

Doc. 300.1.1/4

Date: 12/04/2024

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Nicosia
- **Collaborative Institution(s):**
University of Patras
- **Town:** Nicosia (Cyprus) and Patras (Greece)
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School of Humanities and Social Sciences (Univ of Nicosia) / School of Humanities (Univ of Patras)
- **Department/ Sector:** Dept of Social Sciences (Univ of Nicosia) / Dept of Education and Social Work (Univ of Patras)
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Παιδική και Εφηβική Προστασία (1,5 ακαδημαϊκό έτος / 90 ECTS, Μάστερ, Εξ Αποστάσεως, Διαπανεπιστημιακό Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών με το Πανεπιστήμιο Πατρών)

In English:

Child and Adolescent Protection (1,5 years / 90 ECTS, MSci, Joint programme)

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].

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme’s status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):** not applicable

In Greek: not applicable

In English: not applicable

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

On 03/04/2024, a preliminary online meeting of the EEC took place, in which first observations and comments on the application were exchanged.

The site visit took place on 11/04/2024, according to the following schedule:

09:00 – 09:10

A brief introduction of the members of the External Evaluation Committee

09:10 – 09:55

A meeting with the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs of the cooperating institutions – short presentation of both institutions

A meeting with the members of the Internal Evaluation Committee

09:55 – 10:30

A meeting with the Heads of the relevant departments for a short presentation of the Schools' / Departments' structure

10:30 – 10:45

Coffee Break

10:45 – 11:55

A meeting with the Heads of the relevant departments and the Coordination Committee of the programme, for a discussion of legal framework, intended learning outcomes and ECTS, learning opportunities available, qualification awarded, feedback processes, selection and admission criteria, students' KPI's,...

11:55 – 12:40

A meeting with the Heads/Coordinators and members responsible for the E-learning unit

12:40 – 13:40

Lunch Break

13:40 – 14:40

A meeting with members of the teaching staff on each course (Q&A session).

14:40 – 15:20

A meeting with students and graduates of related programs (Q&A session)

15:20 - 15:35

Coffee Break

15:35 – 16:05

A meeting with members of the administrative staff.

16:05 – 16:55

A meeting with a representative of external stakeholders.

16:55 – 17:30

Lesson observation

17:30 – 18:00

Exit discussion

The EEC studied the following **materials**:

Document: 200.1 – APPLICATION FOR EVALUATION – ACCREDITATION PROGRAMME OF STUDY, including information about the programme's general profile, the programme's content (structure, course distribution per semester, course descriptions) and teaching staff (qualifications, teaching periods, detailed biographical notes).

+

study guides and overview of interactive activities for each course

+

document on distance learning pedagogical model

+

recorded lesson observation

+

virtual tour of the university premises

+

powerpoint presentations provided during the visit

+

additional materials: policy for use of AI tools at university, sample exam paper in a relevant discipline, student handbook, virtual learning environment access for one course



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



eqar European Quality Assurance
Register for Higher Education enqa.



B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Patricia BIJTTEBIER	academic member + chair	KU Leuven
Judit BALAZS	academic member	Eotvos Lorand University, Budapest
Vostanis PANOS	academic member	University of Leicester
Hatzipanagos STYLIANOS	academic member	University of London Center for Online and Distance Education
Zoe MAGOU	student representative	University of Cyprus

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*
- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
 - (a) sub-areas*
 - (b) standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
 - (c) some questions that EEC may find useful.*
- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*
- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Strengths

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*
- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*
- *The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.*

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

Sub-areas

- 1.1 Policy for quality assurance**
- 1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**
- 1.3 Public information**
- 1.4 Information management**

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

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

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

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

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

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
 - *key performance indicators*
 - *profile of the student population*
 - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
 - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
 - *learning resources and student support available*
 - *career paths of graduates*
- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

1.1. Policy for quality assurance

The programme is managed by a three-member committee, i.e. the Programme Coordinator and two faculty members at the rank of Professor or Associate Professor (one from the University of Nicosia and one from the University of Patras). This Committee is responsible for the internal evaluation of the programme. The Committee shall monitor the programme and ensure its quality. The committee meets at the end of each semester and after examining the progress of the programme makes suggestions for improvement.

