addition, this student-centred approach is

embedded in our University's culture in which all teaching staff, administrative staff are aware about the important aspect of supporting and communicating with students and above all to promote a sense of belonging in our University family, both in a conventional and in a distance learning environment. Also, students have the opportunity to take initiatives in several educational activities in all modules of the programme, experiment with learning methods that interest them most, ask questions and produce knowledge, and explore different learning routes and learning resources through research, study and reflection.

1.c. *There is a need for coherent and consistent programme information across all platforms as there appears at times to be a number of contradictions between internal programme information and that which is available on public platforms.*

The University's website reflects the information of the programme that is currently evaluated and running. The Public platforms are fed with new information regarding the programme as soon as planned changes are approved by pertinent academic and governing University's bodies and, when necessary, by CYQAA. Upon the programme's accreditation the University's website will be updated to reflect the approved structure and content.

1.d. *Policies outlined on the University website indicate an awareness of the workload conventions associated with ECTS. Arguably there might be more clarity when seeking to translate this across wider University teaching, assessment and certification policies.*

Frederick University is holder of both the ECTS label and the Diploma Supplement label ([Link](#)). All Frederick University programmes of study are structured as per the Bologna Process (Three (3) Cycles) ([Link](#)). Master programmes in Frederick University are between 90 – 120 ECTS and each academic year corresponds to 60 ECTS (30 ECTS per semester). Each ECTS corresponds to 25 – 30 hours of student workload and the ECTS allocated for each course are carefully planned and implemented by the Department in order for the student to fulfill the necessary learning outcomes and acquire the skills and competencies related to the course. All Master programmes of the University are in accordance with the Cyprus Qualifications Framework (CyQf) ([Link](#)).

Furthermore, Frederick University has conducted several trainings regarding the ECTS philosophy and implementation and all new teaching staff members get acquainted through relevant resources with its significance for designing teaching and learning, and for the development of new courses.

1.e. *Consideration should be given to examining the role of the higher education teacher as an autonomous professional. The goal of creating an environment where autonomous teachers are given an opportunity to develop their fields of expertise in partnership and dialogue with colleagues is a laudable one. It draws on and helps develop a set of evolving skills and competences and skills that take account of and impact on a changing society. It is also important, at all educational levels, to discuss key issues such as the foundational concepts or 'hidden curricula' underpinning programme and course provisions. This sort of issue that might usefully investigated in a formal teaching qualification.*

We agree with the Committee's comment that higher education teacher must be seen as an autonomous professional. Up until today, teachers' academic autonomy is included in the University's fundamental principles and is secured by University's rules and regulations that govern the University's routine as well as its development. In general, scientific collaboration with both internal and external colleagues is encouraged. For instance, a number of our programme's modules and content areas are the product of synergies between different members of the teaching staff. Also, almost all of our academic staff is involved in various external professional scientific bodies that falls within their scientific field by promoting knowledge both personal and in general. In addition, our staff is involved in joint publications and cooperate in research and educational projects with other external colleagues from University, research centers etc. In general, all of our teaching staff is given an opportunity to develop their fields of expertise in partnership and dialogue with colleagues is a laudable one. Yet, based on this particular comment we will further support and communicate the important aspect of partnership with colleagues both in Cyprus and abroad for all of our teaching staff and based on the autonomous professional aspect of staff in academia. Concerning the comment on "hidden curricula" we agree with the Committee's recommendation for investigating this foundational concept in a formal teaching qualification. Overall, as stated at previous comments and observations University's mission and vision (e.g. student-centred approach etc.) is promoted to students both by our academic staff and academic advisors.

Overall, issues that are being observed are being discussed by the programme's required courses and are revisited via the elective courses in conjunction with more specific, content-areas-sensitive topics. During the program's review, specific guidelines were discussed and agreed upon with the faculty to secure that the program and the courses' development would address the overall educational administration and leadership field.

1.f. *The University should investigate the possibility of developing a meaningful professional practice network to allow participants formally link their theoretical knowledge with the development of practical skills and competences.*

The Department already works in order to internationalise its staff profile and its students through the increase of mobility via the Erasmus program, further involvement in EUConexus networks (Frederick University is an associate member of EU-Conexus European University for Smart Urban Coastal and Sustainability) ([Link](#)). This overall aspect promotes the theoretical knowledge with the development of practical skills and competences among students and teaching staff. Also, under a broader university plan, the Department has identified a series of research related KPIs so that members of staff can relate to tangible and quantifiable targets as well as a series of support mechanisms to help their achievement. Students are encouraged to participate in mobility programs (ex. Erasmus) for placement in order to further enhance their practical skills and competences. Furthermore, the University's operates the Career office with goals the acquisition of the necessary skills for a successful future career. The Careers Office supports Frederick University students as well as graduates in finding either part-time jobs to support their studies or full-time jobs after their graduation. It also helps students who want to continue their studies by providing information on current scholarship schemes and helping them with the application procedure.

