Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

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

- **Higher Education Institution:** Frederick University

- **Town:** Limassol

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School of Education and Social Sciences

- **Department/ Sector:** Department of Education

- **Programme of study-** Special Education (¾ academic semestres, 90/110, ECTS, Maser (MEd)
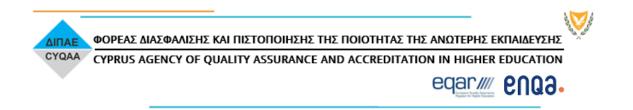
    In Greek:

    Ειδική Εκπαίδευση (3/4 ακαδημαϊκά Εξάμηνα, 90/110 ECTS*, Μάστερ (MEd)
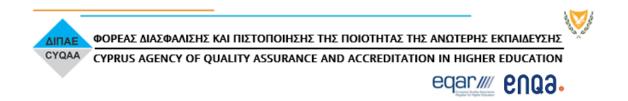
    In English:

    Special Education

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

- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating

ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION
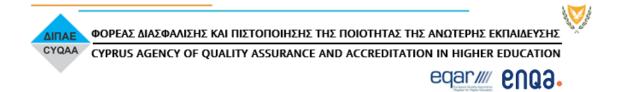
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A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

A key point should be identified at the onset of this report. While our task was to evaluate the conventional face-to face program, which has been in existence for a number of years, the program has never been operational. University personnel assert that despite serving thousands of students since beginning its operation, there have never been eight students at one time that opted for the conventional face-to face program. This seems rather unlikely. However, if true, it does have significant implications for the way in which public information about the program is available to prospective students.
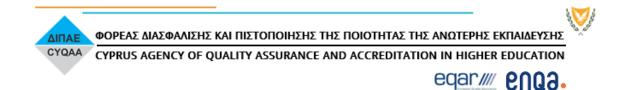
Other complications exist due to the fact that the program is not operational. Importantly, our evaluation must rely on evidence from a number of sources, including students, instructors, and data (e.g., qualification awarded, pass rates, graduate employment information, profile of the student population, student progression, success and drop-out rates, students' satisfaction with their programmes, career paths of graduates). As such, our report is necessarily incomplete. Nevertheless, we believe that the current report provides an accurate assessment of the program, given the information available to us.

Doe to the corona situation, which do not allow for on campus meeting, the evaluation was performed based on digital meetings and digital presentations of the programme.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Ona Bø Wie	Full Professor	University of Oslo
Susanne Schwab	Full Professor	University of Vienna
Joseph Calvin Brojomohun-Gagnon	Full Professor	University of Helsinki
Evrydiki Kolokoudia	Student	University of Cyprus

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*

- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
    (a) *sub-areas*
    (b) *standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
    (c) *some questions that EEC may find useful.*

- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*

- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

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.

Strengths

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

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.

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*

- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*

- ***The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.***

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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

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
  - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
  - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
  - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
  - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
  - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
  - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
  - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
  - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
  - *benefits from external expertise*
  - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
  - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
  - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
  - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*

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- o *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- o *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- o *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- o *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- o *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- o *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*
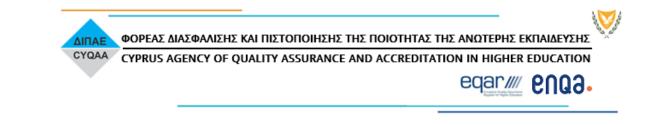
1.3 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
  - o *selection criteria*
  - o *intended learning outcomes*
  - o *qualification awarded*
  - o *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
  - o *pass rates*
  - o *learning opportunities available to the students*
  - o *graduate employment information*
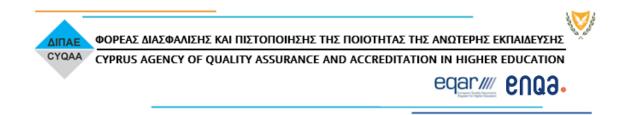
1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
  - o *key performance indicators*
  - o *profile of the student population*
  - o *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
  - o *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
  - o *learning resources and student support available*
  - o *career paths of graduates*

- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*
- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*
- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*
- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*

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 School of Education at Frederick University consists of a large group of teachers with solid credentials and a range of research interests covering diverse and relevant topics. The Special Education programme includes a mandatory 3-semester programme (90 ECTS) and an optional practicum that can be completed in the fourth semester and accounts for 20 ECTS (for a total of 110 ECTS). The programme includes six mandatory courses, each accounting for 10 ECTS, while the students have the choice to work on a Master thesis (30 ECTS) or enrol in three elective courses (10 ECTS each).

