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Date: 26-04-2024

External Evaluation Report (Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
KES College
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School of Health Studies
- **Department/ Sector:** - -
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
Personal Trainer and Group Fitness Coach (2 academic years), 120 ECTS, Diploma
- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek and English
- **Programme's status:** Reaccreditation
- **Concentrations (if any):** - -



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. Introduction

The evaluation team engaged in fruitful and healthy discussions with KES College academic, management and administrative staff and students regarding the re-accreditation of the Diploma in Personal Training and Group Fitness Coach. Tours of the major facilities were provided to enable the evaluation team to get a clear understanding of the current academic provision including infrastructure, facilities, and staff base. Our conclusions regarding the plans to re-accredit the diploma are highlighted below.



B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Nikolai B. Nordsborg	Professor, HoD	University of Copenhagen,DK
Ralf Brand	Professor	University of Potsdam
Lee Ingle	Professor	University Hull
Magda Anthousi	Student representative	Cyprus University of Technology

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

Sub-areas

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

1.3 Public information

1.4 Information management

Findings

The evaluation committee has noted several commendable aspects of the college's program, which is now in its sixth year. Despite its relatively young age, the program exhibits a higher level of maturity, benefitting significantly from the lessons learned from older, established programs. This maturity is evident in the systematic and effective processes implemented for quality assurance and ongoing monitoring.

University leadership has acknowledged areas within the program that are currently plateauing in development. However, there is a dedicated budget to foster further development and address these areas effectively. This proactive approach demonstrates the organization's commitment to continual improvement and adaptation in response to evolving educational needs.

A very systematic and clear perspective on the installed quality assurance processes has been observed. These processes ensure that students' voices are heard, contributing significantly to the program's development and responsiveness. Public information and information management systems are robust, with well-established feedback mechanisms that maintain transparency and continuous improvement.

Regarding ongoing monitoring and review, it is crucial for the department to recognize, and for the teachers to be aware of, the program's strengths and limitations. The program excels in providing highly practical and vocational training! However, it is equally important to acknowledge and respect the boundaries with adjacent fields, such as physiotherapy or other areas of rehabilitation, to maintain the program's integrity and focus.

Strengths

One of the program's notable strengths is its close collaboration with active professionals in the fitness industry, including trainers, coaches, and gym owners who significantly contribute to the teaching activities. From this partnership evolves a quality assurance structure (that resonates well with the college's more formal processes and procedures) that ensures the curriculum is directly aligned with the needs of the job market. Students are expertly trained to fulfill the roles of personal trainers and group fitness instructors, focusing on practical, hands-on skills

required on the training floor. This alignment not only enhances the relevance and applicability of their education but will also significantly boost their employability and effectiveness in the field.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The program's structure and the college's support system are aligned with the goals of providing a comprehensive, very application-oriented educational experience.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

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

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

Sub-areas

- 1.2 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
- 1.3 Practical training**
- 1.4 Student assessment**

Findings

The institution excels in fostering an vocational educational environment that emphasizes both individual and social development through flexible, student-centered teaching methodologies. The pedagogical approaches support intended learning outcomes. Students actively participate in shaping their learning experiences, thereby fostering autonomy while receiving necessary guidance. Practical training is integrated with theoretical knowledge, tailored to meet stakeholder needs. Assessment procedures established. Mechanisms for feedback are in place. Teaching methods are adapted to students' needs and circumstances. This approach supports the development of a practical skill set based on relevant aspects of theory, which ensures that students are well-prepared for their future endeavors.

Strengths

It is a specific strength that learning is highly connected to the relevant environment (ie. fitness facilities).

Areas of improvement and recommendations

It may be considered to improve students' awareness of the value of practical skill sets in personal training and group fitness while at the same time establishing very distinct boundaries towards injury handling and rehabilitation, which should be handled by relevant accredited professions.



Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

- 3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development
- 3.2 Teaching staff number and status
- 3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Findings

The number of the teaching staff is adequate. The teaching staff status appears appropriate. Because this is a vocational program no interaction between teaching and research is expected and also not identified. Strong support from students to current teaching methodology and interaction was clear.

