



Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 03/11/2021

# Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:** University of Nicosia
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School of Life and Health Sciences
- **Department/ Sector:** Life Sciences
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**  
**In Greek:** Διατροφή και Διαιτολογία (3 έτη, 180 ECTS, Διδακτορικό )  
**In English:** Nutrition and Dietetics (3 years, 180 ECTS, PhD)
- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek and English
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**  
**In Greek:** Concentrations  
**In English:** Concentrations



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. Introduction

*This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.*

We would like to thank the members of the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for their professional and academic approach during the on-site evaluation of the PhD programme in Nutrition and Dietetics and for producing a detailed and expertly written evaluation report. We greatly appreciate the EEC's positive comments and recommendations for further improving our programme. This evaluation enhances value to our programme taking into consideration the EEC's members' expertise in the subject and/or related areas.

Below you will find detailed responses to all recommendations whilst the findings of the EEC have been summarized. Any comments coming directly from the EEC are shown in *italics*.

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

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

### Findings

*A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.*

The PhD programme in Nutrition and Dietetics has been considered to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section.

The EEC has stated that the PhD in Nutrition and Dietetics aims to provide students with the most advanced knowledge of Dietetics/Nutrition; the most advanced and specialized skills and techniques, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice in the broad area of Dietetics/Nutrition; competences related to substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity.

The EEC confirmed that in the design and development of the programme:

- (i) the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area,
- (ii) the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes,
- (iii) Standards and Guidelines for On-line programmes,
- (iv) the national laws for quality assurance and accreditation, (v) the National Qualifications Framework, (vi) the European Qualifications Framework, (vii) the Tuning Methodology and (viii) the "Dublin Descriptors", were amongst the points of reference for the process of developing the programmes.

With the PSU and ePSU adequate supports to staff and students are provided.

### Strengths

*A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.*

1. *Pedagogical supports and internal and external regulatory quality assurance mechanisms are sufficient.*
2. *The admission criteria were clearly outlined for potential candidates. The admission criteria for exceptional cases are appropriate and increases the diversity of the candidates.*
3. *Students are afforded adequate supports throughout their PhD studies – counselling, writing etc. Infrastructure supports are adequate for completion of research*
4. *Supervisory team standards assure the PhD student is afforded fair and adequate supervision*

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

*A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.*

1. *Are PhD number targets achieved each year ie 6-10 entrants per year?*

Response/Action: No, as the acceptance of the students depends on various aspects, such as availability of supervisors, research interest of the supervisors in relation to candidates, funds. Therefore, although we achieve the goal of the annual applications the number of accepted students might be different.

2. *Ideally funding would be made available to the candidates to support their candidature.*

Response/Action: Based on the PhD regulations of the UNic this is not feasible. However, the supervisors and the fundraising committee of the UNic guides the students to apply for various grants.

3. *Could elective subjects be undertaken relevant to the studies/research of interest – more in-depth modules on qualitative methods, undertaking systematic reviews etc? Do students coming from the MSc Dietetics need to complete the module on Nutrition and Dietetics? Is there a need for this?*

Response/Action: Yes, this is what is happening now. Below are shown the 3 courses mandatory for our PhD. All courses are directed to be related to the research area of the candidates. Even for MSc Dietetics graduates there is the need to complete NUTR 703 as the main goal of this course is the publication of a systematic review related to the research topic of the candidate.

NUTR-701	Research Methodology
NUTR-702	Biostatistics
NUTR-703	Advance Nutrition/Dietetics Workshops/Seminars

4. *Do the students keep or complete a portfolio throughout their PhD studies to highlight learnings or evidence of completing the learning outcomes etc? Might be worth considering.*

Response/Action:

The students of the PhD Nutrition and Dietetics Programme keep a PhD log throughout the PhD studies in order to report their progress, meeting with supervisors, fulfillment of the learning outcomes. This can be uploaded on the Moodle or it can be kept manually. Also, the Doctoral Studies Office (DSO) has issued 11 DSO-forms (detailed forms where meetings and progress are recorded as well as specialized forms for change of supervisor, extension, etc) (**Appendix 1-PhD**) which they are completed throughout the PhD studies by the student, supervisors, Doctoral Postgraduate Program Committee (DPPC) and vice rector of Faculty and Research.