The University has an established Quality Assurance (QA) policy and a QA Committee with formal status and function across all offered programs. The role of the QA Committee is to focus on a higher level and examine dropout/retention rates, student satisfaction, program regulations, etc. At the programme level, a formal board is in charge of reviewing the study programme, the content, alignment and coherence of the courses offered, and the overall learning experience of the students. A student representative is included in both the QA Committee and the programme's review board.

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

It is certainly a positive thing that students' opinion is taken into account in assessing and reviewing the offered programme.

It is also a strength that quality assessment and programme review cycles are planed regularly and that this process has already resulted in improvements to the programme during the last years. Such an improvement was the increased number of elective courses offered in the programme.

The high number of students enrolled in the digital version of the program and the low number of dropouts (~5%) suggest that the program is highly desirable and that it fulfils actual educational needs.
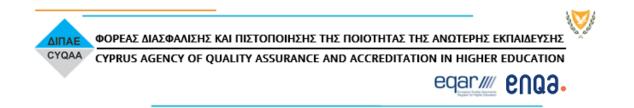
The teachers involved in the programme are well-trained.

The Distance Learning Unit (DLU) is a formal unit in the University responsible for teaching training in online Education and it also acts as the liaison between the University and the students in several ways. The practices, services, and support from DLU seems well-designed and aligned to similar units in other EU universities.

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.

The programme seems to cover many different topics, but lacks focus. There are courses that provide broad, introductory information (e.g., Current Trends) and courses that are too specialized and, maybe, detached from the rest of the programme (e.g., Antiracist Education). Students with Bachelor degrees in Primary or

Secondary Education should be familiar with many of the topics covered in the programme, while courses such as Research Methodology appear content-heavy and highly challenging for someone that has no experience with quantitative methods and inferential statistics. In the end, the Committee believes that the programme should be better aligned to the advertised learning goals. With such a broad audience, it is expected that not all student needs will be matched perfectly with the offered programme. Therefore, a suggestion would be to increase even further the number of elective courses, strengthen the role of study advisors, and provide different tracks for people with different backgrounds. Shorter courses of ECTS could also be used to provide added value to previously acquired knowledge (e.g., introductory/advanced statistics) and increase the flexibility and adaptability of the programme.
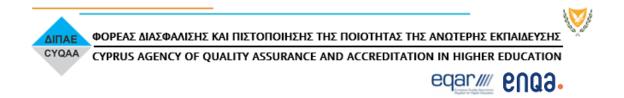
Understandably, a study programme should address the needs of an identified audience. At the same time, though, it has to be aligned with the learning goals routinely linked to an MEd in Special Education. The refugee crisis may provide justification for including a course on Antiracist Education, but it is not necessarily adequate justification to make the course mandatory. It may be beneficial for the University and the audience it attracts to make the target audience explicit (e.g., in-service teachers) and offer relevant, but not core courses, as electives for students that want a broader spectrum.

Another recommendation to increase the focus and flexibility of the programme is to include electives from different programmes across the university. This would allow for a focused set of core courses while offering different tracks to students with different backgrounds.

Regarding the information provided on the programme on the University's webpage, the Committee saw discrepancies between the public information and the application to CYQAA. Specifically, there are only two available spots for elective courses; one in the second and one in the third semester. Similarly, Development Psychology appears as a mandatory course, while there is no description of any of the courses apart from their title. A short description of each course should be available before admission to the programme.

For international students it would be good if also courses in English language would be available.

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	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Non-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

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*
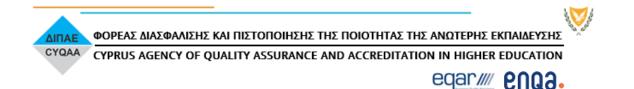
2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

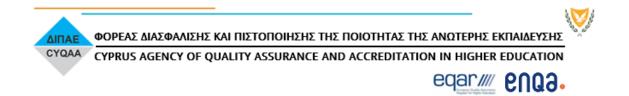**2.3 Student assessment**

Standards
- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*

- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*
- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

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 teaching staff at the School of Education at Frederick University seems to have a clear understanding about the importance of student-centered learning.

Course groups are containing up to 15 participants according to official regulations, to ensure that students in the group remain active.