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment

(ESG 1.3)

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant
2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	Compliant

Areas of improvement and recommendations

2.a. *There is a danger of over assessment, and the course team needs to monitor the number of assessment points across the programme as a whole. While each may be justifiable in isolation, the cumulative impact of multiple assessment points across a programme such as this targeted at professional learners, many of whom are returning to learning, can be significant.*

We acknowledge the important issue that emerges here concerning the over assessment aspect as a whole. In particular, by taking into consideration the overall number of courses in each semester, students have to face multiple assessment methods in all courses. However, the above configuration of these assessments comes from the provided guidelines and regulations by the CYQAA, in which various assessment methods must be presented in the weekly material of each course (e.g. assignments, self-evaluation activities as an important assessment aspect promoted by the educational context in general, etc.). Yet, we have invited all teaching staff to review these types of assessment in all of the courses of our program in order to see how they can be configured so that they do not seem overwhelmed to the students (e.g. reduction of questions etc.). Finally, in the beginning of each semester, all teaching staff is expected to submit the courses' syllabuses to the programme's coordinators. The programme's coordination team examines the assessment issue as a whole, taking into consideration the previous academic year's IQC101 (annual Courses' Evaluation Reports that

include courses' statistics), students' assessment of all courses offered the previous academic year, plus the assessment activities in each course syllabus, and gives suggestions for improvement if necessary (for instance to reduce some of the self-assessment exercises etc.).

2.b. *While many of the course descriptors are of a very high quality, there is a substantial variation across the programme. This is particularly marked with regards to the currency of the bibliographies. While the EEC is conscious of the challenges posed by the limited number of Greek language texts and the associated need to translate both concepts and texts, the substantial difference in the breadth and currency of publications listed in the course descriptors is striking. Consideration should be given to each programme team including details not only of Greek texts – whether classic or modern – but also a list of relevant journals that will be used to source relevant publications.*

The recommendations of the EEC have been adopted. Please refer to **Annex 2** for the revised syllabi.

2.c. *Greater clarity with regards to role of research in 'taught mode', particularly with regards to engagement with and production of research.*

Indeed, research is an important aspect in a post-graduate level. In particular, students need to engage and produce research throughout the duration of their studies. Based on the recommendation of the committee we have implemented the following:

- Encouragement of the teaching staff to engage students in collecting data or involving them in various parts of their own research activity (e.g. participate in small scale research studies in order to collect data for a particular research aspect.)
- Encouragement of the teaching staff to promote assignments in which students could engage in research and collect data (where is possible) in order to be familiarized with the aspect of research in "taught mode".

Also, specific guidelines were discussed and agreed upon with the faculty (authors of the study guides and courses' coordinators). The aim was to secure that the programme and the courses' implementation would highlight specific (already included) research elements:

- Up-to-date theoretical content and topics that are informed by the instructors' research practice and publications so that students become familiar with recent research tendencies and results.
- Study material embracing and demonstrating a variety of methods and educational and epistemological approaches, relevant to the courses' content, and which inform and are informed by research practice;
- Educational activities (including assessment methods) that give students the opportunity to explore research methods and qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques (such as statistical analysis, narrative and thematic analysis, conversational analysis, interpretative analysis, visual analysis etc.), experiment with them, get feedback from the instructor and their peers, and learn by doing and reflecting, as well as present their work to the scientific community.

A peer review procedure secures that these guidelines are be implemented.

2.d. Need to provide opportunities for skills development opportunities in professional practice contexts. One element that the course team might consider is the more explicit inclusion of a tailored practicum element that would allow participants demonstrate their mastery of identified skills and competencies within an educational setting.

The practicum element is an important aspect to demonstrate the skills and competencies that have been learnt during the learning process of the courses. Based on this, we have all of our teaching staff is promoting, through their courses, activities that include videos, scenarios, case studies that could engage students into a more practicum aspect and apply the skills and competencies learnt from the classes. Also, based on the recommendation, the programme's coordination team examines the possibility of including a practicum dimension in each one of the content areas (in select courses) as an assessment form. This inclusion will be facilitated by the Departments collaborations with educational organizations (formal, informal and non-formal education) and subsequent internships.