5. *Could they be more involved in teaching or demonstrating on the relevant under or postgraduate courses to enhance skills?*

Response/Action:

This is an excellent idea, and it was done in certain degree based to the needs of the different course. However, not the Doctorate office of UNic has announced the official engagement to student assistantship and the PhD students can apply with the use of DSO-Student Assistantship Application Form (**Appendix 2-PhD**).

6. Has this programme gone through a periodic review? If so were findings implemented?

Response/Action:

Yes, the programme has undergone an Internal Team of Reviewer (ITR) and an External Team of Reviewer. The ITR included two senior TRF and one student of the Program and the ETR included two external faculty and experts. The suggestions/comments were implemented.

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

### Findings

*A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.*

The PhD programme in Nutrition and Dietetics has been considered to be fully compliant in the two criteria of this section except the practical training which is not required for this PhD.

The EEC has confirmed that the PhD programme of Nutrition and Dietetics is well-structured and encompasses research in basic and research translational science and clinical research. It was confirmed by the EEC that there is good infrastructure to enable high calibre research and staff to student ratio is good. Students are assessed periodically during their studies and there is a monitoring and progress review process. Students appear to enjoy a variety of pedagogical methods to master skills in research methodology. Students have the opportunity to present their work in national and international meetings. There are student support services for a range of student learning activities. The EEC was reassured that procedures for student complaints followed by a UNic structured of dealing.

### Strengths

*A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.*

1. Students are reviewed periodically during their PhD studies
2. There are services available to support students with different abilities and learning needs
3. There is range of innovative teaching methods such research seminars, training on biostatistics, hands-on practical sessions and the environment and resources are available to ensure good quality research
4. Students have the opportunity to get involved in the various layers of academic research; these span from laboratory based studies to participation to clinical trials
5. There is a formal progress review

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

*A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.*

1. *When possible, the student learning would benefit from more post-doctoral researchers to support PhD research learning activities*

Response/Action:

This is a very good suggestion, it will be proposed for approval to the DSO and it will be implemented.

2. There is a need for independent academic mentors/tutors that students should be able to refer in confidence to discuss matters about their learning experiences and research supervision

Response/Action:

We agree with this suggestion and actually the current supervisory team is trained to do this as well. Below you can see the description of the supervisory team as presented in the Code Practice and Regulations Version 5.2 of Doctorated Studies of UNic.

‘Supervisory Team

The Supervisory Team is a three-member committee appointed by the Department Postgraduate Programmes Committee (DPPC). The DPPC, in consultation with the Doctoral Programme Coordinator/Director, first appoints the student’s Main Supervisor, hereafter referred to as the Main Supervisor, and then the other two supervisors following the recommendation of the Main Supervisor. All members of the supervisory team should have research interests relevant to the student’s research topic. The committee is chaired by the Main Supervisor. The main supervisor should be a full time TRF faculty of the university active in research and publications.

The Main Supervisor and at least one other member of the committee are faculty members of the Department or School. The other member of the committee may be a faculty member from another School or another University/Research Institute. A Main Supervisor cannot supervise at any time more than five (5) students.

At least one member of the Supervisory Team must have: 1) the rank of Professor or Associate Professor and 2) must have supervised a Doctoral student to completion. Any member of the team without supervisory experience is encouraged to attend a training workshop on Doctoral Degree supervision. The DPPC must reassure that no member of the Supervisory team has any form of conflict of interest with the Doctoral student.

