

Doc. 300.1.1/4

Date: 25-02-2025

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Limassol
- **Collaborative Institution(s):**
University of West Attica
- **Town:** Limassol
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Social Sciences and Humanities
- **Department/ Sector:** Education - Distance and Joint programme with the University of West Attica
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Μεταπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα στην Ειδική Αγωγή και Νέες Τεχνολογίες

In English:

MEd in Special Education and New Technologies

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: na

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].

In English: na

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The onsite visit took place on February 24 between 9.00 and 18.15, at the premises of the University of Limassol. The evaluation committee consisted of four professors and a student representative, who were present throughout the visit. One professor participated online due to illness. The committee was briefed and guided by a representative from the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education. The committee met with management, academic and administrative staff, as well as with active and graduated students. The visit also included a physical visit to the library and a virtual tour of the future premises to be built.

The visit started with an introduction, presentation, and discussion with the Rectorate, followed by a presentation and discussion with the Dean of the School of the Social Sciences and Humanities and the prospective Head of Department of Education. The visit continued with presentations and discussions of the two programmes, involving both designated Head of Department and staff involved in the programme committees. This was followed by presentations and discussions with the Distance Learning Unit of the university. Thereafter, meetings were held with teaching staff, selected stakeholders, students, and administrative staff. The visit was concluded by an exit discussion with the Dean, the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance, the designated Head of Department, one of the Programme coordinators, a member of the Administrative Council, and the Vice Rector of International Affairs and Extroversion, the last two from the University of Attica with which this programme is jointly conducted.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Barbara Schulte	Chair	University of Vienna
Riikka Mononen	Member	University of Oulu
Ágnes Hódi	Member	University of Szeged
Pantelis Papadopoulos	Member/ E-Learning Expert for the MBA E-Learning	University of Twente
Angelina Angelidou	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.

- Quality assurance follows the established procedures from existing programmes at the University of Limassol based on formalised, transparent, and appropriate structures.

- Teaching and administrative staff are highly involved in quality assurance procedures, with a relatively clear awareness of tasks, responsibilities, and procedural steps to take.
- Student involvement in quality assurance takes place mainly through student evaluations of courses. Student feedback is taken very seriously by staff and programme committee, as well as analysed and addressed systematically in the subsequent development of the programme.
- There are clear policies and procedures in place regarding issues of academic integrity, and a clear awareness of the on-going development and emanating challenges of Generative Artificial Intelligence (such as ChatGPT).
- There are clear policies and procedures in place regarding issues of discrimination and grievances, both through a personalised ticketing system and student support structures (such as counselling) and through anonymised complaint boxes both on campus and online. Additionally, there are effective procedures in place for raising awareness regarding these issues, such as workshops and seminars/webinars.
- Stakeholders are clearly involved through formats of exchange and cooperation, however currently in less formalised ways.
- Learning objectives are clearly defined, and are explicitly related to different fields of research and practice, thereby following the institutional strategy of firmly integrating research and teaching. The matching of learning objectives and teaching methodologies within each course as well as the usage of teaching methodologies across courses is mapped only to a limited extent.
- Both the programme and staff discussion revealed a high degree of awareness regarding the interconnection between the programme and society, including challenges and requirements emanating from the dynamics of the labour market and socio-ecological changes.
- Staff are aware of the need to continuously monitor and, if necessary, revise the contents and structure of the programme, for example to include new research trends and findings, or to adjust ways of teaching, examination, and assessment. There are procedures in place to affect such changes.
- The programme's design clearly takes into account issues of student progression and workload (including the necessity to flexibly arrange some of the workload to accommodate students who are already working), and clearly connects theory and practice, with possibilities for students to gather experience and expertise in professional settings.
- The programme is not published yet. However, the provided materials, including the application and the presentations, as well as the information in place for the existing programmes, make it highly probable that clear and accessible information will be provided regarding selection criteria, intended learning outcomes, qualification awarded, teaching, learning and assessment procedures, pass rates, learning opportunities available to the students, and graduate employment information.
- The programme is not running yet. However, the provided materials, including the application, the presentations, and responses in the discussion with mainly staff and students, as well as in light of experiences with existing programmes, make it highly probable that an adequate information management will be put in place. The application shows a clear awareness of key performance indicators, students to be targeted, procedures to track progression and success of students, as well as the importance of students' well-being and satisfaction. Existing programmes have drop-out rates at around 1 per cent; in these cases, exit interviews are conducted with the students. This procedure is planned to be put in place also for this programme. Throughout, there are frequent and clear references to students' career paths and the labour market situation.

