ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Date: February 20, 2024

External Evaluation Report
(E-learning programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution: University of Nicosia**

- **Town: Nicosia**

- **School/Faculty (if applicable): Life and Health Sciences**

- **Department/ Sector: Health Sciences**

- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

  In Greek:

  Φαρμακορρύθμιση-Κανονιστικές Υποθέσεις (1,5 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 90 ECTS, Μάστερ, Εξ Αποστάσεως)

  In English:

  Drug Regulatory Affairs (1,5 academic years, 90 ECTS, Master of Science, E-Learning)

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

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

- **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

Members of the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) reviewed and examined the Accreditation Programme of Study (Application for Evaluation and other accreditation reports) provided by the University of Nicosia (UNic) relating to the MSc in Drug Regulatory Affairs (e-learning). The EEC members evaluated the submitted documents individually before visiting on-site. The EEC's visit to the UNic campus took place on 19th of February 2024 following a tight but well-organized schedule. Throughout the day the committee met with UNic representatives, academic teachers, students and administrators. The EEC members were first given an introduction about the institution by Prof. Philippos Pouyioutas, Rector and Prof. Panayiotis Angelides the Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs and Chair of the Committee of Internal Quality Assurance and met with the members of the internal evaluation committee (Dr Ioannis Sarigiannis, Member of the Quality Assurance Committee, Prof. Kyriakos Felekkis, Dean, School of Life and Health Sciences, Dr Christos Papaneophytou, Associate Dean, School of Life and Health Sciences, Dr Christos Petrou, Head of the Department of Health Sciences, Dr Lefteris Zacharia, Programme coordinator, Mr Kyriakos E. Georgiou, Senior Officer, Office of the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, Mr Lakis Agathokleous, Officer, Office of the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs). Following this, the head of dept Dr Christos Petrou presented the structure of the department. This covered the Department`s profile, mission, strategic planning (including SWOT analysis), and how the dept. connects with society. Consecutively, the programme coordinator Dr Lefteris Zacharia presented the contents, standards and management of the program as well as teaching and learning processes and student admission. A separate session with members of the e-learning unit was held. After each presentation, there was a discussion about its structure and contents.

After the break, the EEC had a meeting with the members of the teaching staff only, followed by a meeting with representatives of the students to discuss various aspects related to studies and student life. Next the EEC met with the members of the administrative staff only. Finally, the EEC members again met with the head of the relevant department and the programme`s coordinator to summarise previous discussions.

During the visit at the UNic, the EEC was given access to all additional material as requested, including study programs, the curricula vitae of all teaching staff, and documents relevant to the UNic structure. The reception of the EEC by UNic was excellent and all staff and students were particularly cooperative and willing to support the evaluation procedure, providing any material requested and answering all questions posed by the EEC members. Based on the information provided, namely the accreditation report, and the visit on site, the EEC can conclude that the program being evaluated has good standards and meets the quality expectations (pending adoption of recommendations). This evaluation report describes how the standards are met and provides additional recommendations for improving the program.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Marie Louise De Bruin	Professor	Utrecht University
Nikoletta Fotaki	Professor	University of Bath
Li Wei	Professor	University College London
Christothea Herodotou	Professor	Open University UK
Platonas Michaelides	Student representative	University of Cyprus

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

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

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*

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

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

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

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

Findings

The University has a clear structure for quality assurance, which applies to the program of Drug Regulatory Affairs. Their Distance Learning Unit has been accredited by several organisations, with the most recent certification by *'E-xellence in e-learning*' in 2024. UNic has various international collaborations and is well embedded in various EU

university networks in the EU. The department has identified understaffing at the level of administrative support as a weakness, but found ways (including more use of student assistants) to fill gaps and is back up to standard.

Industry stakeholders are involved in the development of the programme and contributing to the courses, in their role as adjunct faculty. Student evaluations (written) are used to monitor and improve courses. Through partnerships with external organizations, there is contact with the job market to facilitate career opportunities for students. The School has an Industry Advisory Board to actively engage with industry leaders, advising them on their various curricula. For the Drug Regulatory Affairs Programme it would be of interest to also explore opportunities to involve health authority representatives in an advisory role, as they are an important stakeholder.