The Supervisory Team is responsible for:

- a. helping the student feel at home in a Department or School, and in the University
- b. approving the student’s final research proposal
- c. providing general guidance on such matters as the nature of research; academic standards; planning; literature and other sources; methods and techniques
- d. assisting the student in navigating through official procedures, and ensuring that deadlines are met
- e. maintaining regular (and frequent) formal contact with the student; where the student has not been in contact with the Supervisory Team for some time, it is the Supervisory Team’s responsibility to make contact with the student
- f. keeping proper records of all the meetings held between the doctoral student and the Supervisory Team
- g. being accessible to give the student informal and formal advice
- h. obtaining progress reports and other written work, and promptly providing constructive criticism
- i. arranging any training which the student requires, including research and personal skills



- j. ensuring that the student is aware of when s/he is making inadequate progress or other impediments to the successful completion of research within the required duration
- k. ensuring that the student enrolls with the University on a semester basis
- l. ensuring that the student makes a positive contribution through his/her work within the University and through the choice of area of study, research methods and analysis, to promoting diversity and equal opportunities within the University and the community'

3. *A policy on procedures on student complaint is required, if this is not already available.*

Response/Action: In the Code Practice and Regulations Version 5.2 of Doctorated Studies of UNic (section 23) there a policy and procedure on student's complaint presented below:

**'Complaints and Appeals Procedure**

Doctoral Degree students can complain about any issue relating to their studies and appeal against the outcome of the examination of their Thesis and/or any decision concerning a progress-related issue. Complaints and appeals must be made, in writing, to the DPPC's Chair and to the Office of the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research. In the case of an appeal, the grounds for appeal must be clearly stated on the appeal letter. The deadline for submitting appeals is ten (10) days from the date when the student was formally notified by the University of the decision under appeal.

The Office of the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research will release the letter of appeal to the affected stakeholders, depending on the reason of the appeal (eg. DPPC, Supervisory Team, Examination Committee), and ask for an official response in writing within ten (10) days . The response will be made available to the student.

Appeals against Examination Committee decisions may be made on the basis of the following grounds:

- a. irregularities in the conduct of the examination (including administrative error) of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the examiners would have reached the same conclusion had they not occurred
- b. evidence of inadequate assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners. Challenges to the composition of the Examination Committee and academic judgment of the examiners will not be considered.'

4. *The students would benefit if they had the opportunity to experience research outside their host country. The institution may want to consider student mobility awards*

Response/Action: This suggestion is welcomed and it is conveyed to the PhD office for official confirmation. Nevertheless, this is done in some degree. For example, one of the PhD student was given permission to relocate for a period of time and in collaboration with laboratory abroad to do part of his lab work in Africa.

### 3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

#### Findings

*A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.*

The PhD programme in Nutrition and Dietetics has been considered to be fully compliant in all criteria of \_\_\_\_\_



this section.

The EEC has stated that there is a good number of members of academic staff to support the research students. 'The academic staff holds appropriate to the discipline academic degrees, and research degrees at PhD level. Only few members of the team have a solid research track record; others are less research active and/or their outputs are of low-modest calibre. The estimated number ratio between students to academic is good, ensuring a high-quality PhD programme is provided to students. There are opportunities for interdisciplinary interaction with other Departments and Units within the University and the existence of a Medical School is considered an advantage to foster high calibre clinical research. The EEC considers that there is a lack of specialist technical staff particularly with the run of practical sessions and student support during laboratory dissertations.'

### Strengths

*A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.*

Major strengths of the teaching staff include

- 1. Discipline appropriate academic qualifications, professional registration and ongoing engagement to research*
- 2. Good staff to student ratio ensuring optimal conditions for academic learning and teaching are in place*
- 3. Research activities cover a broad range of disciplines spanning from Public Health Nutrition to Clinical Nutrition and Nutritional Sciences*

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

*A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.*

- 1. If possible, the department would benefit from additional technical support staff in laboratory*

#### Response /Action:

This will be included in the annual budget proposal of the programmes in Nutrition and Dietetics

- 2. It was unclear whether there are post-doctoral researchers to help with research teaching activities*

#### Response /Action:

At this point , there is no postdoctoral scholar as an ‘individual holding a doctoral degree who is engaged in mentored research or scholarly training for the purpose of acquiring the professional skills needed to pursue a career path of his or her choosing.’ However, the teaching is done by the PhD faculty, the mentoring by the coordinator and researching guiding by the supervisors.

