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External Evaluation Report (E-learning programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY CYPRUS
- **Town:** NICOSIA
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School of Sciences
- **Department/ Sector:** Health Sciences
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

“Λογοπαθολογία (18 μήνες/90 ECTS, Μεταπτυχιακό)”
Εξ Αποστάσεως

In English:

“Speech Language Pathology (18 months/90 ECTS,
MSc)” Distance Learning

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek and English
- **Programme’s status:** New



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 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

Due to the pandemic the site visit was conducted online with the use of Zoom on March 23 2021, with one day used for interviews with the vice-rector, dean, program director, staff, teachers, administrative staff and the distance education team involved in development of this new e-learning program. Students of the conventional master program were also interviewed.

The program under evaluation is a proposed distance learning master's program in speech and language therapy (SLT), with two separate concentrations. The first concentration focuses on SLT-services for children, the second concentration on SLT services for adults. All courses are proposed as 10 ECTS courses, except for the master's thesis normed to 30 ECTS. Although two of the courses are joint courses, the remaining course work is quite different. The adult concentration includes topics like voice disorders, acquired speech and language disorders, and disorders of swallowing. The child concentration has an emphasis on early development of speech and language, child language and learning disorders and SLT services related to school.

The EUC already has established several distance learning courses at undergraduate as well as graduate level with a total of 1773 enrolled students in fall 2020, of which 98.6% are from the EU. Blackboard Learn is used as e-learning platform, with the different modules for diversity of working modes.



B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Ellen Gerrits	Professor	Utrecht University
Kristiane van Lierde	Professor	University of Ghent
Arve E. Asbjørnsen	Professor	The University of Bergen
Santi Caballé Llobet	Professor	Universitat Oberta de Catalunya
Katerina Nicolaou	Student	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University

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 EEC finds the policy for quality assurance of the programme of study assuring, as the EUC reports, they have investigated needs and opportunities for setting up the described programme. Other master programmes exist in Cyprus and in Greece, but no distance learning programmes. As soon as the programme is approved, it will gain a formal status and will be publicly available in line with the remaining programmes of study at the institution. The policies for quality assurance appear to support the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes. The quality assurance policies are set up to ensure academic integrity and freedom. At present this system is redeveloped since there were technical problems and there was a lack of student participation in the evaluation surveys. The EUC is experiencing challenges regarding student involvement in quality assurance, but they work to develop better procedures. The EEC had an open discussion with the vice-rector, dean and program director on this topic in which this problem was recognised in our universities and ways to improve student engagement in evaluation procedures and surveys were shared.

The programme of study is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes.

Students and other stakeholders have been involved in the design of the content of the programme, and they have been taking advantage of e-learning experiences from other institutions, e.g., applied guidelines and white papers from other institutions in designing the programme. The EUC has also established a platform for competence development for their employees. The programme 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). It has been made an effort to design the programme so that it enables smooth student progression, and the programme should assure that the content of the exams and assignments corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS.

The study guide breaks down the suggested workload to hours per week, and thus defines the expected student workload in ECTS. The courses are designed for distance learning using a similar template, as mentioned they are all 10 ECTS, operationalized as lasting for 14 weeks, with a weekly work assumption of 15-20 h per week, distributed on independent studies for 14-15 hours, and 1-5 hour for self-assessment exercise preparation in addition to projects for some of the modules. In addition, there will be approximately six teleconferences during the course. These are not allocated to student work hours separately; the duration is neither described. The study guide gives a detailed description of work pace and content from week to week.

Each course is also provided with appropriate course descriptions, giving the general outline of the course, in addition to expected learning outcomes. As required by the EQF, the learning outcomes are described according to knowledge (the cognitive component), skills (the psychomotor component) and general competences (the affective component). The part that is less visible in the courses is the affective component (attitudes, beliefs and values of the profession, and place in community, including ethical challenges).

The programme is planned with Greek and English as teaching languages, and the long-term plan is to offer the programme internationally.

The programme is subject to a formal institutional approval process, and it will result in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated. The qualification refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the EQF of the European Higher Education Area.

The new programme will be evaluated by the staff after one year. In addition, it will be 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.

The produced documentations are in line with the recommendations regarding clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information about the programme of study. The admission criteria are described as a degree in Speech Therapy or Communication Disorders and at least 400 hours of clinical practicum, and the intended outcomes are clear (specialization within SLT with a master's degree). The teaching, learning and assessment procedures are described. Graduate employment opportunities are reported to be good.