2.e. *While teacher autonomy in the context of the teaching practices and methods used during the modules is to be welcomed, it is important that the programme develop mechanisms to ensure that every teacher has the appropriate skills to teach by distance. For this reason it is suggested that making the optional professional development for supporting distance learning skills mandatory for everyone is considered.*

The University is working towards achieving that goal: for the optional professional development to be considered as mandatory starting in Fall 2021. The newly established Centre for Professional and Personal Development of Frederick University is responsible to make the decision. The Center aims to cultivate the professional, but also the personal growth and development of Frederick University staff. The breadth of this task is very wide, from improvement of pedagogical techniques, training on new technologies and dissemination of policies and procedures, to promotion of values and communication of organizational goals to personal well-being. As of now, Frederick University ensures that appropriate training and support is provided for the academic staff and that this training is enhanced in the light of technological and educational developments. The University gives great emphasis on staff training and development. Since the introduction of Distance Learning programs trainings are provided on a regular basis. The Distance Learning Committee (DLC) in collaboration with the Learning Support Unit (LSU) and the Open and Distance Learning Center (ODLC) organize and deliver regular training sessions and information days for the academic staff involved in distance teaching. Specifically, the initial basic training for new distance learning instructors it is scheduled and delivered at the beginning of every semester. Follow up training sessions throughout the semesters are also organized based on the needs and demands of the new as well as experienced academic staff in distance teaching and learning. Additionally, various sessions are scheduled in light of any technological and pedagogical developments and advancements. Finally, information and training sessions are organized and delivered within the academic year, when considered necessary and upon request on a personal as well as group/program level basis. In order to better support the academic staff, a DL Instructors Portal, a DL Instructors Induction Course and Sample Distance Learning Courses are developed in LMS. Educational materials, videos, tutorials and guidelines are developed by the DLC, ODLC and DLU (Distance Learning Unit) and are provided to instructors (via the aforementioned portals and courses). The academic staff involved in distance learning programs is also welcomed to attend any other professional development training is provided



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by the University. The Distance Learning Committee in collaboration with the Open and Distance Learning Center will continue to regularly organize professional development trainings for the DL instructors (newcomers and experienced), as well as to pedagogically and technically support them.

3. Teaching staff

(ESG 1.5)

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

3.a. *Ensure that if run, the MA in Leadership and Administration has an identity of its own and caters for students who consciously chose an in-person programme of study.*

Although this is a Distance Learning programme, the Department welcomes the suggestion for the corresponding conventional (face-to-face) programme.

3.b. *Analyse the possibility of developing a training programme plan increasing the formative actions that provide a wide spectrum of skills, not solely focusing training and development in the realm of technology supported teaching. The achievement of the formative plan could be recognized with a specific accreditation in university teaching methodologies and skills as some universities do.*

The Department welcomes the suggestion, and the University is taking it into consideration. In particular, the Department has decided to take the following actions:

- To further enhance the seminar series where all faculty members, as well as invited speakers, present their research work and receive feedback on their research work. The use of online technology was recommended to limit travel costs for invited speakers.
- To organize specialized research seminars by invited speakers of international research calibre. The Department has agreed with visiting faculty members to provide

research seminars in their field to faculty members and PhD students. We believe this will have a positive and immediate impact.

- To increase the research support administration capacity. It has been identified that many colleagues are reluctant to engage in funded research initiatives due to the administrative overhead this often entails. For this reason, a new research officer has been hired in the Research and Interconnection Service with such specific duties.
- To increase training capacity towards faculty members for matters relating to research engagement. In February 2021 the University hired a new research officer with experience in administering research projects, editing research proposals, and enhancing/facilitating research network development. The new recruit will focus on the provision of training and development seminars to faculty and assisting them in developing and enhancing their research collaborations

3.c. *Consider implementing programmes and resources to promote innovation initiatives. The teaching innovation prize could be seen as a model for these initiatives, but other initiatives such as a program to provide financial support for innovation projects could have more impact gathering and involving several academics around a project.*

The EEC's recommendation has been adopted. In fact, starting this academic year, the University has established the 'Teaching Excellence Awards', an initiative with the goal of acknowledging best practices and encouraging DL instructors to strive for excellence in teaching. Concretely, as per the decision of the University Council in its 100th meeting, Frederick University has established a number of awards in memory of its Founder, Michael Frederickou. The awards aim to highlight actions that promote the key values of the Founder and of the University, as expressed in the university's core mission pillars. The Michael Frederickou Teaching Excellence Awards (as mentioned above) are among the most prestigious awards and are awarded via nomination by colleagues or self-nomination. The Evaluation Committee comprises the School Deans, the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs and the President of Frederick University Council. During this year's graduation ceremony, awards for good practices and teaching excellence in distance learning programmes have been given ([Link](#)).