- 3. The department may want to leverage existing opportunities to engage more with visiting professors from other Universities across Europe and elsewhere*

Response /Action:

This is an excellent suggestion and we are going to implement it.

- 4. There is need for high calibre research and research outputs; this in turn will foster high PhD training.*

Response /Action: The faculty of PhD programme in Nutrition in Dietetics and Nutrition and the supervisors are goal oriented towards a high calibre research with research outputs. Most of them are involved to such research projects as PI or part of a research team. Their publications are indicative of these. They aim to involve or guide their PhD students towards elite research. The programme assures the continuing effort of excellent research work.

#### 4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

##### Findings

*A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.*

The PhD programme in Nutrition and Dietetics has been considered to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section.

The EEC stated that the rules for student admission seem to be appropriate and follow in general internationally accepted rules. Students are admitted only in fall. 'The University has a process for general quality assurance. PhD students have access to the welfare mechanisms and counselling tools established at the University of Nicosia. Evaluation of thesis is done by a committee involving at least one external reviewer.'

##### Strengths

*A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.*

'The programme is in an early phase and it is difficult to oversee particular strengths without having access to lists of topics and supervisors, as well as publications.'

##### Areas of improvement and recommendations

*A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.*

*1. It would have been useful to have a list of current PhD topics and supervisors, and first indicators of publication and graduating history. The University should consider to admit students during the whole academic year, not only in fall.*

##### Response /Action:

The PhD topics, the supervisors and the student publications were included in the accreditation application and presented by the coordinator of the PhD in Nutrition and Dietetics at the date of the accreditation. The topics of the thesis and some of the student publications of the PhD students are presented below. Initially, the programme admitted students throughout the year, but the number of the student enrolled was not beneficial for the UNic. This is something that will be considered for the future.

No.	Name	Status	TITLE
1	Xanthi Sophokleous	1 <sup>st</sup> Student Graduated 2020	The impact of television food advertising on childhood obesity and the added value of nutritional counselling

2	Panagiotis Siekkeris	Ongoing	Cyprus Structured Diabetes Education Trial based on carbohydrate counting in people with Type 1 Diabetes
3	Eleftheria Panagiotou		Vitamin D and the impact to diabetes management and metabolism
4	Juliana Marcou		Behavioral change of obese children and the effects of Dietary–Physical Activity – combination of the two for the treatment of Childhood Obesity
5	Tamara Al-Abdi		How does personality affect meal regularity, metabolic rate and BMI? Are the effects of meal regularity on metabolic rate mediated by personality traits?
6	Antonis Zavros		The impact of selenium and zinc supplementation to body composition and thyroid hormones for overweight and obese people with abnormal TSH with the use of specialized diet and exercise
7	Dimitris Papamichael		Adherence to the Mediterranean Diet reduces pro-inflammatory markers in people who have experienced colorectal cancer: Prospective intervention research
8	Chrystalla Myriantheos		The Impact of Food Label Use on Nutrition Knowledge and Nutritional Behavior
9	Maria Kyriakidou		Adherence of the Mediterranean Diet to Heart Diseases and evaluation of the effectiveness of Coenzyme Q10(CoQ10) in Primary as well as Secondary prevention
10	Morris terfa Aloysius		The development of Chitosan Nanogel for the encapsulation of mixed food extracts for the management of Type 2 Diabetes
11	Jessy Rizk		The effect of individualized diet for pregnant women to body weight and levels of serum iron during pregnancy and to their nutritional status
12	Nancy Abi Abboud		Feeding behavior in the first year of life and risk of childhood obesity
13	Evgenia Petridi		The obesity of children aged 9-12 in Europe and the determining nutritional and environmental factors of child obesity
14	Persa Korfiati		Eating Disorders and development of behavioral modification techniques to be used by dietitians and psychologists
15	Nicoletta Ntorzi		The change of nutritional status, biochemical indexes and Anthropometric in Cypriot soldiers
16	Angelos		Gut microbiome as a key modulator to multisystem physiological