Strengths

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

- The programme draws on established and formalised procedures of quality assurance. There is a very good awareness of these procedures among the staff, who are both experienced and cooperative with regard to identifying problems and adequate solutions.
- There is a very good network of stakeholders with a very beneficial range of different backgrounds, such as from the fields of practice, administration, and research.
- There is high awareness and strong expertise regarding learning objectives, teaching methodologies, and student progression/workload and overall well-being and satisfaction, as well as regarding developments in research and society that may make changes in the programme necessary.
- There is a high awareness of the interconnection between the programme and society as well as a clear orientation towards practice and professionally related fields.

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.

- Students' involvement in quality assurance could be expanded beyond student evaluations of courses, for example in having student representatives in (some of the) Programme committee meetings.
- Clearer procedures are recommended regarding stakeholders' involvement in quality assurance, for example by assigning to them clearer roles regarding programme review, learning objectives and teaching contents and methodologies, etc. This needs to be done in balanced ways as to not overburden stakeholders with tasks beyond their own professional responsibilities.
- Given the awareness and expertise of learning objectives and teaching methodologies among management and staff, it is recommended to systematically map these within and across courses so that it becomes more visible how learning objectives and teaching methodologies match, and how the range of different teaching methodologies spreads across individual courses in order to provide a diversity of methodologies to the students throughout the programme.
- Given the awareness of the challenges emanating from GenAI, it is recommended to integrate the process of text production/academic writing more systematically into course work to be done by the students. Measures such as writing logs, mutual peer-review of work in progress, uploading work in progress as well as reflections on how to build on this work could be used to adequately address these challenges; as well as measures to instill joy in creating and writing.

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

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



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



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.*
- *For distance learning programs, the number of students in both undergraduate and Master's level postgraduate programs does not exceed **30** students per class.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

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

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

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

2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

- The University applies a completely asynchronous e-learning approach. This allows more freedom for the students, but it also raises questions regarding the pedagogy as this also allows for space for students to avoid live interactions with peers and teachers. As such, it is unclear why a combination of synchronous and asynchronous was not applied. Stemming from the fully asynchronous mode, additional issues of accurate and fair assessment and overall student engagement and well-being can be raised.
- The University applies an e-learning approach that is aligned with common practices. Interactive activities are used regularly in weekly activities. The learning material combines a range of different media to offer a rich learning experience. The lectures are recorded and can be watched at any given moment by the students.
- The courses include both individual and collaborative learning activities, which is very good. Additional attention is needed by the teacher to fairly assess individual contributions within groupwork.

- The DLU of the University offers an introductory session with the students, primarily on how to use the technology related to the e-learning aspects of the programme. Taking into account that the expected audience may be older, have no prior experience with online education, and have lower availability than a typical student in a conventional programme, additional guidance on what it means to be active and engaged in a distance learning programme is needed. The students can reach out to DLU for this kind of support, but it would be even better if the University was proactive and not reactive in this matter.
- Regarding social development, the University is focusing primarily on creating knowledgeable learners, but more support is needed for social development. It appears that the students self-organize and create their own online groups (in other programmes which also have conventional aspects), but no specific method is used to enhance students' social interaction, apart from including groupwork and peer discussion in the courses.
- The role of students in taking an active role in creating the e-learning process is not clear. However, the EEC also heard from students (of other programmes) and teachers that rubrics and deadlines are discussed with the students, which is a very positive element.
- Several courses use the case-based instructional approach. This is a positive element as case-based learning can inject authenticity and help students deal with real-world complexity. Other approaches, such as serious games and simulations were not discussed, even though it seems that some courses may use live cases (i.e., the case unfolds according to students' reactions), which is similar to simulations and serious games.
- There is a maximum limit on the size of a cohort set at 30 students. If the number of enrolled students is higher, the university will create additional cohorts that will operate in parallel with different teaching staff.
- Practical training is offered only for Greek students, according to the legal requirements of Greece for practical experience. Currently, the plan is to have one practicum (30 ECTS) to be completed in one practicum place during one semester. As the completion of the practicum will give students a qualification to serve as a special education teacher, one practicum place will give only a narrow view for the work of a special educator.
- Stakeholders mentioned a high need for more trained teachers in special education and were largely positive about the prospect of such a programme.
- At programme level, it seems that there is an intention to analyze grading across courses and identify differences between teachers. This is a good step, but perhaps more is needed to guarantee objective and consistent assessment throughout the programme. Assignment and thesis screening (i.e., randomly re-assess past student work by another teacher) is not employed.
- Grading seems to be conducted with only one teacher for each course. This can be understandable if there is no other teacher with expertise in the same field. In addition, there is a clear process for a student to appeal.
- Study guides and manuals are available for all courses.
- The teachers are trained by the DLU on technical and pedagogical aspects. This training lasts in total for 25 hours and an interested teacher may ask for more support and 1-on-1 sessions throughout the programme. In addition, there is a culture of co-designing the learning experiences taking into account both the learning design of the teacher and the suggestions from the DLU. It is mandatory for a teacher to send the learning design of a course to DLU. Finally, there are three guides (PDF documents) available for teachers on "Moodle Learning", "Distance Learning", and "Moodle Analytics for Instructors". All the above are very positive elements of the programme. It would be further suggested that training be extended to cover more pedagogical aspects. As an indication, a mandatory teaching qualification certificate is required in many Northern European universities which includes 150 hours (5 EC) for the standard and 300 hours (10ECs) for the advanced certificate.
- Regarding students' individual characteristics, information is recorded during enrollment and by the study advisors and counselors who then have to inform the teachers.