The Programme Coordinator, Dr. Lefteris Zacharia, plays a key role in the evaluation of the courses as well as the programme as whole, ensuring that both professors and students fulfil their responsibilities. At the end of each semester, students are invited to respond to questionnaires evaluating both the course and the professor. Approximately 60% of students participate. After each course the teaching staff involved evaluates the course and implements changes if necessary.

With a cumulative number of 51 students enrolled so far, the Drug Regulatory Affairs programme is relatively small within the school of Life and Health Sciences that has over 1200 students in total. The programme however responds to the societal demand for more regulatory affairs professionals. Intended learning outcomes seem appropriate and in line with EQF level 7. Since its initiation in 2019, 4 students have graduated from the programme.

The program consists of 3 semesters (90 ECTS). The overview of the courses available on the UNic website is not in line with the programme that was presented to the committee in writing and during the visit. The website lists a compulsory program of 9 courses of 7.5 ECTS each (67,5 ECTS), 1 elective course (from a list of 4 of 7,5 ECTS each), and a postgraduate assignment (thesis) of 15 ECTS. The programme presented a compulsory program of 7 courses of 10 ECTS each (70 ECTS), followed by two options: either 2 elective courses (from a list of 5 of 10 ECTS each), OR a thesis of 20 ECTS. The committee was informed that the ECTS of the individual course were increased after feedback that the student workload was too high. It is unclear when these changes were implemented. The committee was also informed that there is a wish for a track of the programme without a compulsory thesis and this was the reason to change the curriculum. The committee noticed that this may have consequences for the graduates, as a diploma without a thesis will not be recognised in several countries internationally as a Master of Science (see also section 4).

The programme targets an international student population with a distance learning format in English. A large proportion of the students work in (pharmaceutical) industry or at health authorities and take the programme as a part-time education to further specialise. For both the fulltime and parttime students labour market prospects are good, as we were presented with examples of graduates successfully obtaining jobs of interest or being promoted. The faculty describes the students as highly motivated, which is in line with the students the committee talked to during the visit. Drop-out rates are low (<20% in 2022-2023).

Strengths
- It is evident that there is appropriate experience, knowledge, and the necessary mechanisms in place to support the entire online learning process, as evidenced by the multiple certifications the university has managed to secure (EFQUEL, UNIQUE, QS STAR, etc.).
- The programme has a clear link with society and actively involves industry stakeholders. For the Drug Regulatory Affairs Programme, it would be of interest to also explore opportunities to involve health authority representatives in an advisory role.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
- The publicly available information of the programme, its structure and courses are outdated and should be revised in line with the documentation presented to the committee.

- Any potential consequences of the international recognition of the new sub-track of the programme without a thesis should be clearly communicated in programme study guide and on the website.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Partially 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.*

Findings

Courses are 12-week long and are hosted on Moodle. Each course has a provision for 9-hour synchronous sessions (hosted on WebEx) between tutors and students (either 3 sessions of 3 hours each or 6 sessions of 1,5 hours). These can take the form of lectures, Q&A, case studies and real-life examples depending on student needs. In addition, there are video recorded presentations, readings of PDFs and other online material, quizzes, and some opportunities for forum discussions and group work. While there are plenty opportunities for interacting with material (quizzes, reading and producing an individual essay etc), this is rather not the case for student-to-student interactions. Forums that would enable student communication and interaction are not used regularly nor systematically across courses, while as mentioned by students, opportunities for group work/assignments should be increased. Moodle is rather used as a repository of material (videos, PDFs, weblinks etc) distributed across the 12 weeks of a course (for example, students open up and access PDFs and other resources in separate windows); it should rather offer students an integrated learning experience where all material has been processed and has been embedded into the body of Moodle.

Study guides are consistently designed and presented across courses with clear objectives and learning outcomes. Yet, they would benefit from the inclusion of more up to date literature that aligns with the current state of the art in the field. In the guides, it is stated that the final grade is divided between a final exam (60%) and other activities or assignments (40%) which are not specified. Weekly assignments are neither explicitly mentioned nor graded in the study guides. This was also confirmed after inspection of two online courses. Yet, during the visit a distinction was made regarding weekly assignments as follows: two weekly assignments graded with 25% of the final grade and a major assignment graded with a 15%.