Furthermore, the University provides Internal funding for faculty members that require financial assistance to develop their research ideas and innovative projects. Notably, faculty members

will take advantage of the decision by the Senate in Fall 2020 to fund competitive research proposals. Specifically, the Senate has allocated a portion of the University's Research Fund for an internal funding scheme through which members of staff that have lacked the financial support to further their research through external means and indicate a reasonable path to the generation of research output can apply for internal small-scale financial support (5,000 to 10,000 euro per project). The call was announced in January 2021 and several groups in the department have submitted proposals in their fields of expertise.

3.d. *Evaluate the benefits of linking teaching assessments promotion. It is common practice to see career advancement in Higher Education linked to evidenced examples of teaching quality. This can recognise and stimulate teaching quality and prevents teaching being viewed as secondary to research as marker for career advancement. This approach has the benefit not only of recognising good teaching but also of ensuring that students continue to benefit from innovative and high-quality teaching experiences.*

According to the University's rules regarding academic staff promotion process, each full time teaching personnel promotion includes a report by an external to the university, special scientific committee. This committee examines the candidate's portfolio and one of the indicators that are taken into consideration is teaching quality. The committee has at its disposal students' assessments, teaching material, and a teaching demonstration by the candidate.

3.e. *In addition, consideration might be given to linking teaching quality to increased remuneration.*

This matter has been discussed at top management level and the position of the university is that direct link of teaching quality with remuneration will be counterproductive both due to difficulty in implementation and also for the risk of creating a transactional environment with students. However, it is noted that the University regulations and operating directives indirectly link teaching performance with remuneration. Firstly, teaching quality is a key factor in the assessment of faculty for promotion. Secondly, the university has specific awards and bonus schemes for excellence in teaching that aim to highlight and reward teaching quality and the

adoption of best practices. Thirdly, with respect to visiting faculty, quality of teaching delivery is a key factor in the appointments as well as remuneration schemes.

3.f. *Consideration should also be given to offering grants for PT academics who have been at Frederick University for several years and could be promoted in the future. The University benefits from research in terms of improving their reputation and increasing teaching quality levels. For private universities could be challenging to compete with public universities in the research productivity, but it's important to guarantee some level of research production to attract students.*

The Department has decided to take the following actions in order to promote the research culture and activity among all staff:

- To further enhance the seminar series where all faculty members, as well as invited speakers, present their research work and receive feedback on their research work. The use of online technology was recommended to limit travel costs for invited speakers.
- To organize specialized research seminars by invited speakers of international research calibre. The Department has agreed with visiting faculty members to provide research seminars in their field to faculty members and PhD students. We believe this will have a positive and immediate impact.
- To increase the research support administration capacity. It has been identified that many colleagues are reluctant to engage in funded research initiatives due to the administrative overhead this often entails. For this reason, a new research officer has been hired in the Research and Interconnection Service with such specific duties.
- To increase training capacity towards faculty members for matters relating to research engagement. In February 2021 the University hired a new research officer with experience in administering research projects, editing research proposals, and enhancing/facilitating research network development. The new recruit will focus on the provision of training and development seminars to faculty and assisting them in developing and enhancing their research collaborations.
- To establish a series of incentives and further enhance existing ones which aim at promoting research output. These include:

- Teaching load reduction. The University's teaching load reduction scheme is enhanced to include eligibility for faculty that engage in research activities which mentor junior faculty or faculty with limited publication record. Equally importantly, the Department will enable faculty members for requesting load reduction in anticipation of future research results (publications/research grants) rather than the standard University practice were such load reductions are given upon achievement of research outputs.
- Increase the funding for participation in Scopus indexed conferences that lead to publications by 50%. It is noted that the University already allocates a budget to the Department for these activities. In the past year the Department utilised ~3,000 euro for conference-support activities and a further 4,000 euro for research expenses. Clearly, the COVID pandemic has restricted expenditure in conference participation.

As mentioned, in order to boost participation in high-impact publications, such activities will further boost the departmental budget by 50%. The Department has re-iterated the importance of utilizing European funds and in particular European COST actions in the last departmental meeting in December 2020. A number of faculty members already participate and expressed their interest to continue. They have also shared experiences with other faculty members to increase participation in this important form of European funding.

3.g. The qualifications for collaborative staff should continue to meet high level quality standards with the holding of or working towards a PhD considered to be important for ensuring that the staff have both adequate skills and knowledge and safeguard the quality of teaching.