Students could have an academic advisor who supports them in their individual development. Final grades always consist of various assessment components. Grading guides and rubrics are provided to ensure that the criteria for marking are clear to the students. To ensure that feedback is provided effectively a guide for mentors is used.

Students have the opportunity to be involved in (funded or non-funded) research projects and can participate in research activities through their master thesis.

According to student's welfare, several services exist at Frederick University. For instance, the University offers the opportunity to form Student Clubs and operates a sports office. A support and counselling office empowers students to perform productively. Further, peer-tutoring services are offered. In addition, low achieving students are placed under academic probation and supported within various mechanisms.

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

The University offers many possibilities for counselling if a student is personally or academically struggling.
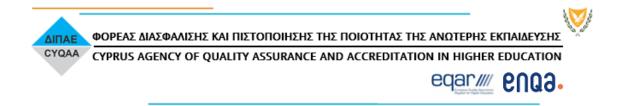
Students have the possibility to participate at additional activities (e.g. webinars, conferences) which are focused on broad topics.

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.

As stated in the Application 'Almost all courses include a written final exam in their assessment methods.' To create a more autonomous learning process and also to address students different learning styles it would be recommended to increase the flexibility and to vary with the final exam (e.g., oral exam, seminar work). Moreover, assessments could also be carried out by more than just one examiner. As only a very limited part of the grade is linked with interactive activities (around 5%) it is also recommended to overthink the criteria for marking – to ensure that students are in interaction among each other and with the teaching staff. In addition, multi-tiered systems of support should be established for students and evidence-based practice should be embedded within teaching methods in higher education.

According to the collaboration with schools (mainly focusing on practice), it is recommended that also research collaborations are strengthened. For example, within the Research Methods course, collaborations could be installed and research could directly address school's needs (e.g., evaluation of a new learning

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programme, running an intervention study etc.). This would link theory, research, and practice further and make it obvious for students that research is also needed for school development process.

The access for students with disabilities should be further developed. Especially in the field of special needs, higher education students who themselves have a disability must have the possibility to participate without barriers.
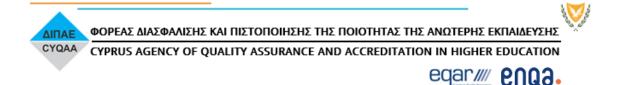
Since the practicum is not mandatory, students, who do not actually teach in schools (or who have already collected teaching experiences), may find it difficult to link theory and practice. Especially for those students the practicum should be highly recommended or even mandatory since the advertised programme goals include practical experience.

Similarly, if students are not writing a thesis their practical experience with research is limited. For those students an elective course on research might be helpful. Otherwise, it would also be possible to divide the master's program into different tracks: one which addresses "Special Education" for in-service teachers and which is strongly focused on inclusive schooling and special schooling and one which is more research-oriented and attracts students, who plan to pursue a research career.

Based on the students' feedback, in the digital version of the programme, more knowledge is needed about "how to deal with students with behavioral problems". This is a very important topic in the field of special needs as many teachers are afraid of deviant behavior and class disturbances. Therefore, an elective course would be appropriate.

Opportunities for students to get involved as teaching assistants, research assistants or volunteers need to be expanded.

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	Partially 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**

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*

- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

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 teaching staff qualifications are overall adequate and the number of teaching staff is acceptable to run the master program. All the lecturers hold a PhD securing an adequate level of knowledge. Within a course, there are 30 students per teacher and the teaching staff were motivated to follow up each student supporting them in achieving the planned learning outcomes of the master program. The workload for three groups is considered large, but although a teacher is expected to teach and be responsible for up to three groups and allocate 3h per group during the week, most of the staff had responsibility for 1-2 groups.

The teaching staff are working together effectively to develop and evaluate the content and the quality of this master program. There are ongoing, compulsory, and optional teaching training course for teachers that have issues with their course evaluations.

The qualification of the teaching staff reflects the content of the study programme as containing a more broad perspective of SEN (including a focus on changing the way disability is understood and assessed, managing diversity in education and in society). Although staff contains high expertise within specific areas such as language and mathematical development and disability, social and emotional difficulties, developmental psychology and assessment within special needs education, a part of the staff have background in areas not specific to SEN.

The teaching staff shows high engagement in different society- and academic related responsibilities. Overall, the publications list show higher activity in conference participation than for publications in highly ranked international journals. The majority of publications are from 2018 or earlier. The research strength is strong in parts of the staff.

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

1) Motivated teachers

2) The program coordinators are highly motivated, and are well placed to coordinate and evaluate the program and to manage the teaching staff.

