



Doc. 300.1.2

07.14.318.061

**Higher Education Institution's Response**

**Conventional-face-to-face programme of study**

Date: *Date*

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

**Programme**

**In Greek:**

Νοσηλευτική (4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο (BSc))

**In English:**

Nursing (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor (BSc))

**Language(s) of instruction:** English and Greek

- **Specializations (if any):**

**In Greek:** -

**In English:** -

**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)

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

1.a. There are internal but no external assessors in the various quality control systems of the programme.

#### Department's Response:

At a general level, the Nursing Degree Program of Frederick University complies with the **European Directive 2005/36/EC** regarding the recognition of professional qualifications and since 2012 has received European recognition, as included in the Organizations that grant a Nursing degree in Cyprus ([2005L0036 — EN — 24.05.2016 — 011.001 — 132](#)). Every five years, the study programme also undergoes the **external evaluation by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA)** and adopt the recommendations of the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's). Moreover, the Programme of Nursing have been recognised as equivalent to the university level of Nursing in Greece by **the Hellenic National Academic Recognition and Information Center** (Hellenic NARIC – "DOATAP") which is the official body of the Hellenic Republic for the academic recognition of titles and qualifications awarded by foreign Higher Education Institutions.

Regarding more specific quality control systems of the programme, the Department of Nursing is consulted external partners to ensure the quality of studies. Our external assessors are collaborators from the Ministry of Health, the professional Nursing bodies, other Universities and the clinical field with some of whom we have contracted a Memorandum of Cooperation, bringing their professional expertise to the validation process of the programme. These are:

- **The Nursing services of Ministry of Health in Cyprus** (Annex 01.01 - [Memorandum of Cooperation with Nursing Services - Ministry of Health](#)) which provide an external benchmark with the Department of Nursing, as they are a valuable asset in assuring that the programme is academically coherent and relevant to the needs of employers.
- **The Cyprus Nursing and Midwifery Council** which gives feedback every year by granting our graduates the license to practice.

- **Hellenic Mediterranean University (HMU)** (Annex 01.02 - Memorandum of Cooperation with Hellenic Mediterranean University) with which there is a mutual exchange of knowledge, information and feedback on the Nursing program studies.
- **Hospitals and clinical areas** (Annex 01.03 - Memorandum of Cooperation with "Hippocrateon Private Hospital") through continuous communication and mutual feedback in the context of clinical practice and the learning objectives of the respective theoretical courses.
- **The Department Advisory Committee**, a five member committee consisting of the Chair of the Department, an academic from another University, a representative professional from industry, a representative from a Nursing body and a graduate of the department, who cooperate, as external assessors of each programme.
- **Our graduates**, through personal communication during their career but also continuing their studies at postgraduate level.

Through the process of validation of programme, the Department of Nursing is able to secure its academic standards and assure the quality of the learning opportunities available to nursing students. Therefore, we have adopt external assessors in quality control systems of the programme and have already discussed the issue by including additional external assessors.

## 2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment

### (ESG 1.3)

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

2.a. There could be more evidence of changes made to teaching methods as a result of student feedback. At present student opinion seems very positive with only limited evidence of the ability to reflect and make suggestions for improvement.

#### Department's Response:

Undoubtedly, using student feedback is an integral part of the educational process and strengthens the quality management of Academic education. Frederick University has adopted a combination of feedback mechanisms as presented below:

- **General Management Procedure:** The General Management Procedure (GMP08 – Satisfaction Surveys, Complaints & Suggestions) provides all students the option to submit a written complaint or suggestion regarding any aspect of the University's operation, through the Extranet platform. This includes complaints/ suggestions regarding the University's academic or professional programs offered, its services, the faculty or administrative personnel, the infrastructure etc. The complaints are monitored daily and according to the issue raised, the complaint is communicated to the relevant department(s) concerned. If the student is satisfied with the actions taken, then the complaint is completed and archived. In case the student is not satisfied with the actions initially taken and the relevant feedback, then further action are defined.
- **Student Advocate:** The University, in its effort to ensure that all students are able to pursuit and fulfil their academic goals, has been implementing since 2012 the Student Advocate Service. This scheme allows for students to voice any complaints they may have with administrative or academic processes at Frederick University and ensure their speedy investigation. The director of the studies and student Welfare Service acts as the student advocate.
- **Consultation Weeks:** The Studies and Student Welfare Service organizes twice in each semester "Consultation Weeks" during which all students must meet with their

**Academic Advisors** to discuss their attendance and academic progress, based of the information available from the “Electronic Student Absence and Performance” facility. During these meetings are free to express their concerns and give feedback related to their courses. Academic advisors maintain records on their meetings with the students they are advising. Whenever necessary, advisors may refer students to the Studies and Student Welfare Service for further action.