The Department welcomes the Committees comments for the high level standards of the academic staff. As per the University's regulations all academics must be PhD holders with a Doctoral degree relevant to the vacancy field and related internationally recognized research work. ([Link](#)). All courses in our program are being taught by teaching staff that hold a PhD in their respective research/ scientific field. At the same time, with the recruitment of new teaching staff for the upcoming semester Fall 2021, we ensure that teaching staff is actively engage in research activities, including recent publications and participation in research programmes.

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

(ESG 1.4)

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

Areas of improvement and recommendations

4.a. *The University should be consistent in its application of English language requirements to ensure that the student body has the competence to engage in the curricular elements that involve English. The present extended admission criteria presented in the application should be also published in the program's webpage. In this way students will be able to know exactly what skills they need to have in order to have a successful completion of the program.*

The University applies the English language requirements as set by the relevant CYQAA announcements ([Link1](#)) ([Link2](#)). The University's website reflects the information of the programme that is currently evaluated and running. The Public platforms are fed with new information regarding the programme as soon as planned changes are approved by pertinent academic and governing University's bodies and, when necessary, by CYQAA. Upon the programme's accreditation the University's website will be updated to reflect the approved structure and content.



4.b. *The students' handbook describes the general studying regulations applied for every student at the University. It would be useful to offer a differentiated handbook dedicated to students enrolled on a postgraduate distance learning program.*

A handbook for postgraduate studies, as well as extra information regarding studies at Frederick University is available through the Universities website ([Link](#)).

5. Learning resources and student support

(ESG 1.6)

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Partially compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

Areas of improvement and recommendations

5.a. *There seems to be a reliance on end of year exams (50%) that take place mainly in a face-to-face format and have been transferred to online assessment during the pandemic. An option would be to think about alternative forms of assessment, e.g., coursework or project-based work.*

All courses' final exams are open book exams so that critical thinking is encouraged. Additionally, assessment forms such as take home exams and oral exams can be used. Various forms of assessment are used for coursework as part of the formative assessment.

The existence of face-to-face final examinations is a requirement by the current regulatory framework so we must abide by it. Frederick University is positive to the introduction of more flexible assessment methodologies, either by incorporating electronic proctoring systems or by enhancing the formative assessment component in continuous assessment. We are happy to note that, given the experience of remote examinations during the COVID pandemic, the regulatory authorities are re-examining the examination framework and a fruitful dialogue to this end has commenced.

5.b. *While the use of formative assessment and activities is commendable in the distance learning delivery, it was not clear from the structure of the activities if they just consisted of optional electronic quizzes that the students were asked to complete. Learning analytics was mentioned as a method for monitoring student progress, however it was not clear if this also applied to the self-assessment activities.*

In all courses of the program, ungraded self-assessment activities are presented as guided by the Pedagogical Framework and as part of the guidelines of the CYQQA. In the provided Study Guides and CIPs, it is clearly stated out that self-assessment activities are not graded. Yet, based on the committee's observation we have reached out to the teaching staff to clarify that even if these kinds of quizzes are ungraded students are urged to complete them. Learning analytics are used for several purposes and mainly to monitor students' progress and participation. Completion of the self-assessment activities is one variable to check via the learning analytics and the teaching staff is encouraged to do so

5.c. *The virtual learning environment offers opportunities for interaction; however, these seem to be limited. The panel has not seen examples of innovative use of technology such as computer simulations or serious games or virtual or augmented reality applications, embedded in the learning environment. In our discussions, virtual and augmented reality were mentioned as examples of learning technologies the programme team was planning to develop further.*

The University gives great emphasis on the online interaction, the use of advanced technologies, the use of data analytics and the integration of innovative and alternative assessment practices mainly for continuous assessment. It also aims to take advantage of the full affordances of the online platform. It acknowledges the need and has been continuously working towards enhancing and updating its processes and educational material. There is a firm intention from the University to move in this direction. Consequently, to further promote the aforementioned, the Centre for Professional and Personal Development has already developed a professional development action plan in regards to the workshops/trainings/courses to be offered during the following academic year. Some of the courses will be considered as mandatory and some others as voluntarily. Some courses will be provided in-house, some others from collaborators/ experts outside university, and some others as MOOCs. One of the workshops / trainings to be provided focuses on the use of more



advanced tools and pedagogies (i.e. simulations, serious games, augmented and virtual reality, adaptive assessment and e-assessment). Along with the trainings, the Open and Distance Learning Center of the University will continue to pedagogically and technically support the DL instructors in regards to course design and delivery and educational material development.