3) The teaching staff effectively cooperation working together to develop and evaluate the content and the quality of this master program

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.
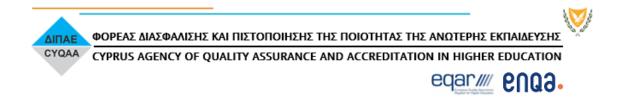
1)   Increase publication in highly ranking journals.
The list of publications shows there is room for improvement concerning the number of publications and number of staff that has publication in highly ranged journals. Most of the publications date back to 2018 or earlier.
2)   Look into a possible reduction in teaching load allowing for the staff more time to research and thus higher synergy between teaching and own research.
3)   Recruiting staff with more in depth knowledge of specific areas within SEN

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	Partially compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Partially 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**

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
  - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
  - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

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4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Are the admission requirements for the study programme appropriate? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?*
- *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*
- *Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?*

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.

Concerning student admission, progression, recognition and certification, the program has identified and published regulations related to the student admission process, including requirements for previous study, proficiency in Greek and English languages, requirements for digital literacy, and guidelines for the recognition of previous coursework. Additionally, requirements for degree certification are identified. Procedures and supports are in place to identify student academic progress and provide supports, if needed. Policies and procedures are also in place with regard to certification of student degrees.

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

It is positive that the requirements for what prospective students must submit in the application are clear. It is explicitly stated, "Prospective students are expected to submit their application and all related documents, such as copies of their degrees, transcripts, two letters of recommendation from professors or supervisors in the workplace and a research interest report."

There are significant strengths in the approach toward Student Progression. Grades serve as the clear requirement for, "*Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*" Importantly, each student's academic progress is monitored via an Academic Advisor.

Evidence of a strong plan for data collection on student progress, information sharing and follow-up sharing is evident: All Academic Advisors have access to the data concerning all students they are advising, so they can be informed at any point, throughout the semester, of each student's progress. This allows for the early identification and intervention of students with academic or other difficulties. Furthermore, the Studies and Student Welfare Service organizes twice in each semester "Consultation Weeks" during which all students must meet with their Academic Advisors and discuss their academic progress and concerns."

A process is also available to place students with inadequate progress on Academic Probation. Although the specifics are unstated, it is identified that students on academic probation are provided, "various mechanisms in order to help the students improve their academic performance."

Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place. It is appropriately and clearly stated, "Transfer of credits from other academic institutions complies with the regulations of the University for transfer students and recognition of previous studies."

Another strength is that, "*Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*" Regulations for certification are clear and detailed.
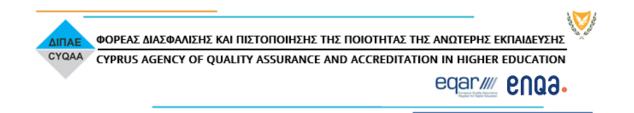
Areas of improvement and recommendations
A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

There are several concerns specifically concerning the requirement of *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.* First there is a lack of clarity in the requirements. For example, it is required that applicants have, "A good undergraduate degree from a recognized university." During the interview, a few examples were provided (e.g., primary education, psychology). However, as written, the requirement is too vague to be useful and to allow for follow-up to see if the requirement is being appropriately followed. There is a need for clarity in the written admission requirement.

A second concern is the alternative requirement to an undergraduate degree: "or the equivalent international qualification or an acceptable professional qualification is considered the main academic requirement." There was clarification during the interview with administrators and an explanation that this could apply to professionals that earned their degree before the field of teacher education was integrated into the university system. However, there were questions as to if this is still relevant, given how long ago the change was made. Whether or not the issue remains applicable, there is a need for clarity in the written admission requirement.

A third concern is the requirement and assertion that, "very good knowledge of Greek and English is extremely important." While, for example, the TOEFL is mentioned, there is no minimum requirement that would allow for the objective evaluation of future students. In our discussions with current students in the program, it was also evident that some of them did not have even the most basic level of spoken English. The specific language requirements need additional specificity.
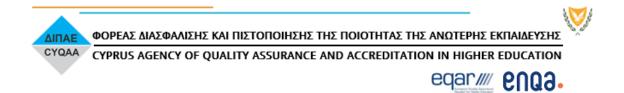
A fourth concern is the mention that students entering the program must have proficiency in "digital literacy." The term is undefined and there are no criteria for proficiency; both issues need to be addressed in the written information provided to students and used as the basis for acceptance in the program.

