**Doc. 300.1.1**

**Date: 04/06/2024**

# External Evaluation Report

# (Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  City Unity College, Nicosia

- **Town:** Nicosia

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):**

- **Department/ Sector:** Sector
  Animal care and Management Industry

- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
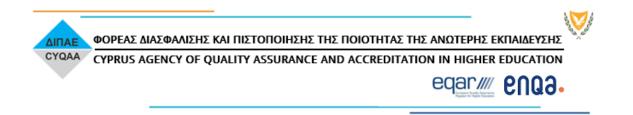  **In Greek:** Διοίκηση Κυνολογικών Μονάδων (2 Έτη, 126 ECTS, Δίπλωμα)

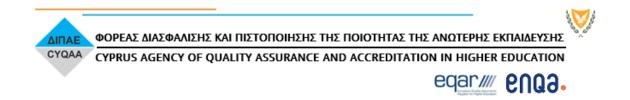  **In English:** Canine Management Studies (2 Years, 126 ECTS, Diploma)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English & Greek

- **Programme's status:** New

- **Concentrations (if any):**
  **In Greek:**
  **In English:**

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

In advance of the site visit and during the visit itself, the EEC received the Application for Evaluation - Accreditation Programme of Study. On-site, on the first day of the visit, the EEC received the updated Application as a hard copy, the PowerPoint slides presented, the Appendices and other materials such as the CVs of the lecturers.
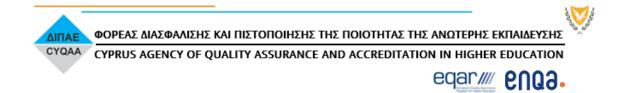
The site visit was undertaken at the host college. The EEC met with the senior management team, namely CUC's CEO and President of the Board, Mr. Elias Philippou; the Academic Director, Dr Constantinos Charalambous; the Academic Programme's Director, Prof John Violaris; the Head of Research, Dr Zanete Garanti; the Head of Business Department, Dr Chrysostomi Maria Kyrillou; the Canine Programs Leader, Dr Teresa Tyler; the Quality Assurance Officer, Charis Kyriacou; the Quality Assurance Officer, Dr Melina Solaki; the administrative and IT staff; the external stakeholder, Sonia Philippou; the lecturers, and six students who currently study in other programmes at CUC. The presentations covered the Programme, its structure, research opportunities, staff workload and organization, assessments, facilities and other resources. The EEC also took a tour of CUC's current premises and discussed the plans for the new canine facility.

The EEC had opportunities to ask questions. The EEC sought additional evidence and clarification regarding a range of specific areas. Specifically, the EEC inquired about the novelty of the Programme (e.g., intended learning outcomes, competencies, programme structure, assessment methods, infrastructure, and IT support). The EEC collected information on placements, advisory for students, office hours, examples of assessments, and details about open-access materials, platforms, and other learning technologies. Students from existing programmes at CUC shared their experiences regarding their experience, availability of resources and general student support.

This new venture involves animals in the teaching programme, thus, the protection and welfare of animals are priorities for the EU, and this was discussed during the site visit.
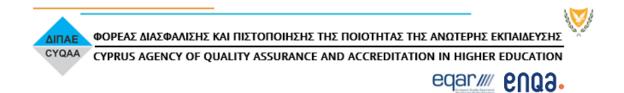
The EEC posed questions about strategic elements of the Application driven by current unmet needs in animal welfare and industry in Cyprus, particularly in light of anticipated developments in the European Qualifications Framework. They also inquired about strategic plans for the Programme's future and the overlapping between similar programmes. The final session involved a meeting with members of the senior management team for any remaining questions and clarifications (exit discussion).

The EEC members found the discussions to be enthusiastic, constructive and informative. The EEC thanks all parties involved for their cooperation during the site evaluation and would also like to express its gratitude to Ms Droso Lavithi, the CYQAA coordinator, for her efficient organisation.