Strengths

It is a strength that teaching is highly vocational and often takes place in a relevant environment (ie. training facility).

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Members of the teaching staff could be further supported with regard to the development of their background knowledge (and also their teaching skills) by establishing a formal professional development program. This would even further strengthen the program.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

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

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

Sub-areas

- 3.1 **Student admission, processes and criteria**
- 3.2 **Student progression**
- 3.3 **Student recognition**
- 3.4 **Student certification**

Findings

This institution upholds expected standards in student admission, progression, recognition, and certification, fostering a transparent and fair learning environment. Admission criteria are clearly defined ensuring equitable access. Progression policies are in place and monitored. Recognition practices adhere to expected standards. Certifications are adequate and outline the qualification, learning outcomes, and the context of the studies. The approach supports that all students receive the support and acknowledgment they deserve for their achievements.

Strengths

It is a strength that the program offers educational possibilities for students unlikely to enter formal academic systems, such as BSc programs. The trained students are an absolute asset for the personal training and group training industry and are well educated to interact with staff of other disciplines.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Even more students could be admitted to the program.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

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

4. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

- 4.1 Teaching and Learning resources
- 4.2 Physical resources
- 4.3 Human support resources
- 4.4 Student support

Findings

KES college demonstrated adequate resources for all aspects of the evaluated program. Physical resources (ie training center) were described by video only. Student centered resources were inspected physically.

Strengths

The close interaction with stakeholders and especially future employers of personal trainers and group based fitness instructors was clear. Learning facilities have been established within fitness training centers, which is a clear strength. Students were very supportive of the course teachers.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The theoretical framework around the very strong practical education requires continued updating. This can easily be ensured by the staff who possess relevant knowledge.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

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

5. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

- 5.1 Selection criteria and requirements
- 5.2 Proposal and dissertation
- 5.3 Supervision and committees

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.

NA

Strengths

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

NA

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.

NA

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
6	Selection criteria and requirements	NA
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	NA
6.3	Supervision and committees	NA




D. Conclusions and final remarks

Firstly, we would like to thank the KES College staff for their friendly and engaging discussions with the evaluation team. The team were very thankful for the hospitality shown and the engaging and friendly interactions. We were extremely impressed with the scope and format of the very practical and vocational qualification “Diploma in Personal Training and Group Fitness Coach” which can be gained following two years of study. We felt that the students were extremely well supported by faculty and associated stakeholders (employers), and were able to develop real-world practical skills to allow immediate employment in the health and fitness industry in Cyprus. The panel were very concerned, however, regarding issues surrounding their license to practice in Cyprus, which we believe requires further consideration and resolution at the national level.

We were convinced that existing supportive structures around financial / organizational / resourcing / teaching quality assurance processes and mechanisms were already in place to support the re-accreditation of this program. Our major concern focuses on the boundaries of the program and how it could overlap with related disciplines such as physiotherapy. The panel firmly believes that graduate students with this qualification should work exclusively with apparently healthy members of the general population in group or one-to-one settings, providing exercise training, programming and prescription guidance and support for aerobic activities, strength and conditioning, and related activities. However, we are clear that graduate students with this qualification should not be leading on the management of sports-related injuries, nor be managing the rehabilitation process of clinical populations. We firmly believe that these more complex cases are beyond the scope and remit of graduates of a 2-year Diploma in Personal Training and Group Fitness Coaching. Management of these conditions should be via medical professionals and physiotherapists. We believe this distinction should be stated clearly during the course delivery. We are also aware of trends and fads in the health and fitness industry and believe that KES College should provide faculty staff with a continuing professional development budget to allow them to keep up-to-date with the latest developments in the area. However, on balance, the evaluation team is fully supportive of the proposal to re-accredit the Diploma in Personal Training and Group Fitness Coach.



E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Nikolai B. Nordsborg	
Ralf Brand	
Lee Ingle	
Magda Anthousi	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 26-04-2024