- The students have several opportunities to be actively involved in research activities during their thesis or, to a lower degree, in a course. This is because most of the teachers are highly active researchers publishing in Q1 journals and they are interested in both the support they could get from their students and also to allow opportunities for their students to learn more about how to conduct research activities.
- There is no explicit mapping on how the courses are going to address the intended learning outcomes. Many courses have similar descriptions of teaching methods. From the viewpoint of a student, it would be beneficial if the ways of teaching methods and assignments vary enough between the courses.

Strengths

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

- The DLU provides support at different levels and is available to teachers throughout the programme also in 1-on-1 sessions. Attention is given to pedagogy and not only technical support. There is always a dialogue between teachers and the DLU regarding the design of a course in a distance learning mode.
- The planned courses regarding their content and learning outcomes take well into consideration the aspects of both special education and new technologies, and their integration.
- The learning material includes a range of resources and media and the courses include both individual and collaborative learning aspects.
- The instructional methods applied are appropriate for the distance learning nature of the programme and follow common practices.
- The DLU provides support to students in dealing with the tools related to the distance learning aspects of the programme.
- There are several opportunities for the students to be involved in research activities and this is also a result for the University-wide culture of actively supporting research by allocating time and budget for the teachers. This is something that appears to be a luxury for many other European universities.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- The main concern is based on the University's decision to apply a fully asynchronous mode of education. Distance education does not necessarily mean a fully asynchronous mode and, indeed, a combination of synchronous and asynchronous activities is the most common practice. Being fully asynchronous allows the students to opt out completely from synchronous student and teacher interaction. The argument that the interactive weekly activities (e.g., quizzes and assignments) will keep the students active is missing the point that human interaction (and not human-computer interaction) is not optional but mandatory in any kind of formal education. As such, it should not be possible for a student to completely skip all live interaction with the teacher, and perhaps with other students, and appear live only during the exams. This is not merely a point about the risk of cheating (which is nevertheless valid). EEC wants to underline the importance of social and soft skills that can only be developed via live interactions. As such, it is strongly advised that elements of the program will require the students to spend some time live with their teachers, either during the planned lectures or ad hoc consultation time during virtual office hours. In general, the teachers should also have a better understanding of their students' learning trajectories, special contexts, and individual differences before they see them during the exams. So, adding synchronous elements could also address this issue.