	Vlachogiannis	regulations associated with diet, exercise and sleep
17	Anna Christothea Michael	Title: The significance of Dietary Protein for Chronic Renal failure; the determination of significance of animal against vegetarian protein for keeping high eGFR.
18	Christiana Philippou Charidemou	Title: “The correlation between nutrition and exercise behavior with emphasis on life-style changes for weight management in primary care in Cyprus ”
19	Elina Polydorou	Title: Customized nutritional assessment software for the improvement of clinical dietetic practice and better health outcomes in patients receiving medical nutrition therapy
20	Dionisia Vardakastani	Evaluation of the effect of intermittent fasting on the health indicators of overweight and obese people compared to the conventional diet in the long term
21	Elena Troullidou	Effect on postprandial glucose and insulin of breakfast cereals enhanced in protein or increased in fiber or gluten-free or a mixture of cereals in a specific dosage in healthy adult people in the Cypriot population
22	Kyriaki Savvidi	Social media and their relationship with psychosocial behavior and eating habits of children and adolescents

#### Publications of PhD Students of Nutrition and Dietetics Programme

- 1. Angelos Vlahoyiannis, Christoforos D. Giannaki, Giorgos K. Sakkas , George Aphamis, Eleni Andreou , "A Systematic Review, Meta-Analysis and Meta Regression on the Effects of Carbohydrates on Sleep". *Nutrients* 2021,13,1283. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu13041283>
- 2. Tamara Al Abdi, Eleni Andreou, Alexia Papageorgiou, Alexandros Heraclides, Elena Philippou (2020) “Personality, Chrono-nutrition and Cardiometabolic Health: A Narrative Review of the Evidence”, *Adv Nutr* 2020;1-10; doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/advances/nmaa051>.
- 3. Angelos Vlahoyiannis , George Aphamis , Gregory C. Bogdanis , Giorgos K. Sakkas, Eleni Andreou , Christoforos D. Giannaki (2020) “Deconstructing athletes’ sleep: A systematic review of the influence of age, sex, athletic expertise, sport type, and season on sleep characteristics” *Journal of Sport and Health Science*, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jshs.2020.03.006>
- 4. Vlahoyiannis A, Aphamis G, Andreou E, Samoutis G, Sakkas G, Giannaki C. (2018) “Effects of High vs. Low Glycemic Index of Post-Exercise Meals on Sleep and exercise Performance: A Randomized, Double-Blind, Counterbalanced Polysomnographic Study”. *Nutrients*, Volume 10, (11). pii: E1795 (Impact Factor 2018: 4.171).
- 5. Aloysius Morris Terfa, Felekkis Kyriakos, Petrou Christos, Andreou Eleni (2021). “The relation of chitosan nanogel with mixed food plants (MFP-unripe plantain, bitter yam and okra) for the management of Type 2 diabetes: A observational case-controlled systematic review and meta-analysis”. *Journal Nutrients* (submitted)
- 6. Panagiotis Siekkeris, Felekkis Kyriakos, Roupa Zoe, Andreou Eleni (2021). “Systematic Review on the existing online education in type 1 diabetes”. *Journal Diabetes Care*, (submitted)

- 7. Xanthi Sophocleous, Zampellas Antonis, Felekkis Kyriakos, Andreou Eleni (2021). "Content Analysis of Food and Beverage Products in Television Advertisements Seen during Family Zone in Cyprus and its reflection to the Food Pyramid prototype". Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (submitted)
- 8. Sophocleous X. (2018). "The impact of television food advertising on children's eating behaviour in Cyprus". 10th Cyprus Dietetic and Nutrition Association Conference with International Participation, ISBN: 978-9963-9876-6-5 (Nicosia, 22-25/11/2018)
- 9. Book Chapter . Korfiati Persa, Eleni Andreou. Behavior Modification in BED ( 2021)

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

### Findings

*A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.*

The PhD programme in Nutrition and Dietetics has been considered to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section.