There are opportunities for hands-on practical activities within each module such as case studies and critical analysis while, as stated during the visit, the University offers to students the opportunity to complete an internship (optional, not accredited). As it was stated by students, the programme would benefit from more opportunities for practical work such as more hands-on experience on the assessment of regulatory dossiers.

Strengths
- Study guides are consistently designed.
- Appropriate tools such as Moodle and WebEx are used to support the delivery of online learning.
- Students are given opportunities for hands-on practical activities including the completion of an internship.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
- Make sure the teaching materials are updated regularly with up-to-date information
- Student-to-student interactions should be prioritised and enabled through the design of appropriate forum and other collaborative activities.
- Weekly activities should be interactive and graded, and as such, clearly presented in the assessment framework of study guides.
- Material should be embedded in Moodle in a seamless manner and without requiring students to process and access them beyond the Moodle environment.
- Internships should be further utilised and accredited.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Partially compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant
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.*

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- *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.*

Findings

The University provides the necessary resources for the teaching staff to successfully adapt to teaching an online program. The teaching staff is engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development offered by the Distance Learning Unit and is overall well-qualified to support the educational objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme. Training opportunities are available when staff first joins the University (required training on online teaching and learning) as well as on an ongoing basis through seminars etc. Information on the promotion process is available.

The teaching team consists of permanent and adjunct staff along with a number of visiting teaching staff.

Based on the documentation and the discussion during the visit, a formal process on the assessment of the teaching performance is not in place. The programme coordinator is responsible for internal monitoring processes.

Some members of the teaching team are research active that provides a good start on the teaching - research interactions.

Strengths
- The program coordinator is of excellent quality and experience; the overall teaching staff is of good quality and have appropriate experience to cover the teaching material. It should also be noted that there is a good student/staff ratio.
- Research initiatives are in place to support research - teaching synergies.
- The teaching staff were very positive during the site visit.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
- The EEC would recommend adapting a formal process for the peer review of teaching performance.
- As several courses (PHAR-616, PHAR-624, PHAR-625, PHAR-626, PHAR-627) are dependent solely on adjunct and visiting staff, the EEC recommends a formal monitoring process (for example inclusion of permanent members of staff on all courses) to ensure sustainability of the programme.

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

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

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

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

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.*

Findings

Regarding the regulations concerning student admission, the committee observed that there are clear guidelines in the admission process and evaluations of applications. Specifically, although applicants are required to come from specific backgrounds, there is no indication in the admissions criteria of any minimum GPA score. We were informed that each application is evaluated separately with the assistance of a database to assess whether the applicant meets

the admission criteria. It serves as a comprehensive tool for the admission committee to make informed decisions about each candidate's suitability for the program.

Regarding the progress and participation of students in the program's specific activities, the EEC was informed that the university keeps a record for each student, indicating the last time they logged in to the platform, how many minutes they viewed each video lecture, and other information through which the active participation of each student can be easily discerned. This meticulous tracking system not only ensures accountability but also provides valuable insights into students' engagement with the curriculum. It enables instructors to identify any potential challenges early on and offer necessary support to help students succeed in their studies.

Regarding recognition and certification, the EEC was informed that there are no issues with recognition within the country. However, the committee were informed that the program will include the option to replace the Thesis with two additional elective courses, which raises issues of recognition beyond the country's borders (see section 1). This adjustment in the program structure may necessitate additional measures to ensure that the qualifications obtained by students remain recognized and valued internationally. Considering that most students come from other countries and aim for positions outside the borders of Cyprus, it can be easily inferred that writing a thesis is necessary for their future professional development.

Strengths

- The program is well-equipped with the necessary tools so that each instructor can monitor the progress and participation of every student, which enhances personalized education and effective support for their learning needs.
- Students have demonstrated a remarkably high level of satisfaction with the program. After discussions with current students as well as alumni, it became apparent that this program fully meets the expectations of a working student who may be in a different time zone and can asynchronously attend lectures at any time.
- Although the number of alumni is very small (4), the two alumni present at the meeting believed that the knowledge they gained from the program had a direct impact on the job market, and they did not mention any gaps in the program regarding the courses and knowledge acquired.
- The program is tailored to accommodate individuals with special requirements such as hearing or vision impairments, ensuring their full participation. The methodologies employed are regularly updated.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The EEC recommends that the University checks the eligibility for this option for the programme assessed. Furthermore, recognition of a degree without a thesis as a Master of Science may not be the case in other countries.
- It would be advisable to encourage all students to engage in writing a thesis and provide clear information about implications in case they choose not to pursue it.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant

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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

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- *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.*

Findings

There is a Distance Learning Unit (DLU) in place with two directors: a director with managerial responsibilities and a director with expertise in life-long learning and teaching overseeing of the pedagogical side of eLearning. The DLU is also responsible for designing and offering training on teaching and learning both for face-to-face teaching and online. Online courses are hosted on Moodle and supported by a range of audiovisual and other capabilities such as text, presentations, videos, quizzes, wikis for group work and forums. There is a provision for staff to access student learning analytics through Moodle (e.g., last log in, completion of activities). Weekly activities are present in some, yet not in other courses and they are not consistently implemented across courses (limited opportunities for student-to-student interaction) (See section 2).

UNIC library contains study resources with over 500,000 eBooks and 30,000 full text eJournals free access (https://www.unic.ac.cy/distance-learning/library/) to the programme students. The staff in the library are able to answer students' queries and provide group or individual support to students via email/ phone/web platform. Students were mainly recruited to the programme from Greece and Africa and most of them are working in the

All DL students had a training session about the library resources at the beginning of the programme. The documents in Annex 2: section 4.2 contain University of Nicosia Library & Information Centre information, and Annex 7 (Distance Learning Faculty Handbook): Appendix 9: (Library Guidelines for DL Faculty) have detailed information and are easy to follow. The DL HelpDesk and contact person are available to students. The support to students with disabilities is excellent, for example, the sign language for the course is available to deaf students. The written end of course feedback from 30 students was very positive. The average score for the evaluation for library, technology and platform, courses and materials, staff support were ranged from 4.2 for "Discussion through the course forum was used as part of my learning activities" to 4.7 for "Moodle was user-friendly, accessing and using UNIC Port was easy and convenient and The Platform was running uninterrupted".

Strengths

- Great infrastructure of IT support and excellent library service.
- Dedicated staff for all courses who provide support to students in a timely manner.
- A system to support student's special requirements.
- A DLU with qualified and knowledgeable staff supporting delivery of online learning and relevant staff training.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- General support was provided to students; however, a formal tutor-tutee system is encouraged to be put in place.
- Weekly, interactive, and graded activities should be consistently presented in each course.

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

D. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC evaluated the program based on the provided literature and the on-site visit. The programme was found to have good standards and meet quality expectations. Based on the materials and the site visit, the EEC has identified a number of areas in which the program team could make improvements to strengthen the program and increase its impact as follows:

- The publicly available information of the programme, its structure and courses are outdated and should be revised in line with the documentation presented to the committee.
- Any potential consequences of the international recognition of the new sub-track of the programme without a thesis should be clearly communicated in programme study guide and on the website.
- Make sure the teaching materials are updated regularly with up-to-date information
- Student-to-student interactions should be prioritised and enabled through the design of appropriate forum and other collaborative activities.
- Weekly activities should be interactive and graded, and as such, clearly presented in the assessment framework of study guides.
- Material should be embedded in Moodle in a seamless manner and without requiring students to process and access them beyond the Moodle environment.
- Internships should be further utilised and accredited.
- The EEC would recommend adapting a formal process for the peer review of teaching performance.
- As several courses are dependent solely on adjunct and visiting staff, the EEC recommends a formal monitoring process to ensure sustainability of the programme.
- The EEC recommends that the University checks the eligibility for this option for the programme assessed. Furthermore, recognition of a degree without a thesis as a Master of Science may not be the case in other countries.
- It would be advisable to encourage all students to engage in writing a thesis and provide clear information about implications in case they choose not to pursue it.
- General support was provided to students; however, a formal tutor-tutee system is encouraged to be put in place.
- Weekly, interactive, and graded activities should be consistently presented in each course.

The EEC would like to thank all university staff involved in the process of evaluation for their time and availability during the visit and also express their gratitude to Ms Emily Alexandridou for organising and facilitating a smooth evaluation process.

E. Signatures of the EEC

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