The quality assurance process of the joint programme is governed by the European approach to quality assurance of joint programmes adopted by the Ministers of the Single European Higher Education Area in May 2001. In addition, at the University of Nicosia there is an internal programme evaluation process. The Council of the Department of Social Sciences appoints internal and external evaluators who are responsible for the evaluation of the programme. They evaluate the programme and make suggestions for improvement.

The Internal Programme Evaluation Process is as follows: IPEP is initiated 1.5 years (18 months) after the accreditation of a programme by the Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (DIPAE). It is a 2-year process and is completed 1.5 years (18 months) before the 5-year DIPAE accreditation of the programme expires, which is within the timeframe for submitting the programme for re-accreditation. The Department to which the programme belongs assigns the evaluation to internal evaluators (2 faculty members of the programme), to an external evaluator (1 faculty member from another university specializing in the thematic of the programme) and 1 student of the programme.

The Council of the Department of Social Sciences appoints a three-member internal quality committee consisting of the Head or Associate Head of the Department, a faculty member with experience or specialization in quality assurance issues of programmes, and one student. The Committee shall be responsible for the internal evaluation of the programme and shall ensure its quality. Also, every end of the semester there is a meeting of the Dean of the School with the Head of the Department and the coordinator of each specialization and after examining the progress of the programme they make suggestions to the Council of the Department for improvement. Additional suggestions for the improvement of the programme are submitted by the Department's Faculty members as topics for discussion in the plenary session of the Department. Also, all course outlines are submitted to the course leaders (faculty members of the Department) and to the programme coordinator for feedback. Self-evaluations of the programmes are also carried out through anonymous questionnaires answered by the students.

1.2. Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

The proposed programme consists of 90 ECTS (1.5 years of study), of which 60 ECTS are compulsory courses (10 ECTS each) and 30 ECTS electives (10 ECTS each). The programme will be delivered in Greek.

Compulsory courses cover the following areas: Decision making in child protection; Addictive behaviors in youth: diagnostic and therapeutic approaches; Social research methods; Safeguarding resilience in children and adolescents; Trauma therapy in children and adolescents and new counselling techniques; Law and child protection. Elective courses cover the areas of Leadership and interdisciplinary collaboration in child protection system; Intercultural communication; Challenges and innovative practices in child protection. Students have the option to replace two electives by a master's thesis (20 ECTS).

1.3. Public information

As the proposed programme still has to be accredited, no public information is available yet. As to other currently running programmes, the University of Nicosia website provides adequate information on different aspects: profile, admission, assessment, learning outcomes, academic path, semester breakdown, faculty and adjunct faculty profiles, career prospects and graduation criteria. Prospective applicants can click on relevant links to access details of individual courses.

1.4. Information management

As the proposed programme has not started yet, there is no information yet on number of applicants, admissions, registrations, drop-out, number of graduates, graduate employment etc. The programme plans to enroll around 90-150 students per academic year.

Strengths

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

- The University of Nicosia has established a quality assurance procedure and each programme is reviewed periodically according to the CYQAA guidelines.

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.

- It was consistently acknowledged that child (to include adolescent) protection is receiving overdue attention and gravity worldwide, indeed in Cyprus. This has important implications for policy, services and practice, hence for professional training. Professional roles vary in relation to child protection, which relies on clear guidelines, inter-agency communication and collaborative care. Consequently, the proposed programme could variably relate to different professional groups. For some groups, namely social workers and psychologists, this could build on existing knowledge and skills (although not universally), while for other groups this would be a relatively new opportunity. This highlights the importance of revisiting the programme objectives and target group, and adapting the curriculum accordingly (also see other sections for related findings and recommendations). As expressed by several participants (students, teachers, stakeholder), there would be added value to training in an interprofessional context for future policy and impact in Cyprus.
- Regarding the curriculum, this should be adapted to either a more generic interprofessional or more specialist student group. The courses (topics) should be incremental and build on knowledge. The indicative curriculum reflects teaching strengths, which could be slightly adapted in terms of topics and order to fit with the above context, as follows:

Semester A (compulsory courses)

1. Concepts of child protection and safeguarding, legislation (in Cyprus and internationally), and implications for different professions, service and policy.
2. Vulnerability (risk) and protective (resilience) for child protection, highlighting complex mechanisms and opportunities for interventions. Important factors include parenting capacity, domestic and community violence, parental mental health and drug use, and socioeconomic adversity.
3. Assessment (formulation of needs and care plan) and decision-making. Legal, ethical and practice dilemmas should be considered from different professional perspectives and connected into collaborative care plans.

