

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 11.10.2022

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
European University Cyprus

- **Town:** Nicosia

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

In Greek:

“Δημόσια Υγεία (18 μήνες/90 ECTS, Μεταπτυχιακό)”-Εξ’ Αποστάσεως

In English:

“Public Health (18 Months/90 ECTS, Master of Science)”- E-Learning

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

In Greek:

- Γενική Κατεύθυνση
- Πρωτοβάθμια Φροντίδα Υγείας
- Πρόληψη και Έλεγχος Λοιμώξεων

In English:

- General Track
- Primary Healthcare
- Infection Prevention and Control



The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws” of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

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

The Department of Health Sciences and the Department of Medicine of European University Cyprus wish to express their sincere gratitude to the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for the evaluation of the postgraduate programme of study Public Health (M.Sc.)-E-Learning.

It is with great pleasure that the two departments and the School of Sciences and Medicine noted the positive feedback of the EEC and we appreciate its insightful recommendations, which provided us the opportunity to further improve the quality and implementation of the programme.

In the following pages, we respond in detail to all recommendations for improvement suggested by the EEC and we provide all relevant information to explain the actions taken to ensure that the re-accredited programme is of high quality.

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>Fine-tuned alignment between learning outcomes, teaching and assessment based on a comprehensive approach using feedback from students, teachers as well as external stakeholders</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The European University Cyprus has already established processes to collect feedback from students, instructors as well as external stakeholders. During the last two (2) weeks of each semester, students complete a survey on Student Feedback on their learning experience for each course and this information is analysed to fine-tune alignment between learning outcomes, teaching and assessment for each course (APPENDIX 1; Student feedback survey for Spring 2022). 2. The Public Health program has established an advisory committee of the program consisting of students, internal and external faculty in Public Health and external stakeholders who provide advice on curriculum improvements and modifications, learning outcomes and assessment (APPENDIX 2; Advisory Board Members). 3. Instructors, students, alumni representatives and stakeholders participate in the Programme Evaluation Review (PER) process, which aims at programmes' ongoing monitoring and evaluation. For full information on the PER process, please see APPENDIX 3; Internal Regulation on EUC's Program Evaluation Review. 	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>Emphasis on skill competences and real life experiences within the regular courses or within projects/coursework</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Problem-based learning with real-life experiences in the local and international public health context, involving professionals from the field have been incorporated in the revised program courses (APPENDIX 4; Examples of Problem-based learning). 2. Projects/coursework are now combining theoretical course contents with real-life experiences and real-life scenarios (APPENDIX 5; Examples of Project/Coursework). These practical learning approaches are the closest to practical experience that could be offered in an e-learning education program and respond to students' needs who are in geographically remote areas. These practical opportunities, 	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	<p>that are based on real-life scenarios, and the shared experiences with professionals, provide additional learning opportunities, thus further enhancing skill and competency building to our students.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students can participate in the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID) observerships program (where several EUC faculty, collaborators and students are enrolled, e.g. Dr. Constantinos Tsioutis, Prof. Soteris Tsiodras and Mr. Nikolaos Spervovasilis). Sign relevant MoUs with various centers and organizations by use of our faculty networks. EUC already has an MoU for research and clinical placement with Care Medical Institute (a Primary Care centre) and German Oncology Center, an Oncology hospital which is the only center in Cyprus with an autonomous department in infectious diseases and infection control. In addition, EUC has an MoU with the Cyprus Alliance for Rare Disorders (C.A.R.D.), a patient support and education group focused on rare diseases, some of which have a higher incidence in areas of Cyprus compared to other areas and thus carry a public health importance (e.g. multiple sclerosis, thalassemia, cystic fibrosis, amyloidic nephropathy, etc.). 	
<p>Including pass rates from the public information of the program when available</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Each course instructor presented the recent pass rates of the course to the students in the first meeting. The pass rates for each course for the last semester Spring 2022 are presented in Table 1 below. 	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>As data from the programme increase over time a more analytic approach could be beneficial.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Public Health Program designed a tailored questionnaire for our students to complete at the end of each academic year. The questionnaire seeks information on the opportunities and challenges concerning the e-learning methodologies used, etc. The questionnaire will be distributed at the end of the Fall 2022 semester (January 2023) and the information collected by these questionnaires will be analysed for different types of students (i.e. based on their age, family status, occupation, field of Bachelor's degree, etc.) to guide future program modifications. The data 	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	are anonymously and permission is sought by the National Bioethics Committee and the School Council before distributing the questionnaire. The questionnaire is presented in APPENDIX 6; Opportunities and Challenges of E-Learning.	
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Table 1. Pass rates, re-sit exam rates and total failure rates for all courses of the Public Health (MSc) DL program offered in Spring 2022.