- In addition to the above, the University should have a mechanism in place to check up periodically with students who have indicators of lower engagement. Active students should complete the weekly assignments and attend synchronous online lectures and project meetings. Once a student stops being active in weekly meetings or starts skipping synchronous interaction, the University should reach out and check with the student. This is not only related to academic achievement but also for the students' wellbeing. Being online means that there are higher chances of isolation and disengagement. Since the channel of communication in distance education is limited, the University must be proactive and set up a process to reach out to students. Students of other online programmes mentioned that they went completely offline for 3 weeks because of personal circumstances before the University contacted them. This was done in a case-based approach and a shorter period for reaction would be more productive.
- Pedagogical support is extremely useful for teachers and it is a great first step that the University has already planned training offered by DLU. Nevertheless, this training could be extended. Especially for designing engaging learning activities online instructional models such as Keller's ARCS model (attention-relevance-confidence-satisfaction) could be useful as it offers a lot of practical examples. Similarly, training on curriculum mapping and constructive alignment (i.e., aligning learning goals with learning activities and assessment items) could be offered at a higher level, using, for example, Biggs and Tang's model for teaching for quality learning. Finally, supporting students' metacognitive development (e.g., setting up goals, monitoring, and reflection) and socially shared regulation (i.e., how to work productively in a group) would be useful for any programme, let alone a distance education one. These three aspects are typically included in teacher training programmes mentioned earlier. Finally, AI literacy should be supported for students and teachers.
- Grading objectivity could be enhanced by discussing grading strategies in planned teacher meetings, including multiple teachers (where possible) in grading one course, and implementing screening processes.
- The social development of students should be enhanced by organizing and facilitating social activities for the students online (e.g., online pub quizzes, online social clubs, etc.). This could enhance the sense of belonging and cohesion for the students.
- Concerning practicum, it would be good to consider if students will get enough practical skills and expertise for their future work, if only visiting one place during their practicum. If it is for practical reasons a challenge to provide a wider perspective for the field of special education, then alternatively, it would be good to consider, if there are possibilities to include more field-related experiences for other courses, e.g., in form of stakeholders from different fields to give lectures and seminars related to their expertise.

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	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.*
- *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.

- A clear, fair and transparent recruitment process of new teaching research faculty (TRF) (i.e., lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors, and professors) is reported. External reviewers take part in the evaluation process. The assessment, qualifications, and the responsibility for their selection rests with the Dean of School and the Head of Department. The appointment for TRF shall then be approved by the Senate and the Council.
- For the planned programme, all TRF have a relevant PhD and their knowledge and research interests are in line with the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, covering both special education and new technologies. This will ensure the quality and sustainability of teaching and learning.
- All TRF have been provided training on e-learning (25 h), and they receive support from the Distance learning unit, when needed and tailored for their needs. This further strengthens distance teaching and learning of the programme. The TRF members are encouraged to innovative teaching methods by applying digital technology. Digitalisation is also a focus point at the department level.
- The number and status of the planned TRF are adequate to support the programme of study. There is planned collaboration between the departments, e.g., inclusion of teaching staff from the Department of Psychology for relevant courses.
- The publications are within the disciplines of the planned program and related to the programme's courses.
- The allocation of teaching hours (30%) compared to the time for research activity (30%), and other duty work (40%) is appropriate. The planned Department of Education emphasises conducting research, and this is also supported based on the teaching hour requirement.
- The programme recognises, based on their prior experience, that students benefit most from research in terms of depth of learning and understanding when they are actively engaged, particularly through various forms of research-based learning. The planned TRF can incorporate their research findings into the content

and lectures of their courses. There are established actions at the university level, which aim to present the students with current research conducted by the TRF (e.g., the orientation period includes research presentations). Students are encouraged to take part in research with faculty staff.

Strengths

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

- Already a competent group of TRF to carry out the programme. Natural collaboration between the disciplines and departments, for example in teaching of courses, to bring their expertise to the programme.
- Clear, fair and transparent plans for recruitment processes.
- Allocation between teaching and research time is appropriate. This will ensure also enough research time for the TRF, which further supports their research-informed teaching practices.

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 e-learning methods and tools are constantly developing, and as a response to the TRF based on our discussions, we would encourage the faculty/department, together with the Distance learning unit, to provide continuous learning and training opportunities for the TRF, in order to keep the quality of the distance teaching excellent. This is especially important for the applied program, as it will be provided only online.
- It is recommended that the faculty and the department carefully consider the substance and methodological expertise needed in the programme when it comes to new recruitments in the future. Combination of special education and new technologies is a wide field, so it is important that there are competent TRF members to cover all needed areas in the programme and curriculum.

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.

- Student admission requirements are well-defined for both option A and option B of the programme.
- The programme defines the minimum requirements in terms of students' prior educational achievements from UK, US, Cypriot and Greek Universities.
- The educational achievements and background of the candidate have to be proved by two reference letters, one issued by an instructor familiar with these aspects.
- Even though the language of instruction is Greek (so students are not required to meet English language requirements), minimum English proficiency requirements in a number of international language exams are also stipulated, which are aligned with further stages defined in the 3-year-action plan.
- Work experience is recognized and may be used to compensate for lower final grades than what is defined as a minimum admission requirement.
- Prior educational achievement is also to be proved by submitting certified copies of their High School Leaving Certificates.
- We do not have any information about the consistency and transparency of the access policies and admission processes since the program has not started yet.
- The student's progress in the programme of study, and whether the requirements of the programme have been met, is shown by the overall average for the semester and the whole year. Grades are given to indicate a student's understanding of a course or other coursework. The grading system is pre-defined and applies to all students.
- Students are expected to closely collaborate with their academic counselors to understand their academic paths and to be able to meet their academic goals.
- Based on previous experiences in other programs, the attrition rate is expected to be marginal (approx. 1 percent)
- Students' progress is closely monitored by the functional staff. They reach out to the students who seem to encounter problems in their progress.
- We cannot evaluate if the processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression are in place, since the program has not started yet.