Semester B (compulsory courses)

4. Introduction to social research methods to provide a brief overview of quantitative, qualitative and mixed research methods in social sciences and their relevance to child protection practice. Students will develop skills of critically evaluating the literature and opting for evidence-based interventions. It will also encourage some students to take up the elective research thesis.

5. Responsive and preventive interventions in relation to child protection and different professional perspectives. Because of the wide range of approaches, the aim of this course should be an overview of interventions (theoretical frameworks, evidence-base, applications) that relate to the focus of the programme and the interprofessional student group.
6. Improving systemic issues in child protection. This should highlight the importance and strategies for effective interprofessional and inter-agency communication and collaboration, developing local guidelines, and addressing multicultural needs.

Semester C (electives)

(7 & 8) The programme could consider two elective modules that address child protection in two related contexts, as case studies. One has already been developed in relation to parents with drug use and addiction. The second option could relate to topics such as parenting difficulties, domestic violence and refugee (or unaccompanied) children. These topics and vulnerabilities may also overlap. It is, however, essential that elective courses relate to child protection rather than, for example, wider refugee needs.

(9) Research thesis: It would be desirable for a master's programme to build in a compulsory research thesis, although it is acknowledged that this may not be possible for the proposed programme.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Partially compliant
1.3	Public information	Not applicable
1.4	Information management	Not applicable

2. Student – centered 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.

2.1.1. Processes of teaching and learning and student-centered methodology

The nature of the programme is compatible with e-learning delivery. It provides enhanced flexibility to address student needs and the structure of the programme and the application of generic principles of pedagogy of online learning have been taken into account in the design of the specifics of the programme. This has affected individual courses design, interaction and assessment.

All related initiatives are supported by the Distance Learning Unit, and the thinking behind the pedagogy and implementation seems to be robust. Quality assurance mechanisms function well, maintaining standards and providing a consistent approach to the design of online and distance learning programmes at the University.

2.2. Practical training

The proposed programme has no practical training component.

2.3. Student assessment

Exams are the prominent format of assessment and are taking place online, using a proctoring system (Proctorio) and there is no evidence of serious academic integrity issues.

The MSc thesis constitutes an elective component of the programme. This seems to reflect similar approaches in other postgraduate programmes in Cyprus. However, it is against established practice in HE toward the compulsory inclusion of a thesis in postgraduate programmes.

The EEC did not receive information on the percentage of students in the conventional programme that follow the thesis route, but it seems to be a minority.

The EEC had the opportunity to review a sample exam paper which was well written and allowed students to demonstrate their learning, designed and at the right level to assess higher order learning outcomes.

The university has established a comprehensive policy on Artificial Intelligence (AI) which provides a very useful framework to be applied to individual programmes like this one.

2.4. Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

The EEC reviewed the programme documentation and study guides for all courses. The study guides were well written and had the appropriate level of detail, providing a week-by-week description of content, activities and assessments. The learning outcomes were appropriate and corresponded to the postgraduate level of study.

The EEC was given access to a list of interactive activities in the programme which provided a comprehensive list of designed interactions throughout the courses of the programme. We did not see any examples of interaction between students or evidence of how peer learning is supported.

We were also given access to the VLE (the online environment of the Social Research Methods course), where there was evidence of a well designed and consistent structure, reflecting the structure of the course syllabus. There was good signposting between sections which could help distance learners to navigate through the course and complete readings and activities and interact with other students.

We reviewed a recording of an interactive session in the online environment, which offered satisfactory levels of interaction. We discussed with the programme team the importance of building student communities in e-learning programmes which seems to be a challenging initiative.