The University of Nicosia appears to have an excellent environment to support a research programme of studies. There is a good number of classrooms for large size plenary presentations but also purpose-built rooms for smaller group teaching. There is a library with a broad collection of academic literature and students have access to e-journals and other resources. From the resources shared with the EEC there are cluster rooms and free internet access for registered students. It appears to exist adequate equipment and specialist laboratory space for practical training in energy balance studies, body composition, food preparation and science, biomedical and biological sciences. However, the EEC has not seen photos or videos of such facilities and how accessible these are to students. The equipment detailed in the programme documentation aligns with the needs for academic research in nutritional sciences and dietetics. All these ensure students are provided with the support they require to achieve their research study objectives. The number of students admitted to the PhD programme is good. There are human support resources available and there is a student advising and support facility where students can refer to receive a broad range of services. These span from support for students with disabilities to teaching and learning support for the slow learner. It is customary in academic institutions student to have the opportunity to refer to members of staff as a first line contact for matters around learning and pastoral care. The staff ensured that this was indeed the case but the EEC would like to see some formal policy about tutors impended in the programme's information documentation. Research



students were positive of the environment and support they have been receiving. It might be good for the academic staff to collect formal feedback on these aspects on regular intervals and use this to improve the study curriculum, resources and facilities.'

### Strengths

*A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.*

- 1. Excellent environment to support research as well as student advisory and support facilities*
- 2. There is a good number of classrooms for large size plenary presentations but also purpose-built rooms for smaller group teaching.*
- 3. There is a library with a broad collection of academic literature and students have access to e-journals.*
- 4. There are cluster rooms and free internet access.*
- 5. Adequate equipment and specialist laboratory space are in place for research in nutrition.*
- 6. The equipment detailed in the programme documentation aligns with the needs of a PhD programme in nutrition and dietetics.*
- 7. The number of students admitted to the programme is good so the EEC cannot foresee major issues with resource availability if numbers increase*
- 8. There are human support resources available and there is a student advising and support facility where students can refer to receive a broad range of advisory services and support.*

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

*A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.*

- 1. It is customary students to have the opportunity to refer to members of staff as a first line contact for matters around learning and pastoral care. The staff ensured that this practice was in place but the EEC would recommend staff to formulate appropriate policies around tutoring and impend them in the programme's information documentation.*

Response/Action: We consider our programme privileged to follow the Code of Practice of Doctoral Programmes of UNic. Topics such a tutoring, guiding, learning process etc fall under this. Moreover, there is a structured documentation for these activities. For a quick reference, the table of content of the Code practice is presented below.

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2. *It might be good for the academic staff to collect formal anonymous feedback, on regular intervals, and use this to review study curriculum, resources and facilities provision.*

Response/Action: We agree with this and we will continue doing this for improvement and excellence of our programme.

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

### Findings

*A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.*

The PhD programme in Nutrition and Dietetics has been considered to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section.

'The PhD programme in Nutrition and Dietetics consists of 180 ECTS, thereof 30 ECTS compulsory courses and 150 ECTS project work. The compulsory courses are fitting well into a PhD in the area of Nutrition or Dietetics. The programme has a duration of 3-8 years. Candidates holding a master degree in Nutrition and/or Dietetic or another relevant field in science are eligible. A further prerequisite is the willingness to act as a students' mentor. Candidates who do not hold a master degree may be eligible under specific conditions. PhD candidates have access to the Centre for Research and Counselling Services and other support institutions. Academic counselling is provided by the academic officer, the Head of Department and the Programme Coordinator.

The infrastructure seems to be satisfactory for pursuing a PhD, both with regard to laboratories, library, IT support and supervision. Supervision is organized through a three-member committee (appointed by the Departments Postgraduate Programme Committee) with one being the main supervisor. Roles of the supervisors are well described. The maximum number of candidates per supervisor is 5.