As the programme is new, it is hard to assess the effectiveness of management, but the institution possesses considerable expertise in management of distance learning, also internationally. Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning of the programme.

Strengths

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

The programme has the necessary support within the institution with very motivated and enthusiastic faculty members who are eager to initiate the new program.

The personnel involved, academic as well as administrative, are competent and are working with the intent to acquire the necessary e-learning qualifications to carry out the proposed distance learning programme.

Student progression is monitored via weekly assignments (50%) and a final exam per course (50%) that are described in the study guide. The course descriptions contain learning outcomes.

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 recognizes the need for continuing education within the SLT domain and is enthusiastic about the outreach of a distance learning program. The EEC would like to support the development of this master by addressing certain points, which may have room for improvement. They can be summarized as:

1. Develop new procedures for systematic student evaluation with transparent feedback of results and changes to staff and students
2. Develop public information that includes the uniqueness of this program and a virtual tour of distance learning. This needs to be in place soon if enrolment will be in the fall.
3. Be more specific in your choice of student population and match the program to this group. The report now includes both Cypriot, Greek and international student enrolment with teaching in Greek and English but from our discussions it appears to be good to pilot it in Greek with Cypriot and Greek students only.
4. Describe the procedures for fail/pass and handling of suspected online fraud.
5. Try to be more specific in the description of the different types of assessment (e.g., self-assessment, formative assessment, summative assessment, etc.), and the rubrics used.
6. Explore the possibility to make the program more flexible and student-tailored by including space for elective modules. This may give room for inclusion of courses from the two concentrations or courses offered locally for distant/international students, and also the opportunity to take advantage of visiting scholars.



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	Partially compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Not applicable
1.4	Information management	Not applicable

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

Sub-areas

- 2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
- 2.2 Practical training**
- 2.3 Student assessment**
- 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 distance learning programme of Speech Language Pathology (MSc) consists of two specialized directions: Speech Language pathology in children and Speech Language Pathology in adults. Both are Master programmes, educated in both the Greek and English language, might start in September 2021 (Greek language) depending on the outcome of this evaluation. No surveys are available to evaluate the teaching skills of the teaching personnel. The motivated teaching staff qualifications regarding audiological and logopaedic knowledge and specialized clinical skills are excellent. Also, the global mindset of the teaching staff is obviously present. However, the method of distance learning is new for most of the teachers. Of course, most of the teaching personnel has experience with online teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. To strengthen and to support the distance learning skills

of the teaching personnel the teachers can rely on the guidance of a Distance Education Unit. Guidance of the pedagogical team to monitor and evaluate the distance teaching skills of both distance learning programmes is required. Support and feedback of different aspects regarding the modus of distance learning (new educational material for distance learning, interactions between teachers and staff, tailor-made guidance for students with special needs, increase of the entrepreneurship of students, etc) is recommended. Whether the Blackboard Learn platform will be appropriate to support the teaching skills of the teaching staff is subject for further student and staff evaluations. Surveys after the first semester of online teaching would be nice to implement new distance learning acts for the teaching staff. The number of teaching staff (5 experienced professors and 1 new member) is adequate to run the distance learning programmes.

The EEC would like to congratulate the teaching staff and their qualifications regarding conventional teaching, research and their cooperative attitude towards distance learning. Moreover, the EEC wants to congratulate Dr. Thodi for the motivation and excellent entrepreneurship. It was obvious during the discussions that the professors are working together effectively to develop the quality of the distance learning programs.

The nature of the programme is compatible with distance learning delivery and the methodology provided is appropriate for the particular programme of study. The university's quality assurance is evaluated by external and voluntary accreditations, such as QS Stars and EFQM. However, specific accreditations related to distance learning quality assurance, such as EFQUEL and EADTU, were not identified.

The university's learning management system supports online teaching, learning and administrative processes. This is a Blackboard Learn installation with all the basic online services available. The platform also provides e-assessment procedures through quizzes for students to self-assess their knowledge though the provision of more complex forms of e-assessment to assess complex competences and skills, such as critical thinking, was not shown.

The proposed courses have a complete syllabus plus a weekly study guide that includes relevant information: summary, objectives, learning outcomes, keywords, primary and complementary bibliographic references, activities to perform, self-assessment exercises, and recommended study time. Each course has an adequate number of hours of synchronous communication between instructors and students through live teleconferences, which are recorded for further reuse.