Course	Pass rate	Re-sit exam pass rate	Total failure rate (after the re-sit exam)
Introduction to Public Health	76.9	11.5	11.5
Epidemiology	78.4	13.5	8.5
Biostatistics	88.1	4.8	7.1
Epidemiology II	100	0.0	0.0
Environmental Health	100	0.0	0.0
Health Economics	97.0	0.0	3.0
Management, Organization and Quality of Health Services	96.0	4.0	0.0
Nutrition in Public Health and Health Safety	100.0	0.0	0.0

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>Concerning practical training, students asked for more authentic tasks, and applied assignments, that let them go to the field. And they also suggest more teamwork.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Problem-based learning and team-work learning with real life experiences in the local and international public health context involving professionals from the field are now developed within the regular courses (see APPENDIX 4: Examples of Problem-based learning). 2. Teamwork projects/coursework are now combining theoretical course contents with real life experiences (see APPENDIX 5: Examples of Project/Coursework). 3. Final exams are developed to enhance critical and analytical thinking. 	
<p>Concerning student assessment, the program has a strong evaluation system. Evaluation of a course is distributed into 50% assignments, and 50% final examination. Students need to do the assignments and the exam to pass the course. The final exams are online, and they use a specific platform to do them (LockDown browser). There are clear actions to prevent plagiarism, but there are many issues that are dependent on each instructor.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The final exams were conducted online only during the pandemic period. In non-emergency situations, the final exams of all EUC E-Learning programs are done with students' physical presence and are conducted in pre-determined examination centres across the whole world, depending on the geographical location of the students. In this emergency situation, the instructors of all the courses follow the guidelines provided by the office of Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, which are in complete alignment with the occasional guidelines and recommendations issued by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (Final exams in emergency situations due to coronavirus in distance learning programs, CYQAA Council, 74th Meeting). The final exams were thoroughly checked through Turnitin, an Internet-based plagiarism detection service (https://turnitin.com/). The EUC academic regulation on academic ethics include a section on plagiarism. Cases of plagiarism are reviewed by the School Council and students found guilty of violating the Code of Academic Ethics face a range of sanctions, including failing a course, suspension, or dismissal from the University (APPENDIX 7; Internal Regulation on Academic Ethics and Students' Discipline). 	

<p>It is recommended to implement a more authentic assessment (especially in the final exam).</p>	<p>2. More authentic assessment has been created for projects/coursework and final exam. Teamwork projects/coursework are now combining theoretical course contents with real life experiences (APPENDIX 5; Examples of Project/Coursework) and final exams are developed to enhance critical and analytical thinking.</p>	
<p>It is recommended to have a shared procedure about plagiarism in the whole master's.</p>	<p>1. All course assignments/projects/coursework and final exams are thoroughly checked through Turnitin, an Internet-based plagiarism detection service (https://turnitin.com/). The EUC academic regulation on academic ethics include a section on plagiarism. Cases of plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty or unethical behaviour are reviewed by the School Council, Chaired by the Dean of the School. Students found guilty of violating the Code of Academic Ethics face a range of sanctions, including failing the course concerned, suspension, or dismissal from the University (APPENDIX 7; Internal Regulation on Academic Ethics and Students' Discipline).</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>To integrate learning resources with different formats: infographics, and videos.</p>	<p>1. Program faculty have been informed of this suggestion and additional resources, such as infographics, interactive tools and videos have been integrated in the courses.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>The EEC strongly recommends decreasing the weight of the final exam, to orient the student to the learning process</p>	<p>1. Continued assessment part of the course, accounting for 50% of the final grade, while the written final exam accounts for the other 50%. This is a horizontal weighting evaluation implemented for all e-learning education programs of EUC to have a homogeneity in assessment across all e-learning programs. As part of the essential elements of the pedagogical principles and teaching philosophy employed in all E-Learning courses at EUC developed by the Standing Committee of the Committee of Internal Quality Assurance "Pedagogical Planning of E-Learning Programs of Study" (as presented in the document "The EUC E-Learning Programmes of Study", please see APPENDIX 10), after the semester 13-week learning period is completed, students take the final exam for each of their courses which are allocated a percentage at 50%. This applies for all EUC E-Learning programmes of study. The final exam assesses in a</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>