More specifically, at the following courses the following simulations, virtual and augmented reality applications were integrated in order to further promote the use of innovative technologies and applications. Examples are provided below:

In the course DLEDA052 - Effective and Successful School Leadership, the following simulation application is integrated in order to engage students in real-life classroom situations. The simulation is used for weekly activities as well as for graded assignments:

Simulations for School Leaders and Teachers

<https://schoolsims.com/>

In the course DLEDA061 - Team Leadership in Education, there are two serious games applications that are integrated within weekly activities and graded assignments. These are:

The Pacific, which is a serious game on leadership and team management

<https://www.game-learn.com/game-based-learning-corporate-training/serious-game-in-leadership-and-team-management/>

and the Merchants, which is a serious game on negotiation and conflict resolution (<https://www.game-learn.com/game-based-learning-corporate-training/serious-game-negotiation-and-conflict-resolution/>)

Finally, in the course DLEDA064 – Teaching, Learning and Evaluation the following simulation application is integrated in order to engage students in real-life classroom situations. The simulation is used for weekly activities as well as for graded assignments:

<https://www.simschool.org/home/simschool/>

5.d. *We recommend that the induction becomes compulsory for all students as this will help with learning support and the students benefitting further from the affordances of the learning platform.*

We recommend that staff professional development around distance and online learning becomes part of a professional accreditation programme.

We recommend that the online interaction is further developed by the use of technologies such as virtual/augmented reality and simulation/games, use of data analytics to monitor and support students etc. and that the full affordances of the online platform are fully used. In order to ensure full compliance, the panel suggests:

- The University develops an implementation plan to indicate how they will seek to integrate the enhanced online functions mentioned which could include, but not be limited to, the use of technologies such as virtual/augmented reality and simulation/games, use of data analytics to monitor and support students.*
- Further attention be given to enhancing the interactive elements in the programme's online platform to provide personalised feedback to student input.*
- It is not intended that this be completed by the end of the review process rather that there is a firm intention at institutional level to move in this direction.*

We recommend that innovating assessment practice e.g., use of open book exams, continues after the pandemic as it is more suitable for this type of programme and discipline.

The University agrees with the Committee's recommendation for the induction course to become compulsory for all students and it is working towards that goal. The newly established Centre for Professional and Personal Development of Frederick University is responsible to decide whether the staff professional development around distance and online learning becomes part of a professional accreditation programme. The University leans towards that direction since it has already discussed with faculty members the current issue. Both faculty members and the University are being positive in implementing such decision.

The University gives great emphasis on the online interaction, the use of advanced technologies, the use of data analytics and the integration of innovative and alternative assessment practices mainly for continuous assessment. It also aims to take advantage of the full affordances of the online platform. It acknowledges the need and has been continuously



working towards enhancing and updating its processes and educational material. There is a firm intention from the University to move in this direction. Consequently, to further promote the aforementioned, the Centre for Professional and Personal Development has already developed a professional development action plan in regards to the workshops/trainings/courses to be offered during the following academic year. Some of the courses will be considered as mandatory and some others as voluntarily. Some courses will be provided in-house, some others from collaborators/ experts outside university, and some others as MOOCs. An indicative list is given below:

- Course on Instructional Design
- Course on Blended Teaching and Learning
- Workshops focused on the use of LMS and its tools (activities and resources)
- Workshops on the advanced use of LMS (i.e data analytics, use of H5P), other equipment, hybrid classrooms and Virtual Computer Labs
- Training on the use of more advanced tools and pedagogies (i.e. simulations, serious games, augmented and virtual reality, adaptive assessment and e-assessment).
- Trainings on innovative and alternative assessment and feedback methods and tools (within and outside LMS) (adaptive assessment, e-assessment and personalized feedback) (*Note: in order to further enhance the personalized student feedback to students*).
- Workshops on the use of technological web-based tools to enhance the teaching and learning process
- Workshops tailored to the needs of each department
- Workshops on Course Design and Delivery based on the Blended and Distance Learning Pedagogical Framework.
- Workshops on library resources and capacities
- Training on how to use ZOOM (face to face Vs online synchronous Vs hybrid classrooms)
- Training on how to integrate synchronous and asynchronous activities in courses

The Open and Distance Learning Center of the University will continue to pedagogically and technically support the DL instructors in regards to course design and delivery and educational material development. The University would like also to express its commitment that the experiences, skills and knowledge gained through the pandemic will be continued to be employed and infused within the teaching and learning practices. The University Council and the Senate has already established the Committee for the Technological Advancement of the



Teaching and Learning Practices. The Committee is responsible to promote and enhance the exploitation of new and emergent technologies in the teaching and learning practice.