Formative assessment of the courses is based on submitted assignments with provision of detailed feedback during the course counting up to 50% of the final grade while summative assessment is based on a mandatory final onsite exam counting 50% of the final grade. Assessment procedure is completed with a number of online quiz-based and peer-assessment assignments during the course as well as collaborative activities based on project-based learning and other forms of teamwork. Further graded formative (self-evaluation) assignments are included in the weekly study guides in order to self-evaluate student knowledge and skills of the course.

Collaboration among instructors and students (and among students) is conducted through the online forums of the course and other forums within the Blackboard Learn platform. In addition, collaboration among students is promoted by collaborative activities during live lectures specifically supported by Blackboard Collaborate. The platform usage could be combined with scalable web conferencing tools, such as Zoom, to overcome certain limitations of Blackboard Collaborate and fully support the online synchronous interaction needs of students with the instructors and the other students.

Strengths

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

Excellent teaching staff regarding audiological and logopaedic knowledge and clinical skills. Moreover, the teaching staff is very motivated to start these unique distance learning programmes. The head of the programs Dr. Thodi is highly motivated, talented and flexible to coordinate and evaluate the program and to manage the teaching staff. Both the Vice-Rector, Prof. Loizos Symeou and the Dean of the School of Sciences Prof. Panagiotis Papageorgis support the distance learning programmes and the teaching staff by providing distance learning knowledge from experts in the field.

The EEC believes that continually evaluating the quality assurance of distance learning by non-mandatory external accreditation organisations is a good practice.

The EEC considers the university's distance learning model to be in line with the specific profile of graduate part-time students who need to learn effectively and in a timely fashion. The provision of personalized feedback in the submitted assignments and during the teleconference sessions as well as the feedback based on rubrics and peer-review are considered best practices. In addition, the EEC recognizes the many benefits of collaboration among students promoted by collaborative activities and discussions organized in online teams. Finally, the weekly study guides, which allow the students to determine the work to be done every week, is also considered a best practice. The EEC urges the university to keep up these strong elements of their distance learning model while reinforcing them when possible.

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 advises the implementation of surveys after the first semester to evaluate different aspects regarding distance learning. Based on the results of the surveys new acts and tailor-made approaches can be made.

The EEC advises to consider attracting international experts to teach specific topics in both educational programmes. The implementation of international experts might support the general objective "enhance knowledge and skills for specialized speech pathology services provision to children and adults of various cultures" of both programmes.

The EEC wants to point out that onsite final exams may not be in line with the learning style of online students, and formative continuous assessment during the course could be reinforced instead.

From the documentation provided and the information gathered from the meetings, it was not clear if gamification strategies are used to increase the student levels of motivation and engagement with the e-assessment process. In addition, more sophisticated forms of feedback based on intelligent tutoring systems and conversational pedagogical agents are also encouraged to support immediate and automatic feedback to students and self-evaluate their advances.

The university's Blackboard Learn platform provides a wide range of learning analytics tools for monitoring student performance based on collecting information from the student with lower grades, poor participation or with undelivered activities. In addition, the instructors also collect related information based on their own experience through the teleconferences and collaborative activities. However, more sophisticated forms of learning analytics mechanisms based on AI and specifically Machine Learning are encouraged to be used to monitor and predict student performance and dropout in order to be able to provide timely corrective measures. This is strongly

recommended in case of university's expansion plans through increasing the academic portfolio and the number of online students.

While the EEC emphasizes the benefits of any form of collaboration among students, the online synchronous collaboration among students was perceived as problematic if in the next years the program is open internationally and attended by many students across different time zones. It was not clear how the university would support this type of collaboration from the coordination perspective while recommending the constant adaptation of their distance learning model to support this situation by increasing the asynchronous interaction and collaboration.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Partially compliant
2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	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 university has a Team of Pedagogical Planning of Distance Learning Programs, which provides technical training and support of instructors to the faculty members of the different University's Schools. However, the effectiveness of these training programs in the form of professional development relevant to distance learning was not shown during the meeting with the teaching staff. Faculty members can participate in training programs to increase their skills to conduct quality online teaching.

The teaching staff is well trained and qualified for giving the courses planned. It is to some extent the same persons who will be serving both the on-site and the distance learning programmes. This may ensure the same high standard of the programmes, but it also raises concern, and it should be considered if the resources are adequate for the requirements. They are in line to recruit one new faculty member, which will be welcomed to cover the additional teaching and supervision.