Strengths

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

- Organisation and quality of the programme documentation. Appropriate level of detail, particularly in the study guides.
- Satisfactory training and induction opportunities for staff (with an emphasis on academic development and pedagogy of e-learning) and students .
- Support infrastructure for distance learning students at programme level and via the university support services, to accommodate all distance learners.
- Evidence of employing authentic assessments in the programme. The team discussed the programme team's intentions in relation to this. The sample exam paper we have reviewed offered good examples of this approach.
- An institutional AI policy.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- As there is no practical training component included as part of the curriculum which would let students apply theoretical knowledge gained in the classroom to “real-world settings”, we have the following suggestions for consideration:
 - To include in the entry requirements to accept students to the master programme who have access to an organisation that undertakes or contributes to child protection work.
 - To include a case discussion course or case discussion activities across all courses that provides a platform for students to apply theoretical knowledge learned in the classroom to “real-life scenarios” and can be highly beneficial, as:
 - it would provide students with opportunities to develop essential skills that are crucial for working with children, adolescents, and families.
 - During discussion students with diverse backgrounds can develop sensitive decision-making skills.
 - Students could discuss ethical dilemmas and get guidelines relevant to their practice.
 - It would provide students opportunities to learn from each other's perspectives, and develop skills for interdisciplinary collaboration, such as social work, psychology, psychiatry, education, healthcare, and law.
- The university should consider directing a bigger number of students towards the uptake of thesis, as they can benefit from the significant research experience of the members of the programme team and enhance the research teaching nexus. The inclusion of a compulsory course on social research methods helps students to develop valuable professional skills.
- We recommend that the programme team articulates how the institution policy on the use of AI is applied to the context of this particular programme, both from a disciplinary and pedagogical point of view. This is crucial in designing assessment and establishing a framework for the use of generative AI tools in the programme by the students.

Our specific recommendations on the use of AI to inform assessment design are:

- Design assessments that require students to apply knowledge in unique contexts, like case studies and project-based tasks.
- Reflective assessment components, where students have to express their reflections, experiences, and personal insights related to the topic.
- Real-time assessments such as live presentations and discussions, where students have to respond spontaneously to questions.
- Continuous/periodic assessment: the current assessment strategy puts a significant focus on end of term exams. Another approach would be to design assessments throughout a course to monitor student understanding and progression.
- More collaborative assignments (peer and group based), where students need to engage with peers to solve problems.
- Design authentic assessments meaningful to students and with a clear link to the world of employment.

- We would also like to provide some recommendations on building student communities, which is a significant component aiming to assist student engagement and support peer and group learning. Some initiatives that can support building student communities are:
 - Regular online meetings can be casual hangouts, study sessions, or discussions on course-related topics.
 - Discussion Forums (which the team already uses) and use of social media platforms like Slack or Discord (subject to university policies on the use of social media), where students can interact outside of class time.
 - Creation of online study groups, where students can collaborate on assignments, review materials, and prepare for exams together.
 - Peer mentoring where older/ more experienced students can mentor newer students. This can help with academic and emotional support.
 - Creation of peer/ group projects that require collaboration among students to encourage communication and teamwork.
 - Creation of virtual clubs or interest groups based on personal and academic interests, or cultural backgrounds.
 - Organize on-campus induction and networking events, providing opportunities for students to meet up in person.

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	Not applicable
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.*
- *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.

3.1. Teaching staff recruitment and development

Each academic year, the Office of the Vice-Rector for Faculty and Research asks the School Deans to identify new faculty needs to be approved by the Senate. The selection of faculty is the responsibility of the Head of the Department and the Dean of the School. The recruitment of faculty members is confirmed by the Senate as well as by the Council. Faculty selection, hiring and promotion processes are in place and well documented.

Staff recruitment as well as staff development are strongly and directly related to strategic academic development. Departments with popular programmes have increased need for new faculty and faculty development. During the planning of a new programme, the specific needs of specialised faculty are delineated for the whole duration of the programme, and a request for staffing is put forward.

3.2. Teaching staff number and status

The proposed programme will be supported by 8 faculty members (2 professors, 4 associate professors, 2 assistant professors).

3.3. Synergies of teaching and research

Teaching staff comprises academics actively involved in research, and this is evidenced by the increase in academic output produced and research funding acquired (cf staff CVs). Various faculty members serve in editorial boards of academic journals, are regularly invited to review papers submitted for publication and make part of research-related committees within Cyprus as well as internationally, which testifies to them being recognised by the

academic community as experts in their fields. Several faculty members closely collaborate with world-leading academics in various Greek, European and US universities.

Teaching staff are actively engaged in all aspects of research and produce a variety of research outputs (peer-reviewed journal articles, monographs, (chapters in) edited books, etc.). When advising and consulting students who undertake a master’s thesis, staff encourages students to make out most of this learning in terms of academic and professional experience (output and applied projects).

