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

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Cyprus University of Technology
- **Town:** Limassol
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Faculty of Health Sciences
- **Department/ Sector:** Department of Rehabilitation Sciences
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:
Programme Name

In English:
Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy – 4-year
program – 240 ECTS
- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):**

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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].

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

The on-site visit was very satisfactory and well organized by the agency and the university. As external evaluation committee we had the possibility to meet all the participants that take part in the program development as well as tentative participants in the implementation of the program. We got a good overview about the organization of the university and of the staff members as well as the Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) program as a model for the development of this program of review.

The day on-site followed the planned program. We have had open conversations with all participants with possibilities to pose questions and time for discussions. Everybody had the possibility to give their insights and overview on the development process and the presented program.

The Appendix of the Site Visit Indicative Schedule agenda is included.



B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Susanne Guidetti	Professor in Occupational Therapy	Karolinska Institutet, Sweden
Margo van Hartingsveldt	Professor in Occupational Therapy	Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands
Christina Schulze	Professor in Occupational Therapy	Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland
Maria Petrou	Occupational Therapist, representative of Cyprus Registration board	University
Isabella Troullouri	Medical Doctor, MSC-student	Open University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University

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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 program is developed with a broad group of stakeholders. We had the possibility to meet a lot of the stakeholders on the site-visit, representing Head of the institution, coordination committee of the program, teaching staff, external stakeholder representing Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, The Occupational Therapy Association of Cyprus, students from SLT, alumni, PhD students and administrative staff.

The Department of Rehabilitation Sciences has a robust internal quality assurance framework to ensure that all its programs meet the high academic and professional standards. The proposed Occupational Therapy (OT) program will adhere to the same comprehensive procedures, which are in line with the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT) institutional quality assurance mechanisms and international best practices.

The description of the design of examinations that enables smooth student progression is not clear. The progress of the development towards more autonomy and agency of the student should be highlighted in the application in relation to the described model of student-centred learning that are presented to be used.

The admission criteria are in accordance with the rules of the Cyprus University of Technology and the Ministry of Education. The access to enter the program are four: Two compulsory exams are taken by students in Modern Greek, and Mathematics or Mathematics (general), and two exams are selected from the following topics: English, Ancient Greek, Biology, History, Latin, Accounting, Economics, Physics, Chemistry, Accounting.

Because it is a new program, the information about the program is not available on the website. The needed info is well described in the Application for Evaluation.

The Department will systematically monitor student progress, with student performance being reviewed at least once a year by the Undergraduate Studies Committee which will then report to the Departmental Council.

Each student's academic file is updated regularly, providing faculty and administrators with insight into student progress and areas needing attention.

The applicants representing the program presented a conducted SWOT analysis and a feasibility study highlighted the strengts and weaknesses that relates to each assessments of the program of study. The SWOT analysis and the feasibility study are both presented in a trustful and transparent way.

The program is still in some parts under development. There is no information available about the information management. There is a strategy about information management based in the strate of the SLT program.

Strengths

- Developed with a broad group of stakeholders.
- The course of Pedagogics for the teachers established at CUT.
- The involvement of students and staff in the development of the program.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The support of external stakeholders could be strengthen also with a formal Memorandum of Understanding of collaboration.
- To establish an external board of stakeholders acting as giving advise to the program on developments and trends in policy and practice
- Add a clearly description of the design of the examinations into the application to enable smooth student progression. Thereby the progress of the development of the student towards more autononmy and agency should be highlighted, in relation to student-centred learning. We empahasis the importance of the support for the student to become a life-long learner.
- We recommend to use the possibilities of Erasmus+, possibly to start with staff mobility as for example job shadowing in other European OT programs which could support inside to the developed program and would strengthen the occupation-focused starting point of the program.
- In the presented program there are no opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme of review (*we were informed that the courses/modules needs to be taught in the Greek language*). As the study program outlines we also agree that clinical supervisors should have 5 years of work experience.
- The quality assurance of the program would benefit of strong partnerships and networks with external stakeholders, such as the Cyprus Assocociation of OT, European visting professors, ENOTHE and SPOT-Europe.

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	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Partially compliant

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

The curriculum, course content, and learning outcomes have been designed to meet the minimum standards set by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) and follow the Guidelines and Reference Points for the Design and Delivery of Degree Programs in Occupational Therapy from the Tuning Educational Structures in Europe initiative (2024). These standards ensure that all learning outcomes align with the Assessment Framework for Occupational Therapy First Cycle (Bachelor Level 6).

The student-centered learning is not so explicitly described in the program.

There are good facilities in the Rehabilitation Clinic of the University for SLT program. There are future plans for expanding the building with 3 floors. There is also a list with all the OT equipment which will be required when the new building is ready presented in the Feasibility study. The challenge will be the time schedule to be ready for the start of the program in fall 2025. The developing committee described an alternative plan for accommodating the students admitted to start the program.

The staff is well equipped to use new technology already present at CUT in order to be able to make the teaching process more effective for the students.

The practical training seems to be well organised, there are good recourses for providing OT-interventions with real clients. The infrastructure of the clinic is promising in terms of material, modernity and equipment. The clinic serves the community of Limmasol and the broader population of Cyprus. There are a lot of possibilities for the integration of education, research and practice.

The practical and theoretical studies are not well described in the application to be viewed as enough interconnected. The STL program has succeeded to incorporate students in research, because the department is a research-focused environment its seems promising also for this new program in OT.

The mentorship organised for every student gives the opportunity to give supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies as well in the thesis writing. The supervision of the thesis is very well described in the application.

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A critical point in the application is the lack of description of the possible assessment and the examinations for reaching the learning outcomes and are therefore difficult to review as an external evaluator. The advise is that students present their thesis for other students in the same year and the lower years to stimulate peer-learning and situated learning.