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

| Name | Position | University |
|---|---|---|
| **Alan Baird** | Professor | University College Dublin, Ireland |
| **Eniko Kubinyi** | Professor | Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary |
| **Evangelos Diamantakos** | Senior Lecturer | Hartpury University, UK |
| **Georgia Hadjiandoni** | Student | Open University of Cyprus |

## C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

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

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**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**

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*Findings*

This new programme is designed to meet needs in the area of animal care and industry, specifically in areas which are not currently strictly regulated. The new venture extends the current reach of CUC regarding subject expertise which has been addressed in the application and during the site visit.

Quality assurance mechanisms aligned with Cypriot standards for the development and management of the Programme. Informal assurance processes also seem to support the formal mechanisms efficiently.

The CUC uses Moodle, electronic libraries and other student-friendly tools.

The faculty teaching staff demonstrated practical experience and hold professional qualifications. Many of the teaching staff are PhD holders.

The Programme offers a diverse range of modules that cover key topics in dog behaviour, biology, and training as well as business management.
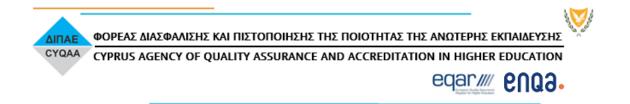
*Strengths*

CUC has an established track record in programme development, business administration, and management. The current Application assembles an impressive range of expertise in design and delivery. The planned dog facility is interesting and will provide a singular opportunity for student engagement and future developments.

*Areas of improvement and recommendations*

The dog facility is still under construction. Alternative accommodations may be required, which are justified with contracts. Memorandum of Agreement with the Cyprus Kennel Club is important but currently limited and could be extended beyond 04/2025.

Given the lack of legislation in the industry (dog training, canine behaviour management), licences to apply knowledge do not currently exist in Cyprus. Ideally, a professional accreditation body could be involved. International developments in these areas are currently ongoing.

For level 5 programmes, the three areas (knowledge, skills and competencies) should be defined according to the descriptors of the eight EQF levels (https://europass.europa.eu/en/description-eight-eqf-levels ) and the CyQF level descriptors (page 12). Therefore, the content in the Section B2 box of the Canine Management Application should change accordingly so it is clearly depicting the learning outcomes of the whole programme.
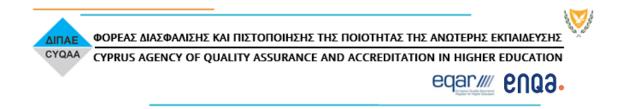
As this is a new area for CUC insurance, indemnity issues should be added to institutional risk management. Special circumstances relating to animal handling (safety issues, immune status of staff and students involved in animal handling, zoonotic factors, first aid training and awareness)

The EEC cannot comment on the canine studies exams and assignments as these were not available at the time of the visit (except one, but it is unclear what module/course it belongs to). Assessment of specific competencies could be listed and described more clearly and in alignment with specific modules. We also regard that detailed Schemes of Work should be provided so it is clear the exact content delivered in different modules (e.g. Canine Behaviour I & II) across the two years of study.

Future programme reviews are scheduled for five-year intervals by CAQAAHE. Given the novelty of the new Programme some review of outcomes, practice and quality should take place at the end of the first operational semester and academic year. CUC internal quality review policies and procedures may govern this aspect.

No public information is yet available for the new Programme. However, the EEC regards that CUC should incorporate in any future marketing material (website, leaflets, etc.) a statement with regards to animal welfare. For example: The student – dog interactions during practical sessions (e.g. dog training, behaviour assessments, grooming) will adhere to the Cyprus and European legislation and EU directives for animal welfare, ethics and codes of practice.

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

| Sub-area | | Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant |
|---|---|---|
| **1.1** | Policy for quality assurance | Compliant |
| **1.2** | Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review | Partially Compliant |
| **1.3** | Public information | Not applicable |
| **1.4** | Information management | Not applicable |

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

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
> **2.2 Practical training**
> **2.3 Student assessment**

*Findings*

This new Programme has been designed and will be conducted by academics and practitioners to ensure that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning.