Strengths

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

- Teaching staff is very dedicated and highly skilled, covering a variety of specialized disciplines.
- In spite of the considerable teaching load, they manage to keep research activities at a satisfactory level, acquire research funding and build a good publication record. This may in part be thanks to incentives provided by the university for successful research activities, such as monetary incentives and research time release.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- As discussed during the visit, there are plans to purchase additional teaching staff time if student numbers exceed current capacity. However, it will be important to hire teaching staff in sufficient numbers and with adequate expertise in their topic.
- Teaching staff across both universities would benefit from joint training in interprofessional education and learning approaches, with consistency in their delivery.
- For new topics of the revised curriculum, there may be a requirement either for input from other teaching or existing staff and a need to consider the topics in relation to the new programme. It is important to note that topics should be related to child and adolescent protection. For this reason, they will need to be contextualized and translated rather than taught in the same way as in previous programmes.

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.

4.1. Student admission, processes and criteria

To apply for the proposed programme, candidates will have to be graduates of university departments of Social Work and/or Social Administration and Politics and/or related social sciences (Social Anthropology, Sociology, Law, Psychology, Education) and have good knowledge of both Greek and English. It will be considered an advantage for the candidate to work or have previous experience in the field of child protection.

In addition to the application form, a certified copy of the obtained degree and a curriculum vitae, candidates are required to provide two letters or recommendation (preferably from two academics or from one academic + one employer) and a motivation letter.

4.2. Student progression

For joint programmes of study with Greek universities, academic progress is evaluated using a numerical grading system, ranging from 0 to 10, with a minimum pass grade for a course being 5.0. A student's grade point average (GPA) shows the average performance for the semester; a student's cumulative grade point average (CPA) includes all courses taken in all the semesters.

The complete record of a student's progress (including all courses taken, all grades received, all transfer work accepted and in general all credits awarded) is available at the Registrar's Office in the form of a transcript.

4.3. Student recognition

In recognition of academic excellence, the university prepares a Semester Dean's List and a Graduation Honor List. Any student who completes at least 24 ECTS (excluding pass/fail courses) in a semester, with a GPA of at least 3.7, is placed on the Dean's Honour List for that semester. For joint programmes of study with Greek Universities, the Graduation Honor List is as follows: Excellent (grade 8.50-10.00), Very Good (Grade 6.50-8.49), Good (Grade 5.00-6.49).

Credits awarded in one programme may be transferred into another programme, either offered by the same or by a different institution. Transferable credits are evaluated based on the university standards and the student's grades.

Regardless of the credits transferred to a master's degree programme, students have to complete at least two thirds of the number of ECTS. Furthermore, the university awards credits to students who study abroad or who undertake a practicum under the ERASMUS+ programme. The study period is an integral part of the student's programme of study, and full academic recognition is given as decided in the Learning Agreement. Finally, pending approval by the CYQAA, it is also possible to earn credit from life or work experience, business or industrial training programmes and other achievements. A portfolio must be submitted documenting the learning done outside of formal university courses and students must demonstrate a balance between theory and practice.

4.4. Student certification

Upon completion of the proposed programme, students will be awarded a double degree (University of Nicosia + University of Patras).

Strengths

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

- Predefined and published regulations regarding student progression, recognition and certification are in place.

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.

- In case the admission criteria for the programme allow access to applicants with a wide range of academic backgrounds, to be able to satisfy the requirements of the curriculum, we suggest that the admission criteria explicitly state that, in addition to having a bachelor's degree, applicants need to be already engaged in this area of activity or be employed in, or at least have access to an organisation that undertakes or contributes to child protection work in order to apply theoretical knowledge to practical contexts.
- In case the admission criteria are kept very broad (direct access for graduates from a broad range of bachelor programmes), there may be an uneven starting knowledge and skill level for some courses. A suggestion could be to offer special courses (e.g., a preparatory programme) for students who did not complete specific prerequisite courses, i.e. related to child development, psychology, sociology, or other relevant subjects, which courses would have ensured that students have acquired foundational knowledge before entering the programme. Another possible way is to specify the required previous knowledge for each course and offer (but not oblige) a set of courses or course materials that students can optionally take in order to be well prepared to start the bachelor programme. Any in-between possibilities can be considered too.
- In case the admission criteria are kept broad, it is to be expected that the programme will attract a student group with diverse disciplinary backgrounds. This creates huge opportunities for interdisciplinary exchange and collaboration. The committee would like to encourage the team to ensure they benefit from such initiatives.