In regards to the integration of the innovative and alternative assessment practices for final exams, the University will follow the regulatory frameworks in Cyprus and Greece.

In regards to the use of serious games, simulations, augmented and virtual reality, besides the training that has been already programmed, the following simulations, virtual and augmented reality applications were integrated in order to further promote the use of innovative technologies and applications. Examples are provided below:

In the course DLEDA052 - Effective and Successful School Leadership, the following simulation application is integrated in order to engage students in real-life classroom situations. The simulation is used for weekly activities as well as for graded assignments:

Simulations for School Leaders and Teachers

<https://schoolsims.com/>

In the course DLEDA061 - Team Leadership in Education, there are two serious games applications that are integrated within weekly activities and graded assignments. These are:

The Pacific, which is a serious game on leadership and team management

<https://www.game-learn.com/game-based-learning-corporate-training/serious-game-in-leadership-and-team-management/>

and the Merchants, which is a serious game on negotiation and conflict resolution (<https://www.game-learn.com/game-based-learning-corporate-training/serious-game-negotiation-and-conflict-resolution/>)

Finally, in the course DLEDA064 – Teaching, Learning and Evaluation the following simulation application is integrated in order to engage students in real-life classroom situations. The simulation is used for weekly activities as well as for graded assignments:

<https://www.simschool.org/home/simschool/>

6. Conclusions and final remarks

6.a. *Frederick University and to commend the manner in which the evaluation visit was conducted. Members of the EEC would like to formally acknowledge the quality of the engagement from the entire Frederick University community and of the time taken to prepare and present us with extensive information on the new programme, and to address our questions.*

*The committee finds that proposed MA in Educational Administration and Leadership is **worthy of support and recommends that it be approved**. The programme draws on a range of research and teaching expertise within the School of Education and Social Sciences and is designed in such a manner as to provide prospective students with an in-depth postgraduate engagement with a wide range of challenging and interesting subject specialisms. The focus of the programme on both the application of theory to practice and the provision of high-quality teaching and research experiences in contextually appropriate areas of study is to be particularly welcomed.*

*All the evidence presented to the EEC would indicate that Frederick University is committed to supporting its students academically, personally, professionally and financially and that the proposed programme will undoubtedly follow this **well-established model of excellence**.*

In terms of the programme's design and delivery – including its proposed curriculum – the EEC suggests that Frederick University continue to challenge itself, its staff and its students to remain at the 'cutting edge' of professional and academic knowledge in the fields of Administration and Leadership. It notes with interest and approval the commitment of the University to provide Greek speaking students with access to translations of relevant English language texts as well as the pedagogic structures put in place to ensure engagement by the student body with key concepts in the areas of Administration and Leadership. It would urge the academic body to continue to produce and publish high quality, contextually relevant research in the Leadership and Administration areas in order to mirror the professional practice contexts of the student body. There is evidence in both the content and teaching focus of the programme to suggest an awareness of the importance of this with

attention being paid to critical concepts such as culture, diversity and context when engaging with ideas and practices of leadership and administration.

The EEC further commends the commitment of the University to support the development of research capacity within the teaching staff of the programme. It notes in particular the ability of part time, CAS faculty to access research funding in partnership with full time academic staff. It would urge the University to continue to prioritise staff development in the research area and to find ways of supporting all staff – full time and part time – to undertake research that is embedded in the realities of the educational experiences of teachers within Cyprus and the broader Hellenic world.

The EEC notes the recent initiation of teaching excellence awards and targeted teaching and learning support seminars/ materials and recommends their continuation. Staff on the MA in Administration and Leadership clearly have a commitment to high quality teaching, and they should continue to prioritise this area of their professional practice. Given the diversity of teaching profiles and experiences, consideration might be given to peer development structures and opportunities formally linked to teaching and learning certification of some sort. The committee notes the significant number of assessment points in the programme under discussion and recommends vigilance with regards to this aspect of course provision.

At a general level, the EEC would suggest that the University needs to keep under observation the balance between teaching, research and academic development – in particular for CAS. While staff indicated a general satisfaction with the manner in which workload (teaching) was applied, there was a recognition that the ongoing currency of their own research work needed supported time to remain current

Issues relating to the nature and number of assessments also need to be considered by the programme team as does the desirability of keeping those of the pandemic related innovations that benefit students. The EEC particularly draws attention to the highlighted success of open book exams in this context.