- For graduate programme students who have completed all graduation requirements and have been approved by the Academic Committee, degrees are issued quarterly.

Strengths

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

- The admission process and criteria are clearly described and formalized.
- The program offers a compensatory strategy for applicants who have lower grades than what is defined in the admission requirements. These students may be admitted if they have strengths in work experience or other accomplishments.
- Credit transfer to a certain degree is also possible.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- We have no recommendations for further improvement.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

- 5.1 Teaching and Learning resources
- 5.2 Physical resources
- 5.3 Human support resources
- 5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- Weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*

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

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

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

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

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

5.4 Student support

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

- Management, programme coordinators, and teaching staff show a high awareness of making teaching engaging and interactive. Some convincing examples and best practices were given to illustrate this, as well as procedures and solutions when a lack of activity on the part of the student is identified.
- Each course includes interactive learning activities that employ a range of media and interactivity types. The use of H5P is particularly positive as it will be, then, easier for the teachers to add a variety of interactive elements into their course.
- The case-based learning approach is used to instill authenticity and deal with the complexity of the real world. Stakeholders are involved in teaching as well and can facilitate connecting theory and practice.
- Students emphasize the importance, as practiced in the existing programmes, of a good and personalised mix of shared student activity and individual work.

- The DLU, even though is established recently has a prominent role in the University by supporting students and teachers and focusing both on technical and pedagogical support.
- The learning management system (Moodle) and the library resources are adequate for the purposes of the distance learning programme.
- There is an extensive online and offline support structure for diverse sets of needs and concerns that students may be confronted with during the course of their studies. Students are knowledgeable about these services. Each student is assigned to an advisor upon enrolment while counsels are available throughout the programme.
- Several accessibility add-ons are available in Moodle for students with special needs (e.g., contrast, font size, text-to-speech, reading focusing, etc.). This is a very positive element.
- Goal setting, self-monitoring, learning portfolios, and other tools that would allow students to self-regulate are not currently used, but they are available in Moodle and could be easily part of students' learning experience.
- The teaching staff is largely appreciative of the University-wide culture that supports research and training. In general, the teaching staff feel supported, adding, of course, that more training would be even better.
- AI literacy and ethical and legal frameworks are still on the rise, but the University must be proactive in helping students and teachers dealing with it. Prompting users to explore without adequate knowledge or purpose may be counterproductive and allow for misconceptions on the use and purpose of AI and GenAI.
- The presented materials and the discussion stressed the importance of international networks and mobility, including some mobility (e.g. conference participation) beyond Erasmus exchange structures. There was provided limited detail regarding how the programme will be linked with plans of increasing international mobility.

Strengths

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

- The DLU provides a range of support mechanisms for students and teachers.
- The technology infrastructure is robust and widely used.
- Teachers expressed a strongly positive opinion on the University and the overall support they receive.
- Academic and other staff have convincingly demonstrated their expertise in dealing with diverse student bodies in interactive and engaging ways.
- There is ample experience with connecting theory and practice, and excellent networks of stakeholders to draw on for this.
- There are solid support structures in place, including personalised services, and made known and available to the students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- As more accessibility tools and options are becoming available, DLU is advised to keep track of recent advancements. For example, special font types such as Dyslexie have been developed and seem to be effective for students with dyslexia.
- Tools that would allow the students to create their learning space by creating, for example, their learning portfolio, learning goals, and timelines, could help them in self-regulation. Most of them are available in Moodle or free add-ons, so DLU could explore further in that direction.
- Further training on pedagogical issues is needed. These have already been mentioned in Section 2. In addition, AI literacy should be further supported. There are several AI ethics frameworks (e.g., UNESCO's

Guidance for GenAI in Education and Research) which could be used university-wide for all programmes. In addition, the EU’s AI Act which came into force on 1 Aug 2024 dictates the risk levels for different aspects of AI in education and training. DLU, and consequently, the teacher must be aware of what is permitted and what is not regarding the use of AI in education.

- The fact that learning is a social, co-constructive process and not just based on individual effort may need to be communicated to the students more extensively and explicitly, perhaps by including reflections on this on a meta-level and linking this to theories of learning. This should also be important with regard to the fact that many of the students will work as educators themselves in the future. While the students we talked with were aware of the potentially beneficial effect of shared activities in social and emotional terms, they seemed to be less cognizant of their effects for learning.
- While physical resources are less important for an online programme, the programme could benefit from some technical equipment, such as a video recording room or at least some technical devices to record lectures in a professional way.
- It is recommended to design more detailed strategies regarding internationalisation and international mobility of students, including questions of, for example, compatibility of study abroad with studying the programme, or when it might be more adequate to focus on “internationalisation at home”.

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.

- A Cooperation Agreement provides the legal framework for the joint programme.
- The added value of the joint postgraduate programme in Special Education and New Technologies between the University of Limassol and the University of West Attica lies in the cooperation and the combination of expertise and different perspectives from the two institutions.
- The mechanisms for ensuring the quality of the joint study programme take into consideration the European Standards and Guidelines and are adopted by both universities involved.
- The added value of the joint program is as follows: (1) Expanding expertise: Students benefit from the expertise of the teaching staff of both universities, offering a comprehensive curriculum. (2) Cross-cultural exposure: Promotes a deeper understanding of special education practices in different regions, enhancing global competence. (3) Access to more comprehensive resources: Students gain access to both institutions' research facilities, technological tools and educational resources. (4) Enhanced networking opportunities: the programme expands students' professional networks across borders, encouraging future cooperation.

(5) Double recognition: Graduates receive a degree recognised by both institutions, increasing their employability opportunities and academic credibility internationally.

- Funding strategy and the division of responsibilities: There is a signed Cooperation Agreement with clear responsibilities with what each part is responsible for regarding management procedures and financial issues. UoL is responsible for the administrative support for students. University of West Attica is responsible for the practicum and its monitoring. In terms of funding, 80% of the student fees will be allocated to UoL and 20% will be allocated to the University of West Attica.
- The evaluation of the publication of programme information is not possible, since the programme has not been offered yet.

Strengths

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

- The strengths lie in the added values of the collaboration listed above.

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.

- We have no recommendations for further improvement.

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	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).

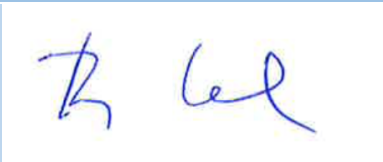
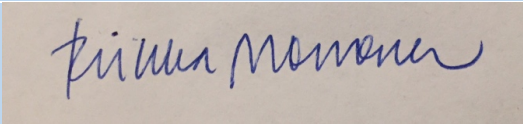
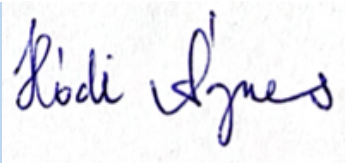
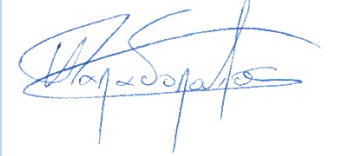
Overall, this is a well-prepared and well-designed programme which takes into consideration the complex challenges of teaching and learning about special education, integrating new technologies. There is a dire need for special education teachers both in Cyprus and in Greece, and it was argued convincingly at the site visit that there was also a great need for expertise regarding new technologies in the field of special education. Additionally, existing programmes in special education have very little content on new technologies, so the establishment of such a programme can be considered filling a niche in the market. The involvement of the two institutions, Limassol and West Attica, creates a distinct added value to the programme, and the specifics of the joint venture have been laid out clearly.

Involved academic and other staff is highly competent, and it can be expected that research and teaching will be highly integrated, and also professional and practical aspects will play an important role, preparing the students for the labour market. There are very solid support structures in place both for the teaching staff and the students.

As fields for further development, we suggest further building knowledge and best practices regarding e-learning and the use of GenAI, as this is most crucial for a programme that is taught online. Also, we suggest thinking more systematically about the use of teaching methodologies across the programme, as well as about involving students and stakeholders in processes of quality assurance.

We are confident that this will be a programme of high quality, attracting good and motivated students both from Cyprus and Greece, filling an important niche in the educational market, and making a contribution to society.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Barbara Schulte	
Riikka Mononen	
Ágnes Hódi	
Pantelis Papadopoulos	
Angelina Angelidou	

Date: 25-02-25