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	Partially compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

5.2 Physical resources

5.3 Human support resources

5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*
- *The e-learning material and activities take advantage of the capabilities offered by the virtual and audio-visual environment and the following are applied:*
 - *Simulations in virtual environments*
 - *Problem solving scenarios*
 - *Interactive learning and formative assessment games*
 - *Interactive weekly activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities for reality reconstruction and further processing based on hypotheses*
 - *They have the ability to transfer students to real-life situations, make decisions, and study the consequences of their decisions*
 - *They help in building skills both in experiences and attitudes like in real life and also in experiencing - not just memorizing knowledge*
- *A pedagogical planning unit for e-learning, which is responsible for the support of the e-learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of e-learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

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

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

5.1. Teaching and learning resources

Teaching and learning resources are at a satisfactory level. The online learning materials on the VLE are adequate and provide good opportunities for learning. Weekly interactive activities are compulsory and support student progression and retention. Access to recordings of sessions and PPTs of lectures enhance flexibility in the student experience.

5.2. Physical resources

The University of Nicosia's teaching resources infrastructure comprises 64 classrooms, 10 amphitheatres and 79 laboratories. The university also has one of the largest libraries in Cyprus. IT support is in place, directed also at e-learning students.

5.3. Human support resources

All programmes offered by the University are supported centrally by the administrative services. This includes recruitment, academic advising (in close collaboration with faculty members), academic affairs, financial issues and student affairs. There is a matrix structure of central administrative services and decentralized academic departments and faculty, tailored to the size, structure and culture of the university.

5.4. Student support

The University of Nicosia is committed to support on campus and online students during their journey based on an equal-opportunity. The priority of the relevant support units is student welfare.

Each student receives planning and academic counselling from the academic counsellors, the Head of the Department and the Programme Coordinator. The Distance Learning advisor assists the students in preregistration and registration, and counsels them where needed with regard to their schedule and degree requirement. The EEC had the opportunity to meet with the representatives of the Distance Learning Unit, who explained in detail how they assist students to get through the programme from the outset. For example, students receive training on how to use the virtual learning environment (e.g., how to upload the assessment, how to access the library, etc.). We also got an example of how they assist blind students to go through the programme.

The representative presented to us the counselling centre (KESY) that students can visit on campus and online, in case they face any personal problems during their academic career.

The representative of the SS informed us about the career open days that online students can participate in and find out the job opportunities that they may have in the future.

The librarian explained to us how they assist DL students and the training that they provide to students on how to access the library online.

In general, the student support centre helps students in their academic career by supporting them in both academic and non-academic issues that they may face, curriculum activities, graduation, and so on.

Strengths

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

- The distance learning unit provides a weekly report regarding student progress / and a reminder about assessment and deadlines.
- A student-centred approach is in place and promotes active self-learning. The Distance Learning Unit provides students with necessary support and guidance on access and induction to e-learning tools. Students and graduates with whom we spoke during the visit were very positive about the support they received during their studies.
- Students who face personal challenges can be supported by the Centre for Research and Counselling Services (KESY).

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.

- More online activities to connect online students with each other (also see our recommendations about building a student community).
- Replace the PPTs with narrated PPTs that provide better context for students who have missed a particular section.

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

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

6. Eligibility (*ALL ESG*)

Sub-areas

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

6.1 Legal framework and cooperation agreement

Standards

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

6.2 The joint programme

Standards

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

6.3 Added value of the joint programme

Standards

The joint programme leads to the following added values:

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

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

6.1. Legal framework and cooperation agreement

The proposed programme is a joint initiative between the University of Nicosia and the University of Patras (Greece). It has been created jointly by the Department of Social Sciences (which is part of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Nicosia) and the Department of Educational Sciences and Social Work (which is part of the School of Humanities of the University of Patras). The documentation referring to the legal framework establishing the programme, is a memorandum of cooperation between the two institutions and comprises clauses on the design and creation of joint degrees.