Strengths

- The curriculum have been designed to meet the required standards.
- Good facilities in the Rehabilitation Clinic of the University for the proposed new program.
- The staff is well equipped to use new technology already present at CUT in order to be able to make the teaching process more effective for the students.
- The practical training is well organised.
- There are good recourses for providing OT-interventions with real clients at the academic clinic.
- The infrastructure of the clinic is promising in terms of material, modernity and equipment.
- The clinic serves the community of Limmasol and the broader population of Cyprus.
- The mentorship

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- We advise to develop a clear vision on the pedagogical approach on education and examination.
- Regarding the proposed examinations we advise to focus more on situated learning, problem-based learning and peer-learning.
- We advise to develop a table about the hours of practice placement to add into the application.
- Provide a clear description of the possible assessment and the examinations for reaching the learning outcomes.
- Insert the methodological approach of qualitative research and participatory action research that very well esablished used method in OT research.
- Reframing the course title and the descriptions focusing on the ooccupational perspective and take not diagnosis as a starting point. The daily activity and the participation in in everyday life needs to be visualised as of strong importance for both OT pratcie and research.
- The soft skills needs to be more addressed in the content of the program.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Partially 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

Attracting quality academic staff is sought through announcements of vacancies in English to attract candidates from a broader academic field. Each vacancy has to determine the prerequisites for application for the position and details on the specific criteria. The vacant positions are often announced/advertised within a specific scientific field/expertise. The specific criteria are set by the Departmental Council depending on the particular needs for teaching staff.

The position of Marianne as co-coordinator seems to be lonely and she has a huge workload in developing the program. The amount of permanent teaching OT staff seems not to be adequate in relation to the start of the new program with the core domain that needs to have a focus on both a professional education as Occupational Therapy and the academic subject of Occupational Science.

The visiting staff numbers are high in relation to the permanent OT staff.

The research has a strong focus on biomedicine and SLT. There is also an opportunity to collaborate with Health Sciences and the Institute of Environmental and Public Health. This will support the OT-research which has a paradigm that is more social and societal based.

Strengths

- The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate, teaching has the potential to connect with research activities.
- The program involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad
- The department of Rehabilitation Science is a research promoting environment.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- We advise to go for a strong academic in the field of Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science to support the OT-team.
- We advise to increase the number of permanent staff for the OT-team to build a strong team within the University department.



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

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

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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

There are pre-defined and published regulations regarding the students admission into the program. Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and described in a transparent manner.

International students seem to be excluded from the possibility to participate in a mobility exchange at program because of the policy of the Cyprus government.

The Department has tools that could be used to systematically monitor the student progress, with student performance being reviewed at least once a year by the Undergraduate Studies Committee which will then report to the Departmental Council. The process is well established. There is fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning.

Strengths

- In the plan to develop the OT-program the accreditation of the World Federation of Occupational Therapy is included.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The standards for examination or repeating of courses are not well described, as a recommendation we advise to develop a Teaching and Examination Regulation plan.



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

There are adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (*teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment*) planned to be used for the students as a support to achieve the objectives in the study program. One of the challenges is the time schedule but that is outside the circle of influence of the department.

The Department at CUT has information technology laboratories designated for group and individual work, library, learning skills areas, and research venues. The Department periodically assesses the adequacy and suitability of these sites and informs the relevant authorities of the university for their actions (*e.g. computer updates and replacement*).

The university's library has reviewed the syllabi of all new courses and has already ordered most of the relevant books.

The Department has a process to promote requests for the continuous upgrading and maintenance of laboratories and equipment and for the unimpeded access of students to the workshops.

The Department's Rehabilitation Clinic is used for clinical training of the students under the supervision of certified SLT and audiologists employed by the university as clinical supervisors. The Rehabilitation clinic will expand and will also be used for the education of occupational therapy students under the supervision of certified OTs employed by the university as clinical supervisors.

All courses and learning materials are made available through the University's MOODLE platform, where students can access syllabi, reading materials, assignments, and other resources.

The meeting with the responsible staff gave more insight and trust in the above mentioned resources.

We had a good and trustful on-site presentation on human support resources and student support



Strengths

- The librarian is focusing on the use of AI and makes this applicable for the students.
- There is an alternative plan when the building is not ready when the program starts

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Well presented nothing to recommend at present.

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



C. Conclusions and final remarks

The external evaluation committee agree to the needs of developing and offer a Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy. This program will be the first public Occupational Therapy program in Cyprus offering Cypriot and Greek students the opportunity to be educated in science and practice of Occupational Therapy.

First, we would like to express our satisfaction with the hard work undertaken by the Department of Rehabilitation, especially as by the program co-coordinator Marianna Tsiakoulia.

By reviewing the application of the program of study and the one-day site visit together we got provided with extensive information for conducting a thorough reviewing process.

Overall, we are impressed by the development of the program, the resources of the university and the plan to expand the building to enhance the Rehabilitation and the Occupational Therapy program as well.

As outlined in the evaluation report, several sub-areas are identified as partially compliant. The recommendations provided in the evaluation report should support the achievement of a fully compliant status of the program under review.

Therefore, we suggest identifying the partially compliant sub-area's and revise them according to our feedback provided.

We are confident that with additional support the team and the university can implement the necessary changes to establish a fully compliant Bachelor of Science program.

We are looking forward to seeing a running accredited program that fulfils the minimal standards of the WFOT in the future. //

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E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Susanne Guidetti	
Margo van Hartingsveldt	
Christina Schulze	
Maria Petrou	
Isabella Troullouri	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 14 January 2025

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