There are rules in place for monitoring progress, which seems to be appropriate, including the nomination of a review committee in case of severe problems. The process of submission of the thesis, requirements for submission and the defence of the thesis are described. The thesis is evaluated by an Examination committee, with one member from another institution and one internal member, and an independent chair. Rules for assessment and procedures for re-examination are described. Also rules for cases of scientific or ethic misconduct are in place.'

### Strengths

*A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.*

1. *The PhD programme in Nutrition/Dietetics appears straight forward and reasoned. It will be interesting to read future PhD theses from the University of Nicosia.*

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

*A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.*

1. *It would have been interesting to get PhD title and performance data of the first candidates.*

Response/Action: We had our first PhD graduate in 2020 (2017-2020). In the table below, No.

4,20,21,22,23 have applied for a semester interruption of the studies for family/personal reasons. No. 2 and 5 will graduate in Spring 2022. The title and their PhD proposals and their progress in the form of their publications are presented below.

No.	Name	Status	TITLE
1	Xanthi Sophokleous	1 <sup>st</sup> Student Graduated 2020	The impact of television food advertising on childhood obesity and the added value of nutritional counselling
2	Panagiotis Siekkeris	Ongoing	Cyprus Structured Diabetes Education Trial based on carbohydrate counting in people with Type 1 Diabetes
3	Eleftheria Panagiotou		Vitamin D and the impact to diabetes management and metabolism
4	Juliana Marcou		Behavioral change of obese children and the effects of Dietary–Physical Activity – combination of the two for the treatment of Childhood Obesity
5	Tamara Al-Abdi		How does personality affect meal regularity, metabolic rate and BMI? Are the effects of meal regularity on metabolic rate mediated by personality traits?
6	Antonis Zavros		The impact of selenium and zinc supplementation to body composition and thyroid hormones for overweight and obese people with abnormal TSH with the use of specialized diet and exercise
7	Dimitris Papamichael		Adherence to the Mediterranean Diet reduces pro-inflammatory markers in people who have experienced colorectal cancer: Prospective intervention research
8	Chrystalla Myriantheos		The Impact of Food Label Use on Nutrition Knowledge and Nutritional Behavior
9	Maria Kyriakidou		Adherence of the Mediterranean Diet to Heart Diseases and evaluation of the effectiveness of Coenzyme Q10(CoQ10) in Primary as well as Secondary prevention
10	Morris terfa Aloysius		The development of Chitosan Nanogel for the encapsulation of mixed food extracts for the management of Type 2 Diabetes

11	Jessy Rizk	The effect of individualized diet for pregnant women to body weight and levels of serum iron during pregnancy and to their nutritional status
12	Nancy Abi Abboud	Feeding behavior in the first year of life and risk of childhood obesity
13	Evgenia Petridi	The obesity of children aged 9-12 in Europe and the determining nutritional and environmental factors of child obesity
14	Persa Korfiati	Eating Disorders and development of behavioral modification techniques to be used by dietitians and psychologists
15	Nicoletta Ntorzi	The change of nutritional status, biochemical indexes and Anthropometric in Cypriot soldiers
16	Angelos Vlachogiannis	Gut microbiome as a key modulator to multisystem physiological regulations associated with diet, exercise and sleep
17	Anna Christothea Michael	Title: The significance of Dietary Protein for Chronic Renal failure; the determination of significance of animal against vegetarian protein for keeping high eGFR.
18	Christiana Philippou Charidemou	Title: "The correlation between nutrition and exercise behavior with emphasis on life-style changes for weight management in primary care in Cyprus "
19	Elina Polydorou	Title: Customized nutritional assessment software for the improvement of clinical dietetic practice and better health outcomes in patients receiving medical nutrition therapy
20	Dionisia Vardakastani	Evaluation of the effect of intermittent fasting on the health indicators of overweight and obese people compared to the conventional diet in the long term
21	Elena Troullidou	Effect on postprandial glucose and insulin of breakfast cereals enhanced in protein or increased in fiber or gluten-free or a mixture of cereals in a specific dosage in healthy adult people in the Cypriot population
22	Kyriaki Savvidi	Social media and their relationship with psychosocial behavior and eating habits of children and adolescents