6.2. Joint programme

The programme is led by the University of Nicosia with support by the University of Patras. All students enroll at the University of Nicosia and all administrative processes are provided by that institution. The joint aspect consists of

having a coordination committee with members from both universities, opportunities for research collaborations among members of both universities and three faculty members of the University of Patras making part of the teaching staff of the new programme.

6.3. Added value of joint programme

The documentation mainly describes the added value of the programme, not specifically the added value of the joint programme. In the discussions, however, at least two reasons for the collaboration between the universities in establishing this joint programme were given: (a) the extensive expertise in distance learning and impressive infrastructure of Patras University for the delivery of distance learning programmes and (b) the fact that the programme targets Greek speaking students. Also, the University of Nicosia teaching staff can benefit from research collaborations with the University of Patras colleagues, and the collaboration strengthens the international profile of the University of Nicosia.

Strengths

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

- There is already a wider strategic collaboration between the Universities of Nicosia and Patras, with precedents of high quality joint teaching programmes.
- In relation to the proposed programme, both Universities and respective departments bring unique teaching and research expertise in topics related to child protection.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- As discussed in the section on curriculum objectives and design, a new programme on the interface of different fields requires integration and coherence that is more than the sum of two good parts. To this effect, and in order to get better added value out of the 'joint' programme for students from both countries (and indeed internationally), there needs to be better integration to take advantage of the two teaching staff groups' strengths and skills in the overarching field of child protection, as well as with each other. This could be achieved through enhanced collaboration and joint training on interprofessional education. In addition, mobility of staff and students between the two institutions would help with the added value objective.

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

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

D. Conclusions and final remarks

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF (Consider also the added value of the joint programme).

The external evaluation procedure was well-prepared by the university, with adequate and clear documentation and informative presentations during the visit. Conversations took place in a very constructive atmosphere, and staff were very open to suggestions and recommendations.

The EEC is very positive about the overall way in which the University of Nicosia, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Department of Social Sciences are run (e.g., state of the art quality assurance procedures, staff development plans, support services). Teaching staff is very dedicated and highly skilled, covering a variety of specialized disciplines. In spite of the considerable teaching load, they manage to keep research activities at a respectable level, acquire research funding and build a good publication record. This may in part be thanks to incentives provided by the university for successful research activities, such as monetary incentives and research time release.

The EEC believes that the proposed programme has a lot of potential and meets a clear need. In the past years, the child protection field has been an increasingly complex environment to work in, due to increased numbers of children being put under the hospice of government and non-governmental organisations. Also, several incidents known to the public are making the need for specialized education on diverse aspects of child and adolescent protection imperative. Professionals in the field lack skills and knowledge on how to develop synergies and safeguard children's best interests. Given all this, the proposed programme is a promising and timely initiative.

However, the EEC also feels that some further clarifications are needed and some decisions need to be made, especially with respect to the target group of prospective students. The first decision relates to the disciplinary profile of eligible candidates for enrollment in the programme. The current admission criteria for the programme are open for applicants with a wide range of backgrounds, which has a rationale, however, some of them may miss significant basic knowledge and raise questions to be able to satisfy the requirements of the curriculum. To handle this issue, we suggest explicitly stating the inclusion criteria next to having a bachelor's degree that applicants need to be already engaged in this area of activity or be employed in, or have access to an organisation that undertakes or contributes to child protection work. Furthermore, to include introductory or additional courses for students who did not complete specific prerequisite courses, to ensure that these students have sufficient foundational knowledge. An alternative is to admit candidate students with the necessary background knowledge from relevant disciplines.

A limitation of the programme is that there is no practical training component included in the curriculum, which would let students apply their theoretical knowledge in "real-world settings". Our above-described suggestion - i.e. include as an entry requirement to accept students to the master programme who have access to an organisation that undertakes or contributes to child protection work - would partly address this issue. Furthermore, including a case discussion course or activities across all courses can be highly beneficial.

In addition, we have offered a set of recommendations with respect to assessment and Artificial Intelligence, career support and community building with the intention of supporting distance learning initiatives at UNIC (see section 2 of this report).



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
PATRICIA BIJTTEBIER	
JUDIT BALAZS	
VOSTANIS PANOS	
HATZIPANAGOS STYLIANOS	
ZOE MAGOU	

Date: 12/04/2024