A fifth concern is the assertion that an interview will be part of the admissions process for just some prospective students: "Where the Evaluation Program Committee deems necessary, the candidates may be asked for an interview meeting." There is no information provided that explains the circumstances for which a student would be required to participate in an interview, the focus of the interview, or criteria for a successful interview. These aspects need serious consideration and written explanation for students.

Because so many of the aspects of the admission criteria are undefined and no criterion level is set, it is not possible to ensure that, "*Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*" Additionally, no information was provided in the application that specifically addressed consistency and transparency.

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	Non-compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

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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

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

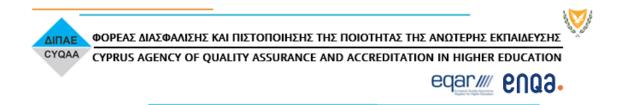## 5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*
- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

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 Learning Management System (LMS) used is Moodle, which is a widely used, open-source, adaptable tool. The University maintains an up-to-date online library that can be accessible remotely via VPN services.

Several human support resources are offered (e.g. academic advisory, tutors, counsellors) to support the study programme but also students personal development. Information about all these services is provided online - therefore students are well informed about the services available to them.

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

The University employs a multi-tier architecture to offer information to the public and services to its academic community through three different platforms.

The University is not solely focusing on students academic development but also offers a lot of social life possibilities.
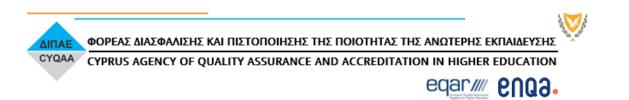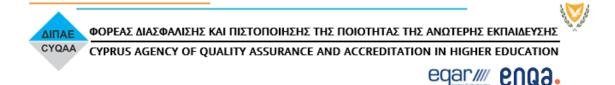
Areas of improvement and recommendations
A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The lack of free online textbooks limits course materials to just some chapters. Therefore it is recommended to provide adequate access to online textbooks.

There is no information on interlibrary loans and agreements that would allow students and academic staff to access publications that are not currently available.

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	Partially compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

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

<u>**Sub-areas**</u>

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements
6.2 Proposal and dissertation
6.3 Supervision and committees

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

<u>Standards</u>

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
    - *the stages of completion*
    - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
    - *the examinations*
    - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
    - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

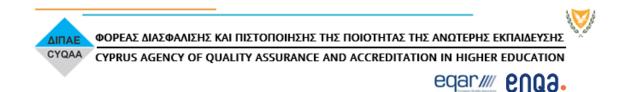**6.2 Proposal and dissertation**

<u>Standards</u>

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
    - *the chapters that are contained*
    - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
    - *the minimum word limit*
    - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

6.3 Supervision and committees

<u>Standards</u>

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
    - *regular meetings*

- o *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
  - o *support for writing research papers*
  - o *participation in conferences*
- *The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?*
- *Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?*
- *Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?*

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.

Not evaluated by the committee

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

Not evaluated by the committee

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.

Not evaluated by the committee

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

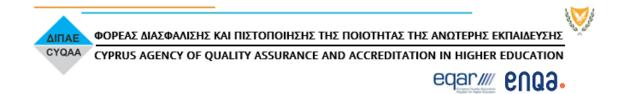| Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Choose answer
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Choose answer
6.3	Supervision and committees	Choose answer

D. 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.

- The program evaluated has never been operational
  - A key point with this evaluation is that the program evaluated never has been operational and this is according to the program administrators due to lack of student interest. The panel recommends the staff to revise the way in which public information about the program is available to prospective students.
- The broadness of the programme
  - The program strategy aim to give the students an excellent knowledge of the different areas in special needs education (e.g: hearing loss, Down syndrome, ADHD, etc.) The panel found the program to be too broad to be able to meet all the advertised learning goals/strategy. The panel advises to the staff to explore the possibility for increase type of courses that aim to give a more in depth knowledge.
- The panel advises an improvement and clarification of the programme admission criteria
- To secure a high quality education and meet the programmes aims stated in the programme strategy, there is an significant need to increase and strengthen the research capacity and the amount of academics publishing in top-tier publications

The panel thank the departmental team for their openness in discussions and very helpful attitude

E. Signatures of the EEC

F.

Name	Signature
Ona Bø Wie	
Joseph Calvin Brojomohun-Gagnon	
Susanne Schwab	
Evrydiki Kolokoudia	

Date: 18.04.2021