Strengths

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

The EEC considers the teaching staff is highly qualified and trained to high academic standards for presenting the programs in SLP, and with the motivation they also show regarding the online program, there are good chances for the program to succeed. We assume the EUC will continue to recruit following the same standards in the future.

The academic staff are active researchers and appear to be capable of integrating research and teaching in the regular courses. We assume this will also happen in the e-learning programme.

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 would recommend that a new faculty member also possesses particular qualifications in e-learning procedures.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

4.2 Student progression

4.3 Student recognition

4.4 Student certification

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.

Prospective students need a degree in Speech Therapy or Communication Disorders and at least 400 hours of clinical practicum. The Department of Health Sciences may request additional confidential information from the candidate, or adopt additional criteria as needed.

Student progression is monitored via weekly assignments (50%) and a final exam per course (50%) that are described in the study guide. The course descriptions contain learning outcomes.

Strengths

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

Students of the current master program are very positive about the teaching staff, their student involvement, interaction and prompt responses to questions.

EUC has a strong and warm team of administrative staff for student support. Students acknowledge this and report they get excellent support with technical/ICT issues, administration, information specialist, 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 suggests specifying the admission criteria, mentioning a bachelor’s degree and be more specific on what documents are needed to meet the minimum of 400 hours of clinical practicum (e.g., diploma with specification of courses and ECTs, criteria for work experience). Secondly, since prospective students are expected to come from different countries and institutions it might be helpful to use a pre-assessment procedure and provide options to complement knowledge gaps, e.g., using a summer school program with courses such as An introduction to statistics, Academic English, From Practice to Science.

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	Not applicable
4.3	Student recognition	Not applicable
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.

The university has a distance learning unit responsible for providing pedagogical and technical support for designing, creating, implementing and evaluating online courses. The unit addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative and summative assessment.

The university also provides a handbook with academic regulations underpinned by the university procedures and policies with guidelines for the development and delivery of distance learning that establishes the main characteristics a distance learning course should have. It is a good reference that guarantees the quality and homogeneity across all the distance learning courses.

The physical resources are not an important concept for the e-learning programme under evaluation, but the access to the same services online is crucial for the success of the programme. From the descriptions, and also following interviews with current students, the access to the services online seems to be working well. However, it is not clear how the students in an e-learning program will get access to necessary lab-facilities situated on campus, or how these hands-on experiences can be compensated if necessary.

Strengths

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

The EUC has excellent facilities for the students to take advantage of, and the administrative staff is very helpful.

The distance learning unit, even if not shown in detail during the meeting, is considered a best practice, due to its potential structure, resources, infrastructures and services devoted to enhanced distance learning. The EEC believes that it can be a powerful support for guaranteeing and maintaining the quality of the provided teaching while providing a good ground to faculty members to face distance learning. Not least considering the focus on lifelong learning and needs for continuing education.

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.

While the online courses include a good variety of learning materials (e-books and articles, videos, blog entries, etc.) which are good for distance learning, the EEC suggests that some considerations should be taken into account to the recorded teleconferences and video lectures to be more usable and accessible for students: make them short, include the teacher in all the videos to provide non-verbal communication, and add subtitles for accessibility.

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	Not applicable
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	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.

The EEC has evaluated Speech Language pathology with two concentrations, children and adults, a new distance learning master program. The committee compliments the staff and teachers with the program and detailed study guide. The program provides continuous education opportunities for speech language therapists across Europe and beyond. It enables practitioners to develop academic skills necessary for innovation and underpinning of the field of intervention for people with communication and swallowing disorders.

The EEC suggests considering the possibility to make the program more flexible, e.g., enable students to choose courses across the two concentrations (children and adults).

The EEC recommends staff to be more specific about the expected profile of the students (age, countries, time zones), and consequences for synchronous and asynchronous elements in the program. In addition, we recommend the teachers to not only receive support in distance learning, but also complete explicit training. In addition to the existing information on Blackboard, and in the course descriptions, we suggest developing transparent information for students (e.g., a distance learning virtual tour video) on what is provided and expected in terms of activities, interaction, time investment and planning of this study.

The nature of the programme is compatible with distance learning delivery and the methodology provided is appropriate for the particular programme of study. The EEC considers the universities distance learning model to be in line with the specific profile of graduate part-time students who need to learn effectively and in a timely fashion.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Ellen Gerrits	
Kristiane van Lierde	
Arve E. Asbjørnsen	
Santi Caballé Llobet	



Katerina Nicolaou



Click to enter Name

Date: 31.03.2021