#### Publications of PhD Students of Nutrition and Dietetics Programme

- 1. Angelos Vlahoyiannis, Christoforos D. Giannaki, Giorgos K. Sakkas , George Aphamis, Eleni Andreou , "A Systematic Review, Meta-Analysis and Meta Regression on the Effects of Carbohydrates on Sleep". Nutrients 2021,13,1283. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu13041283>
- 2. Tamara Al Abdi, Eleni Andreou, Alexia Papageorgiou, Alexandros Heraclides, Elena Philippou (2020) "Personality, Chrono-nutrition and Cardiometabolic Health: A Narrative



Review of the Evidence”, Adv Nutr 2020;1-10;  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/advances/nmaa051>.

- 3. Angelos Vlahoyiannis , George Aphasimis , Gregory C. Bogdanis , Giorgos K. Sakkas, Eleni Andreou , Christoforos D. Giannaki (2020) “Deconstructing athletes’ sleep: A systematic review of the influence of age, sex, athletic expertise, sport type, and season on sleep characteristics” Journal of Sport and Health Science, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jshs.2020.03.006>
- 4. Vlahoyiannis A, Aphasimis G, Andreou E, Samoutis G, Sakkas G, Giannaki C. (2018) “Effects of High vs. Low Glycemic Index of Post-Exercise Meals on Sleep and exercise Performance: A Randomized, Double-Blind, Counterbalanced Polysomnographic Study”. Nutrients, Volume 10, (11). pii: E1795 (Impact Factor 2018: 4.171).
- 5. Aloysius Morris Terfa, Felekkis Kyriakos, Petrou Christos, Andreou Eleni (2021). “The relation of chitosan nanogel with mixed food plants (MFP-unripe plantain, bitter yam and okra) for the management of Type 2 diabetes: A observational case-controlled systematic review and meta-analysis”. Journal Nutrients (submitted)
- 6. Panagiotis Siekkeris, Felekkis Kyriakos, Roupa Zoe, Andreou Eleni (2021). “Systematic Review on the existing online education in type 1 diabetes”. Journal Diabetes Care, (submitted)
- 7. Xanthi Sophocleous, Zampellas Antonis, Felekkis Kyriakos, Andreou Eleni (2021). “Content Analysis of Food and Beverage Products in Television Advertisements Seen during Family Zone in Cyprus and its reflection to the Food Pyramid prototype”. Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (submitted)
- 8. Sophocleous X. (2018). “The impact of television food advertising on children’s eating behaviour in Cyprus”. 10th Cyprus Dietetic and Nutrition Association Conference with International Participation, ISBN: 978-9963-9876-6-5 (Nicosia, 22-25/11/2018)
- 9. Book Chapter . Korfiati Persa, Eleni Andreou. Behavior Modification in BED ( 2021)

## B. Conclusions and final remarks

*Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.*

We thank the EEC for recommending accreditation of the PhD Nutrition and Dietetic programme. The EEC noted, ‘All in all, the PhD programme is reasoned and straight forward.’

All the comments regarding the strengths and recommendations were examined and considered seriously. We guaranteed their implementation or the reinforcement of those already practiced. The faculty will continue their research work and the CPD is required for them to abreast their knowledge and specialization.

Ultimate, as demonstrated in the report above, the program Coordinators and the faculty members of the Department of Life and Health Sciences of the University of Nicosia involved in developing and implementing the PhD in Nutrition and Dietetics, having thoroughly considered the EEC’s productive feedback have taken immediate action to adopt the EEC’s recommendations.



**A. Higher Education Institution academic representatives**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
<b>Prof. Kyriacos Felekis</b>	Acting Dean, School of Life and Health Sciences	
<b>Dr Eleni Andreou</b>	Acting Head, Department of Life Sciences, Coordinator of PhD in Nutrition and Dietetics	
<b>Prof Antonis Zampelas</b>	Co- Coordinator of Nutrition and Dietetics	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	

**Date:** 3/11/2021