Practical training is essential in achieving the objectives of the Programme. With the exception of dedicated animal handling facilities (which are planned), classrooms, library, and other infrastructure are available subject to scheduling with other programmes.

The number of teaching staff, including adjunct appointments, appears adequate to support the programme of study. CVs of the teaching staff were circulated.

CUC has an established policy for the recruitment and promotion of teaching staff.

The CUC uses Moodle as a virtual learning environment along with other robust IT tools and people who support a broad range of student and academic administrative services to the University.

No programme of this nature currently exists in Cyprus. However, international models on which the programme is based are established elsewhere.

*Strengths*

During the site visit, the EEC was impressed by the enthusiasm of the faculty and of the CUC management for the new initiative.

The diversity of teaching staff is broad and commensurate with the needs of the Programme.

The CUC senior staff appears to have strong ties with the Cyprus "dog industry" which offers employment opportunities for students who complete the Programme.
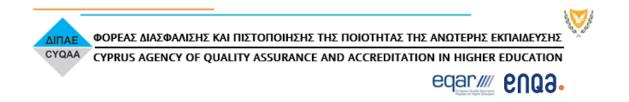
The students interviewed (representing existing programmes) were generally satisfied with the CUC in all regards.

*Areas of improvement and recommendations*

Unpredictable student enrolment figures are a risk.

Recognition of the certificate/diploma could be marketed internationally.
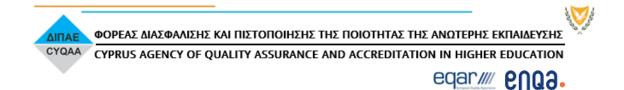
External financing opportunities (including programme-specific scholarships) could be sought.

The dog facility is still under construction. Alternative accommodations may be required, justified with contracts to ensure practical training (please read comments in Section 1 above).

The EEC cannot comment on the canine studies assessments (please read comments in Section 1 above).

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

| Sub-area | | *Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant* |
|---|---|---|
| **2.1** | Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology | Compliant |
| **2.2** | Practical training | Partially compliant |
| **2.3** | Student assessment | Partially 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 EEC met with seven faculty members (full-time and part-time), all of whom possess appropriate qualifications for this programme level. Some of them hold professional qualifications or PhD degrees and are active or plan to be active in research, although this is not a priority of this level of programme. Some of the lecturers are newly recruited and will only teach only in this Programme and the Canine Studies Programme. They mentioned that they were content with the workload and the working environment, including the communication with the management. CUC has policies and processes that promote good teaching practice and continued professional development in pedagogy.
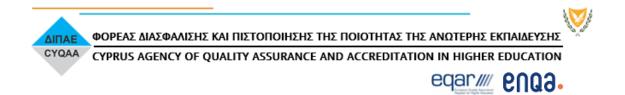
### *Strengths*

The Faculty members (some of whom have an established relationship with CUC) demonstrated high enthusiasm for the programme and expressed their commitment. They are aware of the projected workload and activities required for the new Programme and acknowledge the risks associated with delivering a completely new initiative. All teaching staff is bilingual (English & Greek).
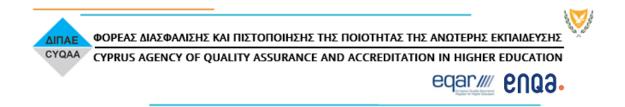
During the interview/meeting, the Faculty members discussed their student-centred teaching approach and the necessity to further promote responsible dog ownership and animal welfare in Cyprus.

### *Areas of improvement and recommendations*
The EEC strongly recommends CUC incorporate in the Schemes of Works Guest Lectures delivered by subject experts and accredited professionals in the areas of canine grooming, training, behaviour, welfare, ethics, management and research.