- **Course evaluation questionnaire.** At the end of each semester students fill in an anonymous questionnaire providing feedback to the department concerning the course such as the degree of difficulty, student workload, assessment, textbooks, infrastructure etc. This part of the questionnaire is utilised by the academic staff through the programme coordinator, for improvements in the course and the programme. The second part of the questionnaire refers to the evaluation of the instructor on issues related to the organization of the course, the quality of the teaching material developed by the instructor, the availability of the instructor to help students, the feedback provided to the students etc. Through this part of the questionnaire, the students are required to give an overall grade to the instructor. The results of this part of the questionnaires are treated as confidential and are available only to the instructor for self-improvement. Only in cases where the overall grade of the instructor is below a threshold, the results are also provided to the Chairperson of the Department. In such a case, the instructor is requested to justify its low grading and suggest a remedial action plan.
- **The design of the Department’s Strategic Plan** is the responsibility of the Council of the Department. To this end, it has appointed the Department’s Strategic Planning Committee. This is an ad-hoc committee comprised of members of the academic personnel of the Department. For the design of the Department’s Strategic Plan, the committee has considered the current developments in the disciplines related to the programs of study of the Department, national and regional factors that affect the Department, as well as information and feedback obtained from the academic staff, the students, the graduates, the employers and other stakeholders. The developed Strategic Plan is a six-year plan that includes a SWOT analysis, short term and long term strategic goals and action plans, as well as a monitoring framework

- **Student representation:** The Senate consists of a representative of the students of each School, elected by the students of the School and the Council of the University consists of a representative of the students, elected by all the students. (Annex 02 - Frederick University Governance)
- **Frederick University newsletter “Our Journey”** <https://mailchi.mp/frederick/our-journey-issue-18>

Regarding the innovative teaching methods have been also adopted through the pandemic period and the online lessons, most of them inquire student feedback:

- **Feedback quizzes** were provided asking students to rate their overall understanding of the day’s class on a scale, their confidence level of what they’ve learned on a scale and what they plan to do to improve their understanding of the concepts that were difficult.
- **Reflection breaks:** By stopping work periodically and encouraging students to record their thoughts about what they’ve learned and having students share their thoughts with a peer – in person or in a video conferencing breakout room.
- **Interactive sessions:** Group discussions, debates, peer evaluations.

Finally, there is also an undergoing process for developing a mechanism that closes the loop between student feedback – evaluation – implementation.



### 3. Teaching staff

(ESG 1.5)

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

3.a. More teachers with a nursing background will be required if student numbers increase, and more qualitative research expertise is needed.

#### Department's Response:

The University is monitoring the registration numbers and, if the need arises that for more academic staff to support any possible increase in student numbers, will employ the processes in place for hiring and evaluation ([Link](#)). Furthermore, the Departments, at the end of each academic year, prepare a report regarding faculty needs and submit it to the Senate for approval.

Regarding qualitative research expertise, we accept and adopt the External Evaluation Committee's suggestion. Further to the already existing statistics experts that teach in the Department Programmes (Associate Professor, [Petroula Mavrikiou](#) and [Dr Panagiotis Paoullis](#)), the programme further enriched by the inclusion of Professor [Jelastopoulou Eleni](#), with the Specialization in **Epidemiology and Research Methodology** and Dr Petros Galanis, specialized in **Public Health and Research Methodology** that will support the programme courses with their specialized knowledge and Expertise (please refer to Annex 03 - CVs).

3.b. It was not clear how the student feedback of their session is used to make improvements.

Please refer to previous answer 2.a.

3.c. This is a risk of having a high number of visiting academics.