	comprehensive way the level at which students have acquired the theoretical knowledge covered in the course, as well as the degree to which they have developed the skills in critical analysis aimed at by the course (for more details please see pp. 10-11)."	
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3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>Although there is support at the department and institutional level for professional development with regard to teaching, it is not clear whether teaching innovation is indeed applied. No member of staff holds or is aiming to obtain a formal qualification on teaching. This may not be readily available in Cyprus, but having a couple of members of staff with expertise in education would help the program develop and remain up-to-date with educational literature and practice. This could be done informally through the program coordinators or a member of staff with special interest in education.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. According to the legislation in Cyprus, faculty are not required to have any teaching certificate to teach in higher education. Full time faculty attended the Faculty Development Program of 35 hours on teaching, learning and assessment for full time staff and scientific collaborators. 2. Full time and part time faculty have attended the online course titled “EUC E-Learning Programmes of Study” which is based on the essential elements of the pedagogical principles and teaching philosophy employed on all E-Learning courses at EUC. This online Faculty Development course has been prepared by EUC C.I.Q.A. “Faculty Professional Development Standing Committee” and it is specifically designed for all staff with an interest on guiding them through theoretical concepts and information about Distance Education at EUC and its E-Learning Programmes of Study. 3. One of the coordinators Dr. Lamnisos had attended a 12 ECTS (300 hours) course on ‘Distance education: theory and teaching practice’ (see Appendix 8: Certification of attending the course ‘Distance education: theory and teaching practice). The two co-coordinators of the program will attend during Fall 2022 semester the postgraduate course ‘EDT610: Online Learning & Distance Education’ offered by the MA in Technologies of Learning & Communication and STEAM Education, Department of Education, EUC. The two co-coordinators will also attend during Fall 2022 semester the following two short courses: ‘Assessment in Higher Education: Professional Development for Teachers (https://www.coursera.org/learn/assessment-higher-education?#about’, ‘Create video, audio and infographics for online learning (https://www.coursera.org/learn/create-video-audio-and-infographics-for-online-learning)’. 	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	<p>4. Additionally, EUC is now a member of the Advance Health Education, offering benefits and opportunities to its faculty, including resources related to teaching, learning and research in higher education, participation in various projects, as well as the opportunity to apply for a fellowship. It is also worth noting that EUC offers the MSc in Medical Education distance learning program (https://euc.ac.cy/en/programs/master-medical-education-online), which offers various relevant modules to our students and faculty.</p>	
<p>Click or tap here to enter text. The number of staff seems sufficient, but this may not be the case in the future. As the institution matures, an increasing number of members of staff is involved in research and other activities which leads to a reduction of teaching hours. If the number of students increases and multiple groups of Greek- and English-speaking students are taught in parallel, this might become a challenge. Having multiple staff teaching in each course may be positive to some extent, but there is always the risk of inconsistency in teaching approaches. It would be good to anticipate these developments and recruit an adequate number of new staff, if required. Another suggestion is to involve GPs in the teaching staff (core staff) for the future primary health care track. And also paramedic professions might be a good idea.</p>	<p>1. The Department of Medicine, the School of Medicine and the Senate of EUC have approved the opening of a new faculty position for the recruitment of an academic in the discipline of Primary Care/General Practice (any rank) to be advertised during F2022 semester. The appointment of the new faculty is planned to begin at the beginning of F2023 semester.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>

<p>Feedback from students is collected, but there doesn't seem to be a systematic approach in reviewing the feedback and suggesting changes. Formalizing the process may help ensure that this is done effectively across the program. Communicating these changes to students in a "you said - we did" format may also encourage further constructive feedback</p>	<p>1. The program has formalized the feedback process as follows: coordinators of the program, the course coordinator and the instructors of the course review the student feedback and decide on the suggested changes and actions, according to the official PER process of the University (see more details at APPENDIX 3; Internal Regulation on EUC's Program Evaluation Review). In case of substantive changes, these are discussed with the Department Chairs and if necessary in the Department Councils and the School Councils. Changes to each course is communicated to the students in the Public Health day organized at the beginning of each semester (see the program of the Public Health Day in APPENDIX 9: Public Health Day). In addition, instructors mention changes made in the course as a result of the last student feedback in their introductory presentation.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
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4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
 (ESG 1.4)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
It could be beneficial for students to get structured feedback after the formative exam.	1. Structured feedback is provided after each stage of the formative exams to students in a similar way with the course projects/assignments. Students are encouraged to participate in scheduled meetings with the course instructors for further in person discussions about their performance.	Choose an item.

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The opportunities for meetings and discussions with teachers. - Support for interaction between students between semesters. - Community building activities for students. - Closer collaboration with health care and public health workplaces, to support real-life understanding as well as the integration between the areas. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Public Health day has been planned to take place at the beginning of each semester to build a sense of community in Public Health among students. This day includes an orientation of new students, introduction of the instructors and course content, and expected learning outcomes. The coordinators of the program discuss the modifications made in the program after reviewing students' feedback on their learning experience in each course. The students have the opportunity to meet faculty in person and discuss possible concerns or any other issues of interest. In parallel to this face-to-face meeting, there is an on-line forum for all students who cannot attend in person. The current students have the opportunity to present their Theses or coursework. In addition, there are guest speakers from public health professionals with experience in developing, managing and implementing public health interventions. The guest speakers present their experiences and challenges in their working environment and provide students the opportunity to ask questions related to their professions. This semester, the invited speaker was Ms Stalo Kaiafa, Coordinator of the Cyprus Network of Healthy Cities. The program of the Public Health day and the recorded link for this semester Fall 2022 is presented in APPENDIX 9: Public Health Day. 2. A Facebook page has been created for the MSc program and current students and alumni were invited to participate and, through this platform, have the opportunity to communicate with each other, share Public Health-related content/news etc. 	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>Student mobility opportunities and activities adapted to distant learning.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The EUC has Erasmus agreements for student and faculty mobility with several universities offering similar or related degrees to the MSc in Public Health. All students are encouraged and 	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	<p>asked to declare their interest to participate in Erasmus student mobility and an effort is made between the EUC Erasmus officer and the MSc coordinators to arrange their mobility in the collaborate institutes. According to the ERASMUS+ Programme guide, students must carry out their physical mobility activity in a country different from the country of the sending organisation and the country where the student has his/her accommodation during his/her studies.</p>	
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7. Eligibility (Joint programme)

(ALL ESG)

N/A

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
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B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
<p>Future review, monitoring and development is considered important, given that the programme is fairly new. This should aim for a fine-tuned alignment of learning outcomes, teaching and assessment based on feedback from students, teachers as well as external stakeholders. The program can benefit from more emphasis on skill competences and real-life experiences, to gain insight in real-life challenges and opportunities in public health, as well as contact with stakeholders and employers in the sector. Also, pass rates from the program should be published when available. As data from the program increase over time a more analytic approach could be beneficial.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The European University Cyprus has established a process to review, monitoring and development and this process include feedback from students, teachers as well as external stakeholders through student and alumni surveys, advisory board, Programme Evaluation Review (PER) process. 2. European University Cyprus implements at the end of each semester the student survey feedback questionnaire on their learning experience for each course and this information is analysed to fine-tune alignment between learning outcomes, teaching and assessment for each course. 3. The Public Health program has established an advisory committee of the program consisting of students, internal and external faculty in Public Health and external stakeholders who provide advice on curriculum improvements and modifications, learning outcomes and assessment. 4. Problem-based learning with real life experiences in the local and international public health context, involving professionals from the field are now developed within the regular courses. 5. Projects/coursework are now combining theoretical course contents with real-life experiences and real-life scenarios. These practical opportunities that are based on real-life scenarios and sharing experience with professionals, provide additional learning opportunities, thus further enhancing skill and competency building to our students. 6. Students could participate in the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID) observerships program. 7. Sign relevant MoUs with various centers and organisations by use of our faculty networks. EUC has an MoU with Care Medical Institute (a Primary Care center) and German Oncology Center, an Oncology hospital which is the only center in Cyprus with an autonomous department in infectious diseases and infection control. 8. A Public Health Day is organized at the beginning of each semester giving the opportunity to students to have more contact time with 	<p>Choose an item.</p>