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

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

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

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria**
> **4.2 Student progression**
> **4.3 Student recognition**
> **4.4 Student certification**

*Findings*

The EEC met six current students from other programmes and interviewed them about their experiences and what they like or dislike at CUC. The students expressed a positive attitude toward CUC and the support they have received from the staff in terms of accessibility and helpfulness. They had two major concerns: one was about the job market, and the other was that they lacked Greek courses facilitating their adaptation to the Cyprian culture (as each attended an English programme and was from abroad). They also mentioned that their Programme was financially affordable which allowed them to work as well.

Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.

*Strengths*

The teaching staff of CUC appear very supportive and generally available, following an "open door" policy.

*Areas of improvement and recommendations*

For the new programme, as well as for future developments, management of advertising and recruitment will be essential.

Greek lessons for international students are recommended.

Transportation (e.g. hiring a bus) is essential to access the new canine facility as the majority of the students do not have cars.

Social spaces at the canine training facility should be provided.

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

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

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

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **5.1 Teaching and Learning resources**
> **5.2 Physical resources**
> **5.3 Human support resources**
> **5.4 Student support**

### *Findings*

The EEC visited teaching facilities, viewed plans of the new canine facility, and met administrative as well as IT staff. The EEC found that the resources, the IT infrastructure, and administrative support reflect a high level of experience and capacity in support of students, faculty and colleagues.

With the exception of a canine facility, adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are available to support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.

CUC offers students recreational spaces and a cafeteria that also serves as a social hub for students.

### *Strengths*

Adequacy of administrative and registry resources is ensured for changing circumstances (embedding of new Programme, coping strategies for unknown student numbers).

Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.
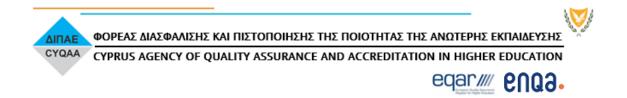
The premises are generally in good condition.

Administrative staff's personal development is supported through training access to the CUC's Programmes.

The CUC library is linked to the university libraries of Cyprus and is responsive to the needs of new programmes.
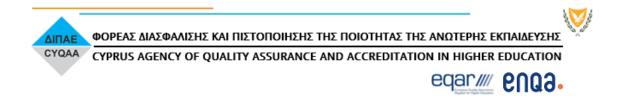
### *Areas of improvement and recommendations*

In the context of practical elements of the Programme, particularly regarding animal handling, the special needs of students should be considered (e.g. immune status, allergies, vaccinations, safety training and special needs due to physical disabilities).

Aspects of animal use generate specific requirements which are new to CUC. For example, dog ownership responsibilities, insurance and indemnity, veterinary care requirements, alignment with national and EU legislation regarding animal utilisation for educational purposes

Ensure support services at off-campus training sites.

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

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

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

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **6.1 Selection criteria and requirements**
> **6.2 Proposal and dissertation**
> **6.3 Supervision and committees**

*Findings*

NA

*Strengths*

NA

*Areas of improvement and recommendations*
NA

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

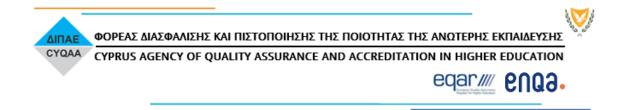| Sub-area | | *Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant* |
|---|---|---|
| **6.1** | Selection criteria and requirements | Not applicable |
| **6.2** | Proposal and dissertation | Not applicable |
| **6.3** | Supervision and committees | Not applicable |

## D. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC are impressed by the ambition and timeliness of this new venture. The sector is important in Cyprus and internationally.

CUC has an established infrastructure for administration, registry management and student assessment, as well as staff recruitment and development.

The special nature of the new venture exposes specific issues with regard to the utilisation of animals for educational purposes. These have been flagged throughout the document with suggestions and recommendations where appropriate.

CUC has the opportunity to become a leader domestically and internationally in the area of the animal care management industry.

## E. Signatures of the EEC

| *Name* | *Signature* |
|---|---|
| **Alan Baird** | |
| **Eniko Kubinyi** | |
| **Evangelos Diamantakos** | |
| **Georgia Hadjiandoni** | |

**Date:** Nicosia, 04/06/2024