The EEC would also like to highlight the importance of coherence with regards to the information held and disseminated by the University across all of its platforms. This is important in the area of programme recruitment, admission criteria, English

language requirements and examination protocols. The EEC understands that a process of consolidation and re-design of public facing communications is ongoing and it would see this as being an important project for the University. The EEC made one finding of partial compliance. We recognise that the University has made substantial progress in the area of technology supported learning and the recommendation – repeated here – is designed to encourage a wider organisational conversation around the nature and opportunities offered by technology supported learning. We expect to outcome to be general plan to be implemented over the short to medium term. To repeat, therefore, we recommend that the online interaction is further developed by the use of technologies such as virtual/augmented reality and simulation/games, use of data analytics to monitor and support students etc. and that the full affordances of the online platform are fully used. In order to ensure full compliance, the EEC suggests:

- The University develops an implementation plan to indicate how they will seek to integrate the enhanced online functions mentioned which could include, but not be limited to, the use of technologies such as virtual/augmented reality and simulation/games, use of data analytics to monitor and support students.*
- Further attention be given to enhancing the interactive elements in the programme's online platform to provide personalised feedback to student input.*

It is not intended that this be completed by the end of the review process. Overall, the EEC would like to commend the course team involved in the MA in Leadership and Administration for the work they have put into developing a high quality, innovative and impactful programme.

The University gives great emphasis on the online interaction, the use of advanced technologies, the use of data analytics and the integration of innovative and alternative assessment practices mainly for continuous assessment. It also aims to take advantage of the full affordances of the online platform. It acknowledges the need and has been continuously working towards enhancing and updating its processes and educational material. There is a firm intention from the University to move in this direction. Consequently, to further promote the aforementioned, the Centre for Professional and Personal Development has already developed a professional development action plan in regards to the workshops/trainings/courses to be offered during the following academic year. Some of the



courses are considered as mandatory and some others as voluntarily. Some courses will be provided in-house, some others from collaborators/ experts outside university, and some others as MOOCs. An indicative list is given below:

- Course on Instructional Design
- Course on Blended Teaching and Learning
- Workshops focused on the use of LMS and its tools (activities and resources)
- Workshops on the advanced use of LMS (i.e data analytics, use of H5P), other equipment, hybrid classrooms and Virtual Computer Labs
- Training on the use of more advanced tools and pedagogies (i.e. simulations, serious games, augmented and virtual reality, adaptive assessment and e-assessment).
- Trainings on innovative and alternative assessment and feedback methods and tools (within and outside LMS) (adaptive assessment, e-assessment and personalized feedback) (*Note: in order to further enhance the personalized student feedback to students*).
- Workshops on the use of technological web-based tools to enhance the teaching and learning process
- Workshops tailored to the needs of each department
- Workshops on Course Design and Delivery based on the Blended and Distance Learning Pedagogical Framework.
- Workshops on library resources and capacities
- Training on how to use ZOOM (face to face Vs online synchronous Vs hybrid classrooms)

Training on how to integrate synchronous and asynchronous activities in courses

The Open and Distance Learning Center of the University will continue to pedagogically and technically support the DL instructors in regards to course design and delivery and educational material development.

In regards to the integration of the innovative and alternative assessment practices for **final** exams, the University will follow the regulatory frameworks.

The Programme's Committee and the Department would like to thank the Evaluation Committee for all the positive comments and overall evaluation, the constructive feedback, and the excellent climate and communication during the evaluation process itself.

In regards to the use of serious games, simulations, augmented and virtual reality, besides the training that has been already programmed, the following simulations, virtual and



augmented reality applications were integrated in order to further promote the use of innovative technologies and applications. Examples are provided below:

In the course DLEDA052 - Effective and Successful School Leadership, the following simulation application is integrated in order to engage students in real-life classroom situations. The simulation is used for weekly activities as well as for graded assignments:

Simulations for School Leaders and Teachers

<https://schoolsims.com/>

In the course DLEDA061 - Team Leadership in Education, there are two serious games applications that are integrated within weekly activities and graded assignments. These are:

The Pacific, which is a serious game on leadership and team management

<https://www.game-learn.com/game-based-learning-corporate-training/serious-game-in-leadership-and-team-management/>

and the Merchants, which is a serious game on negotiation and conflict resolution (<https://www.game-learn.com/game-based-learning-corporate-training/serious-game-negotiation-and-conflict-resolution/>)

Finally, in the course DLEDA064 – Teaching, Learning and Evaluation the following simulation application is integrated in order to engage students in real-life classroom situations. The simulation is used for weekly activities as well as for graded assignments:

<https://www.simschool.org/home/simschool/>



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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



B. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
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Prof. George Demosthenous Rector