	<p>teaching staff and interact with public health professionals.</p> <p>9. Each course instructor presents the recent pass rates of the course to the students in the first meeting.</p> <p>10. The Public Health Program designed a tailored questionnaire for our students to complete at the end of each academic year. The questionnaire seeks information on the opportunities and challenges concerning the e-learning methodologies used, etc.</p>	
<p>The EEC felt that the new stream on primary health care may be quite clinical in its approach, and that involving primary care health providers in the core teaching team would be beneficial. While the explanation given by the program leads (i.e. in relation to recent changes in the Healthcare System of Cyprus) makes sense, the EEC would suggest close monitoring of the stream in its first year of implementation and collection of detailed feedback from students. This should allow a thorough review of the stream at the end of the year and implementation of necessary adjustments.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Department of Medicine, the School of Medicine and the Senate of EUC have approved the opening of a new faculty position for the recruitment of an academic in the discipline of Primary Care/General Practice (any rank) to be advertised during F2022 semester. The appointment of the new faculty is planned to begin at the beginning of F2023 semester. 2. The Primary health care stream will be monitored in its first year of implementation and based on the detailed feedback from student surveys and instructors we will implement the necessary adjustments to make it less clinical in its approach, if deemed necessary. 	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>Students' feedback included requests for more contact time with teaching staff, more teamwork (which is needed in future professional lives) and more interaction with health authorities to achieve hands-on experience. The EEC also suggests reviewing assessments to consider how they might be more authentic. These</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Public Health Day take place at the beginning of each semester giving the opportunity to students to have even more contact time with their teaching staff, beyond regular contact during classes, office hours, online meetings etc., and also interact with public health professionals. 2. Problem-based learning and team-work learning with real life experiences in the local and international public health context, involving professionals from the field are now developed within the regular courses along with projects/coursework combining theoretical 	<p>Choose an item.</p>

<p>changes can enhance the program and improve the experience for both students and teaching staff.</p>	<p>course contents with real-life experiences and real-life scenarios</p>	
<p>The EEC feels that student assessment too heavily relies on final exams. The EEC recommends a stronger focus on formative assessment, with more authentic tasks and practical assignments, and less emphasis on the final exams.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formative assessment and more authentic tasks are now developed for all the courses offered in the next semester. 2. The weighting of 50% for the written final exam is a horizontal assessment implemented for all e-learning programs as part of the essential elements of the pedagogical principles and teaching philosophy employed in all E-Learning courses at EUC developed by the Standing Committee of the Committee of Internal Quality Assurance “Pedagogical Planning of E-Learning Programs of Study”. 	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>Teaching and learning resources may benefit from more opportunities for students to meet and discuss with teachers. Between students a better general support for community building activities can be recommended, and in specific the interaction between students between semesters are asked for. On learning resources, a closer collaboration with healthcare and public health workplaces can be recommended, to support real-life understanding, the integration between the areas, and possibly also student mobility.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Public Health Day is organized at the beginning of each semester giving the opportunity to students to have more contact time with teaching staff and interact with public health professionals. This Public Health Day will give the opportunity to students to build a community through several activities that will be fine-tune and modified accordingly in each year. 2. Problem-based learning with real life experiences in the local and international public health context, involving public health professionals are now developed within the regular courses. 3. Opportunities for student mobility are sought through the ERASMUS+ student mobility. 	<p>Choose an item.</p>

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Dr. Demetris Lamnisis	Program Coordinator	
Dr. Theodoros Lytras	Program Coordinator	
Prof. Chryssoula Thodi	Chairperson, Department of Health Sciences	
Dr. Emmanouil Nikolousis	Chairperson, Department of Medicine	
Prof. Panagiotis Papageorgis	Dean, School of Sciences	
Prof. Elizabeth Johnson	Dean, School of Medicine	

Date: 11/10/2022