The programme is currently supported by 9 visiting staff out of 36 faculty members. These visiting staff teach or co-teach (1 – 3 hours max per semester) courses specific to their



research domain, where they enrich them with their specialized knowledge and expertise. The University ensures that the visiting staffs' teaching load does not exceed the 20% of the courses that are taught by the permanent faculty.



#### 4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

##### Areas of improvement and recommendations

4.a. No comments.

##### Department's Response:

We would like to thank the External Evaluation Committee for their positive remarks.

## 5. Learning resources and student support

(ESG 1.6)

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

5.a. Based on discussions with the students critical reflecting skills could be enhanced at all levels of education.

#### Department's Response:

Critical reflection in Nursing is a process that connects theory or research with clinical practice by converting theoretical knowledge into an in-depth understanding of the situation. Critical reflecting skills in our students are developed by the **Courses' assignments** as well as with the Student Self-Assessment in Clinical Training form (please refer to Annex 03).

However, we accept and adopt the recommendation of the External Evaluation Committee for further enhancing of students' critical reflecting skills at all levels of education. Hence, in the courses where clinical training is provided, methods of developing critical reflecting skills were applied such as **Clinical diaries and Clinical assignments**. Writing a clinical diary improves reflective competence, mentioning the patient's attitude and helps nursing students refresh their knowledge and apply flexible skills (please refer indicatively to Annex 05 - NURS110.ENG and NURS207.ENG). The Clinical assignments include taking a clinical case, filling the nursing history, applying the nursing process, presenting it to the class in PPT and being evaluated both by the student, the instructor and other students (**self and peer evaluation**) (please refer to Annex 05 – Nursing Care Plan Form, and Annex 04 - NURS210.ENG, NURS307.ENG, NURS403.ENG). In some courses the assignment includes the implementation of a research article with a lecture and critical analysis - discussion on it. In this way, critical thinking is developed and the students' intuition on a subject turns into deep knowledge. The courses have been updated to include the above methods (please refer indicatively to Annex 04 – Course Descriptions).



## 6. Additional for doctoral programmes

(ALL ESG)

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

6.a. -

### Department's Response:

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## 7. Conclusions and final remarks

7.a. Frederick University, School of Health Sciences, Department of Nursing is responsible for bachelor's, master's and doctoral education. The university **has good quality assessment methods, a clear mission and vision**, and the unit under assessment is in line with the university's strategy. The unit's educational programmes are generally up-to-date and the **learning environment is excellent**. A particular strength of the unit is the scientific orientation of the teachers (all have PhDs), the good team spirit and the highly student centred teaching. Students have excellent support systems and very personalised support at all levels of education. Practical training is based on theory and science. Students are satisfied with the education they receive and many go on to study for masters and doctorates in the same unit after their undergraduate degree. **Teaching resources are excellent** and it was welcome that they had considered sustainable development goals to protect the environment. It would be good to see more of this across the different programmes in Health Sciences. It is important to maintain a good ratio of permanent and visiting teachers. Practical training and theoretical teaching are mutually supportive. A clear area for improvement is the PhD dissertation requirements, the implementation of which needs to be monitored more closely. In addition, the EEC recommends that the unit could have a research programme under specific research themes based on the expertise of the faculty where students at different levels of education could also participate in relevant research projects. In this way, the unit will strengthen its own level of expertise and knowledge and its reputation would be enhanced. Staff are motivated and enthusiastic about their work and were very welcoming and open to suggestions. The unit was well prepared for the evaluation and the necessary information was at hand. The unit has excellent opportunities to develop and become more competitive.

### Department's Response:

The Department of Nursing wishes to express its gratitude to the members of the External Evaluation Committee for their thorough and insightful evaluation of the Department and its programmes, as well as their fruitful comments and constructive discussion. The accreditation



process provided the opportunity to the Department and the Program Coordinators to obtain the objective views of external and independent peers, as well as examine aspects of the program from a different perspective. The Department has already considered the issues raised, as well as the recommendations of the EEC and has already acted upon, in terms of implementing the Committee's recommendations as shown in sections 1 to 5.

The Department also wishes to thank the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, as well as the members of staff of the Agency that facilitated the organisation and implementation of the External Evaluation Committee's visit.



## B. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
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Date:



