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# External Evaluation Report (Joint - E-learning programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
Frederick University (Cyprus)
- **Collaborative Institution(s):**  
Frederick University (Cyprus) & University of Western Macedonia (Greece)
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Education and Social Sciences
- **Department/ Sector:** Education
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**  
**In Greek:**  
Διαπολιτισμικές Σπουδές και η Ελληνική ως 2η / Ξένη Γλώσσα (3 ακαδημαϊκά εξάμηνα, 90 ECTS, Μάστερ (MEd), Εξ αποστάσεως, Διαπανεπιστημιακό με το Πανεπιστήμιο Δυτικής Μακεδονίας)  
**In English:**  
Intercultural Studies and Greek as 2nd / Foreign Language (3 academic semesters, 90 ECTS, Master (MEd), Distance Learning, Joint with the University of Western Macedonia)
- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):**  
**In Greek:** Concentrations  
**In English:** Concentrations



The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws” of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

## A. Introduction

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

The visit took place on Friday 11th February 2022 and was conducted via zoom due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Prior to the remote meetings, the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) studied the Application for Evaluation, along with the six annexes (sample of certificate, list of compulsory and elective modules module descriptors, staff CVs, infrastructural overview and study guides.

The EEC met with the Rectors - Heads of the Institutions and the Vice Rectors of Academic Affairs, the Internal Evaluation Committee, the Heads of the relevant departments and the two programme co-ordinators, the Head/Coordinator and members of the E-Learning Unit, members of the programme coordination committee, teaching staff on each course, students and graduates of other programmes at Frederick University, and administrative staff.

Our overall impression of the visit was very good. The evaluation was conducted in a professional manner including 7 power point presentations and thorough discussions from all stakeholders involved. The student and graduate testimonials were particularly impressive.

There are 4 key characteristics of this program worth noting:

- (a) New programme
- (b) Joint programme due to start in September 2022
- (c) Delivered fully online via an e-learning platform
- (d) All modules are planned to be delivered entirely in Greek.

This is the second joint programme for Frederick University with Greece, and also the second joint programme for the University of Western Macedonia with Cyprus.

Frederick University has a strong research focus (200+ externally funded projects in the last decade), Times Higher Education Top 600 ranking, 12 PhD programmes, 30+ masters programmes, 27 UG programmes, 4,750 students, 90% distance learning at PG level. The University of Western Macedonia is a regional university with a long list of Erasmus partnerships, and promotes excellence through a variety of prices, and is research active.

The following sections highlight the strengths and areas for improvement of the programme under the headings: (1) Study programme and study programme's design and development; (2) Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment; (3) Teaching staff; (4) Student admission, progression, recognition and certification; (5) learning resources and student support; and (6) eligibility.

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
<b>Professor Daniel Faas</b>	Chair	Trinity College Dublin, Ireland
<b>Professor Eleni Oikonomidou</b>	Member	University of Nevada at Reno, USA
<b>Professor Sawitri Saharso</b>	Member	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands
<b>Professor Albert Sangra Morer</b>	Member	Open University of Catalonia, Spain
<b>Victoria Michaelidou</b>	Member (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.*

## 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*
  - *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
  - *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*

- *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*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *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*
- *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:*
  - *selection criteria*
  - *intended learning outcomes*
  - *qualification awarded*
  - *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
  - *pass rates*
  - *learning opportunities available to the students*
  - *graduate employment information*

### **1.4 Information management**

#### Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
  - *key performance indicators*
  - *profile of the student population*
  - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
  - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
  - *learning resources and student support available*
  - *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 MEd in Intercultural studies and Greek as a Second/Foreign Language is a Distance Learning programme between Frederick University & University of Western Macedonia. The duration of the joint programme is 3 academic semesters for full-time students (or 6 academic semesters for part-time students) and is developed around 90 ECTS. A Quality Assurance Policy is in place. There are a number of quality assurance mechanisms and formal policies in place for the development, management and review of the programme of study. Teaching staff and administrative staff are assigned with the responsibilities of quality assurance. Students are also encouraged to review each study unit through focus groups and an online student questionnaire. The programme ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud, guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against students or staff.

The programme is well-structured, and in accordance with the strategy of the institutions. The programme is designed around compulsory courses of 40 ECTS; the opportunity to choose elective courses of 20 ECTS; and the allocation of 30 ECTS for conducting a postgraduate thesis. The programme 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.

The programme of study presents clear, accurate, up to date and readily accessible information that is published. The objectives, intended learning outcomes, qualification award, teaching and learning assessment procedures are clearly articulated and presented.

The Application and the complementary documents describe key indicators that provide knowledge of the programme and its various components. Regarding the student profile, the Application together with the online visit gives us a (general) picture of the future student group and how they are supposed to complete the courses. However, it may be worth noting that the programme has not been running yet. The same applies to student satisfaction, learning resources, and to career opportunities, both during and after the programme has been completed.

### Strengths

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

1. The quality assurance processes, structures, and regulations are transparent and appropriate. Quality assurance mechanisms from Frederick University apply (as Frederick is the administrative hub of the programme). Student representatives are part of the internal quality assurance committee.

2. The annual reporting structure, along with the bi-yearly report to the senate, provide a strong mechanism for ongoing improvement.

3. The structure of the programme follows the European Credit Transfer System.
4. The design of the programme and the processes planned for on-going monitoring and review are comprehensive.
5. The information about the programme is publicly available.
6. Channels for collecting information about the programme are available.
7. A collaborative spirit among the various collaborators is transparent.
8. The programme incorporates innovative structures of online instruction (e.g. analysis of case studies, team work, presentations).

#### 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. Students should be asked to choose at least a certain number of modules from each institution (e.g. at least 1 elective from each institution) so that it remains a truly joint programme. Otherwise they might only choose and attend modules offered from one university.
2. Providing current insights (and readings) from the field of intercultural studies could enhance the quality of the programme. There is a lack of staff expertise around intercultural studies.
3. The Admission Criteria need to be reviewed. The university should consider ways and means of attracting foreign students given that the programme is taught only in Greek. Suggestion to offer the master also in English. It should also be clear that the target audience comprises immigrants.
4. A further critical analysis of the sequence of classes may be good to ensure that the offerings respond to the stated objectives both in relation to intercultural studies and to language learning. Alternatively, explicit attention to one focal area (e.g. language learning within the context of intercultural understanding) may be good.
5. The programme includes interactive activities that could enhance the students' teamwork skills. It may be a good idea to reconsider the character of the synchronous sessions to ensure maximum participation.
6. The programme aims to attract a vastly diverse audience, ranging from teachers in elementary and secondary schools in Greece and Cyprus to those who wish to teach abroad. Additional specialized courses could be developed in the future that could encourage in-depth study of these various contexts.

7. To enrich the programme we recommend inviting visiting professors to give input in particular study units.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
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	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
- 2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

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

#### Standards

- *The e-learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.*
- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*
- *A specific plan is developed to safeguard and assess the interaction:*
  - *among students*
  - *between students and teaching staff*
  - *between students and study guides/material of study*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the students focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of e-learning 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 e-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

- *A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on e-learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.*
- *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 e-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.*

## 2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

### Standards

- *A study guide for each course, fully aligned with e-learning philosophy and methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:*
  - *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*
  - *Presentation of course material, and students' activities on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)*
  - ***Weekly schedule of interactive activities and exercises (i.e. simulations, problem solving, scenarios, argumentation)***
  - *Clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
  - *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
  - *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
  - *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
  - *Synopsis*
- *Study guides, material and activities are appropriate for the level of the programme according to the EQF.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Is the nature of the programme compatible with e-learning delivery?*
- *How do the programme, the material, the facilities, and the guidelines safeguard the interaction between students, students and teaching staff, students and the material?*
- *How many students upload their work and discuss it in the platform during the semester?*
- *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 rationale of this programme is that given the influx of refugees and other immigrants in Greece and Cyprus there is a need for teachers who can teach Greek as a second language. A social effect of this influx is that Greek and Cypriot society is becoming more multicultural and that the classroom population will also be more culturally diverse. This requires that education has as a task to prepare all pupils, including native ones, for citizenship in a multicultural Greek and Cypriot society and that teachers are equipped for teaching in culturally mixed classrooms.

The e-learning methodology seems appropriate to provide learning for people that are living in different places. However, e-learning is not just connecting each through a screen. The e-learning models the HEI suggests has several elements that makes it interesting even if some improvements could be done.

### Strengths

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

1. The major strength of this programme is that its focus is both on intercultural studies and on teaching Greek as a second language. It aims not only to educate students to teach Greek as a second language, but also to provide them with the necessary expertise to educate them for participation in multicultural societies and to equip the students with the pedagogical expertise to deal with multicultural classrooms.
2. Regarding the e-learning model, the process of teaching and learning is pedagogically sound, as it is based in reputed theories. Guidance and support for students is also considered in the pedagogical approach applied, and teleconferences for presentations and discussions with Q&A sections are set. Interaction is considered as a necessary requirement for the learning process, so the model points out on it. It is mainly addressed through the synchronous videoconference sessions and in some particularly asynchronous discussions organized in the teaching plan.
3. Training, guidance and support are provided to the students at the beginning of the terms, focusing on the specificities of e-learning. The process of teaching and learning is quite flexible, considers some modes of e-learning delivery, but uses few different pedagogical methods. The benefits of asynchronous strategies could be better exploited.
4. Students are supported by study guides in each of the courses they take, so they are provided with the information which is considered necessary. The ratio between students/teacher (max. 30) is appropriate to get good learning outcomes.
5. Student assessment is well-structured and teachers provide feedback.
6. The procedures for dealing with students' complaints are appropriate. Students can talk to coordinator of programme, some go to website Helpdesk function (if it is about distance learning aspects), students can also provide complaints anonymously to the office and office then screens it and responds. The distance learning handbook provides all this info to the students.

### 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. In the programme, there is room for improvement in the area of in intercultural studies. To prepare students to work as teachers or otherwise in a multicultural society, it is important that the programme addresses the realities of a multicultural society and problems teachers encounter in the multicultural classroom. As interculturalism should not be taught in the abstract, we

recommend to link the theory more with the practice. This applies to both the literature, to choose literature that addresses multicultural society and education in a more direct way and to the exercises.

2. In several modules reference is made to “foreigners”. Hence, people of immigrant origin are consequently addressed as “foreigners” and the problem defined as the integration of “foreigners”. Many people would consider this language as an exclusionary way of addressing the people concerned, it excludes students of immigrant origin as “foreigners”, who are hence not part of the Greek or Cypriot citizenry. Therefore, this language and the perspective on society it reflects appears not to be very compatible with the programme’s ideals of inclusive citizenship and interculturalism and needs to be redressed.

3. Regarding practical training, e-learning offers many opportunities for students to actively engage with the material, yet the modules in this programme still seem to make little use of these e-learning tools. In the description of the modules there is little explanation which tools for interactive learning are used and how. We would recommend that if these tools are used, to make this more explicit in the module descriptions. In fact, materials are mostly based on the recording of the synchronous video sessions. Videoconferencing sessions are too long (2 hours each), even if different strategies are used.

4. In general, the teaching methods, as they are described in several of the modules, suggest that they are more focused on the transfer of knowledge than on developing insight and analytical skills and teaching students how to apply knowledge. The terms in the module descriptions often refer to the lower ends of the taxonomy of Bloom. This is not in line with the stated objectives of the programme (and perhaps also not with the way the modules will be taught) and therefore needs to be reformulated.

5. Although students are expected to take an active role in creating the e-learning process, and their sense of autonomy is encouraged, most of the teaching activities are synchronous, so this limits the flexibility and also the capacity of the students’ self-regulation. Interaction between students and teachers seems to be monitored, but interaction among students and between students and study materials should be reinforced.

6. The programme could be made more practice-oriented. If, as we were told, most prospective students will have a philosophical background, we believe that these students with no previous experience with research need some practical exercise in using research tools, like the coding of an interview in Atlas-ti (or any other programme) or work with SPSS before they start their dissertation.

7. Reading lists should be updated as the literature in some of the modules seemed rather old.



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-centered teaching methodology	Partially compliant
2.2	Practical training	Partially compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant
2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	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**

#### **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.*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the teaching staff focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *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:*

- *Is the teaching staff qualified to teach in the e-learning programme of study?*
- *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 are very committed to the new joint programme although there is a lack of expertise around intercultural studies, especially from a social science perspective. There is a good interaction with students and teaching staff follow up on student evaluations. A more outward-looking approach is needed in terms of embedding visiting staff into the programme.

### Strengths

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

1. Teaching and research duties are well balanced. Approximately 30% research, 40% teaching, 30% administration. Synergies of teaching and research are generally good.
2. Student evaluation is conducted on the teaching staff. Each semester students can evaluate each course they attended during the semester. Programme coordinators collect data from evaluations (module coordinator share his/her data with programme coordinators), feedback used to level up courses and programmes in general.
3. Adequate professional development opportunities exist for staff: All staff have to be literate using the e-learning platform, everyone gets introductions into the tool at the beginning, also other personal and professional development sessions on teaching, assessment.

4. The number of staff is currently adequate to support the programme of study. If, however, the programme grows to several hundred students, as is planned, then instructors/adjunct staff are needed to teach and supervise dissertations and there may be a risk of too many adjuncts being relied on (in relation to core departmental staff).

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. There is an imbalance in that the expertise in teaching Greek as a second language is stronger than the expertise in intercultural studies. This is understandable as none of the current staff members has a background in social sciences with an expertise in multicultural society or in intercultural education. We would recommend therefore, that if new staff is hired, to recruit staff that has that expertise. A temporary solution is to hire visiting professors with this expertise. We recommend these visiting professors to be widely deployed in all modules (and to teach in English), as interculturalism is a basic attitude that should be propagated in all modules.

2. Recognised visiting professors (who teach in English) should be built into the programme, preferably in the form of guest lectures in all the existing modules. Alternatively, one additional elective could be set up that has mainly or exclusively guest lecturers. However, if this is an elective, students might not choose it and therefore not be exposed to English-speaking guest lecturers which is why it may be most beneficial to deploy visiting staff across existing modules.

3. Few staff are carrying out research into online education or are generally specialized in online education. Any new hire should therefore be able to fill this gap.

4. Staff should be encouraged to publish more in English, particularly in relevant high-impact international journals that are in English.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
<b>3.1</b>	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Partially compliant
<b>3.2</b>	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
<b>3.3</b>	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**

##### **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*

##### **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.*

The admission criteria are in place. The MEd aims to attract immigrants, teachers and researchers that must demonstrate a good command of the Greek and English language and require an undergraduate degree from a recognized university or equivalent international qualification or an acceptable professional qualification. Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently. Regulations regarding student progression are in place. The processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information pertinent to student progression exist. 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. The Application presents a detailed approach to the Accreditation of Prior Learning. Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on the institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention; cooperation with other institutions and quality assurance agencies. Information and published regulations related to student certification are in place. Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, the level, content and status of studies that were pursued and successfully completed. Student-centredness is a key tenet of the University's espoused culture and principles, making sure that students' individual needs are seriously addressed.

Through the remote visit, together with the study of the material provided, it seems that student access policies are implemented consistently. Students' degrees/background are taken into consideration for admission. They need to be in possession of a first degree (i.e. a Bachelors degree) from an accredited university or tertiary institution; have very good knowledge of the Greek and English language – written and verbal; this is essential since the programme is offered in Greek.

### Strengths

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

1. The University's electronic system seems to work well. Monitoring processes are in place to address student progress, requests and/or concerns of both students and staff.
2. Offering a double-awarded degree supports students' employment opportunities in Cyprus and academic mobility to other European countries.
3. There is a clear explanation of the different courses available and how they operate, whether a student is full-time, part-time when following the distance learning programme.
4. Students believe that the admission requirements to enrol in a programme are appropriate, they feel prepared and supported enough by the administrative staff throughout this process.
5. Students state that are being adequate supported and advised by the teaching staff and by the administrative staff.
6. Regarding the empirical research for thesis/dissertations, students are given enough guidance and support to design and conduct their research, they feel comfortable to ask for clarifications, feedback and additional directions from the teaching staff.
7. The student workload is balanced. The students mentioned that they manage to address all the requirements of the course.
8. Students are adequately informed about the online services available to them (e.g. e-learning facilities/computer labs/library support, student career services/alumni services).

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.*

None.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
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

### 5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

#### Standards

- *Weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*
- *The e-learning material and activities take advantage of the capabilities offered by the virtual and audio-visual environment and the following are applied:*
  - *Simulations in virtual environments*
  - *Problem solving scenarios*
  - *Interactive learning and formative assessment games*
  - *Interactive weekly activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities for reality reconstruction and further processing based on hypotheses*
  - *They have the ability to transfer students to real-life situations, make decisions, and study the consequences of their decisions*
  - *They help in building skills both in experiences and attitudes like in real life and also in experiencing - not just memorizing knowledge*
- *A pedagogical planning unit for e-learning, which is responsible for the support of the e-learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*
- *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 e-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.*

Overall, the programme is well-structured with sufficient attention to detail in terms of learning and teaching resources with a variety of tools and approaches used as the course unfolds. We assume that provision for student support will be in place. Feedback from the student was very positive with tutor support identified as the best feature of the course. However, the teaching and administrative staff will need to engage in a different manner to ensure that good levels of support exist as the engagement required for a distance learning programme will be different.

### Strengths

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

1. The material that we were shown is of the distance learning programme that is also being accredited for the first time. We do feel that most of the samples viewed showed a didactic approach to teaching with no engagement with the students as active participants. However, the documentation highlights that there is a lot of interaction taking place.
2. There are some established mechanisms and technologies that support interaction between staff and students, mainly through online platform and the use of computer mediated communication.
3. The library offers both hard and electronic copies of academic texts and research literature. We were not able to visit the University consequently we did not manage to have a hands-on experience of assessing the full extent of the physical resources and the teaching materials available to support the programme. From discussions we had with the Programme Team and the Administrative staff, and the documentation that we were shown, it appears that these seem to be adequate.
4. Academic staff are either permanent or part-time lecturers. The number of administrative staff appears to be adequate for delivery of this programme.
5. Student support is one of the strongest areas in the programme as the HEI takes in higher consideration how to support students.

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. The virtual learning environment offers opportunities for further interaction in online courses. However, we have not seen examples of innovative use of technology such as computer simulations, virtual or augmented reality embedded in the programme online environment.
2. We recommend that there is a clear student-facing narrative on how the learning environment of the conventional programme integrates online components so that students truly benefit from the online learning environment.
3. Digital learning materials are poorly developed. We have not seen examples of materials that become fundamental in the different courses. Most of the materials are recorded video-lectures from the teachers without developing the actual potential of have an important bulk of digital learning resources further PDF files or e-books.
4. Consideration should be given to split the programme revenues 50-50 a priori rather than allowing total flexibility so that the split could in reality also be 80-20 between the two institutions. Each institution should supervise roughly half the students and each institution should roughly contribute the same number of modules/courses to the programme.

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

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

## 6. Eligibility (*ALL ESG*)

### Sub-areas

- 6.1 Legal framework and cooperation agreement
- 6.2 The joint programme
- 6.3 Added value of the joint programme

### 6.1 Legal framework and cooperation agreement

#### Standards

- *The joint programme is offered in accordance with legal frameworks of the relevant national higher education systems.*
- *The terms and conditions of the joint programme are laid down in a cooperation agreement. The agreement in particular covers the following issues:*
  - *Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme*
  - *Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation, including funding, sharing of costs and income, resources for mobility of staff and students*
  - *Admission and selection procedures for students*
  - *Mobility of students and teaching staff*
  - *Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures*
  - *Handling of different semester periods, if existent*

### 6.2 The joint programme

#### Standards

- *The partner universities apply joint internal quality assurance processes.*
- *The joint programme is offered jointly, involving all cooperating universities in the design, delivery and further development of the programme.*
- *Aims and learning outcomes are clearly stated, including a joint syllabus, language policy, as well as an account of the intended added value of the programme.*
- *Study counselling and mobility plans are efficient and take into account the needs of different kinds of students.*

### 6.3 Added value of the joint programme

#### Standards

*The joint programme leads to the following added values:*

- *Increases internationalisation at the institutions.*
- *Stimulates multinational collaboration on teaching at a high level and makes cooperation binding.*
- *Increases transparency between educational systems.*

- *Develops study and research alternatives in accordance with emerging needs.*
- *Improves educational and research collaboration.*
- *Offers students an expanded and innovative arena for learning.*
- *Increases highly educated candidates' employability and motivation for mobility in a global labour market.*
- *Increases European and non-European students' interest in the educational programme.*
- *Increases competence at partner institutions through cooperation and implementation of a best practice system.*
- *Increases the institution's ability to change in step with emerging needs.*
- *Contributes to tearing down cultural barriers, both personal and institutional.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *Does the joint study programme conform to the requirements of a study programme offered at the specific level?*
- *Is there a system that assures the quality of joint provision and guarantees that the aims of the programme are met?*
- *Do the mechanisms for ensuring the quality of the joint study programme take into consideration the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)? Are they adopted by all the universities involved?*
- *Is the division of responsibilities in ensuring quality clearly defined among the partner universities?*
- *Is relevant information about the programme, e.g. admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures, well documented and published by taking into account the specific needs of students?*
- *What is the added value of the programme of study?*
- *Is there a sustainable funding strategy among the partner universities? Explain.*

### 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.*

Based on the information presented during the virtual visit and the related documentation (Εφημερίδα της Κυβερνήσεως της Ελληνικής Δημοκρατίας, Αρ. Φύλλου 2407, 7 Ιουνίου 2021), the proposed joined programme has received approval from the Greek government. The comprehensive material review by the EEC along with the information presented during the visit is the last necessary step for the approval by the authorities in Cyprus. Upon the completion of this process, it is anticipated that the programme will commence in the Fall semester of 2022.

The programme, which unites a public and a private institution across national borders, is built on a collaborative agreement that provides the rationale for the creation of the joint degree, the curriculum and programmes of study, the proposed service and administrative functions, the anticipated enrolment, and the financial arrangements between the two institutions. The creation of the programme is situated within the current realities of multicultural societies and the

increasing need for tolerance, acceptance, and validation of diverse identities in education and beyond. The added value of this programme is, among others, that it allows for comparative analysis of not only two educational systems and societies (Greece and Cyprus) that share a common language, but expands to additional ones in which members of the Greek and Cypriot diasporas reside. The commitment of the two institutions to the success of the proposed programme appears quite strong. Further, the qualifications of the academic personnel and the administrative structure created could provide pillars for a fruitful and rewarding collaboration.

### Strengths

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

1. The identification of a focal point of communication (Frederick university) with regard to student services and academic scheduling seems to be an important step in streamlining of processes.
2. The grounding of language learning in intercultural studies is one area of added value of the proposed programme. The joint programme aims to cultivate students' intercultural competence and the knowledge, skills, dispositions that are needed for the creation of equitable, inclusive, and validating educational experiences.
3. The quality assurance processes are detailed and comprehensive.
4. The language policy is transparent. While the main language of instruction will be Greek, certain activities may be conducted in English and, as such, proficiency in English is one of the admission requirements.
5. There are considerations for accommodating the needs of different groups of students (e.g. flexible scheduling structures).
6. The joint programme is an important step in the internationalization of the focal institutions, with potential for new collaborations in research and teaching.
7. Beyond the confines of the two focal educational and national contexts, the joined programme aims to also expand to the Greek and Cypriot Diaspora, increasing the employability of its graduates and moving beyond the confines of the EU.

### 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. The division of responsibilities at all levels (curricular, financial, service-related, administrative and so forth) is for the most part transparent, although it seems that it is not split equally among partners. A recommendation by the ECE is for the two partners to re-examine the specifics of the class offerings and to work on allocations of both teaching and advising/theses supervising duties.

2. A related strong recommendation is for the partners to create an additional detailed Memorandum of Understanding in which the roles are clearly delineated. Anticipating the projected growth of the programme, such an agreement can ensure that possible challenges are avoided in the future. This recommendation is in relation to curricular/teaching dimensions and allocation of funds.
3. While the grounding of language learning in intercultural studies is a welcomed component of the proposed degree, there is only one required class that focuses on intercultural studies. Given the proposed centrality of intercultural studies in the rationale for the programme creation, a recommendation would be to reconsider either the title of the degree or to re-balance the class offerings. Such work could enhance the added value of the joint programme.
4. The two partners may consider working collectively to construct what they perceive to be the added value of this programme. A comparison with existing degrees in this area may be necessary for that to occur. Such work could help with advertising and recruitment efforts and the success of the programme in the long run.

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

<b>Sub-area</b>		<i><b>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</b></i>
<b>6.1</b>	Legal framework and cooperation agreement	Compliant
<b>6.2</b>	The joint programme	Compliant
<b>6.3</b>	Added value of the joint programme	Partially compliant

## 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 (Consider also the added value of the joint programme).*

The MEd in Intercultural studies and Greek as a Second/Foreign Language is a Distance Learning programme between Frederick University & University of Western Macedonia is a strong programme and of strategic importance for both universities. Both have a similar vision for internationalization. Both countries have similar needs to address the presence of refugees and immigrants, the issue of language and common culture between the two countries.

There are good research and teaching collaborations between the two universities. Students receive their grades using Frederick University grades (numerical grading) as Frederic University is the administrative hub institution where students apply to. Other benefits of this joint venture include: to further develop research collaborations between the two institutions. Policies and processes at Frederick University apply - even if a module is led or taught by University of Western Macedonian staff.

Past and present students are very positive about the university, they talked about active interaction with the teachers, online course a good opportunity for those who cannot travel (gives them an opportunity to connect with their homeland). Staff are very responsive to student emails and requests and there is a great deal of guidance and support.

Cross-cultural teaching and learning is key to this joint programme. It is in Greek because the Greek and Greek Cypriot diaspora is one of the main target groups of this programme (there are approximately 1 million Greeks in Russian territories) and they need to improve their Greek language proficiency which is often underdeveloped. While the EEC understands this rationale, we would nonetheless encourage all stakeholders to be more outward-looking and to develop further collaboration with external stakeholders and external expertise (e.g. visiting professors).

Overall, we were satisfied with how the two universities have organized and monitored their educational programmes. Our impression is that both institutions are well organized and that the staff of both universities are very dedicated and committed to their students. The joint programme corresponds with the EQF and is compliant in most areas of evaluation. Nonetheless, several sub-areas are in need of improvement.

We invite both institutions to respond to the recommendations in this evaluation report.





## E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
<b>Professor Daniel Faas</b>	
<b>Professor Eleni Oikonomidou</b>	
<b>Professor Sawitri Saharso</b>	
<b>Professor Albert Sangra Morer</b>	
<b>Victoria Michaelidou</b>	

**Date:** 15.02.2022