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Date: Feb. 26, 2025

# External Evaluation Report (Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
University of Limassol
- **Town:** Limassol
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Social Sciences and Humanities
- **Department/ Sector:** Education
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

**In Greek:**

Πτυχίο στην Προδημοτική Εκπαίδευση

**In English:**

Bachelor in Early Childhood Education

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

**In Greek:** n/a

**In English:** Concentrations



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

## A. Introduction

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

The 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 and of whom three professors are evaluating this programme. (The fourth professor evaluated only e-learning aspects within another programme.) 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 the other programme to be evaluated 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
Angelina Angelidou	Student representative	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

### C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

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

#### **Findings**

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

#### **Strengths**

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

#### **Areas of improvement and recommendations**

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

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

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

### **Sub-areas**

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

### **1.1 Policy for quality assurance**

#### **Standards**

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
  - *is a part of the strategic management of the program.*
  - *focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study program.*
  - *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*
    - *is developed with input from industry leaders and other stakeholders (i.e. industry leaders, professional bodies/associations, social partners, NGO's, governmental agencies) to align with professional standards.*
    - *integrates employer surveys to adapt to evolving workplace demands.*
    - *regularly utilizes alumni feedback for long-term effectiveness assessment.*
    - *is published and implemented by all 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*

- *Aligns course learning outcomes with student assessments using rubrics to ensure objectives are met.*
- *Connects each course's aims and objectives with the programme's overall aims and objectives through mapping, aligning with the institutional strategy.*
- *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*
  - *collaborates with industry experts for curriculum development.*
  - *conducts joint reviews with external academic specialists to maintain academic rigor.*
  - *performs periodic assessments with external stakeholders to ensure continuous alignment with market needs.*
  - *establishes collaboration with international educational institutions or/& other relevant international bodies for a global perspective.*
  - *conducts regular feedback sessions with local community leaders for societal relevance.*

### 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*

*In addition, the program has established mechanisms of transparency & communication to ensure that*

- Professional bodies validate program descriptions and outcomes.
- Community leaders actively participate in ensuring that the program's public information is relevant and resonates with the local and societal context.
- External auditors review public information for accuracy & consistency vis-à-vis the actual implementation of the program.
- Industry-specific & societal information is regularly updated with expert inputs.
- Alumni testimonials are included for a realistic portrayal of program outcomes.

## 1.4 Information management

### Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed using specific indicators and data i.e:*
  - *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*
  - *industry trend analysis.*
  - *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*
  - *data exchanges with professional networks*
  - *employer insights concerning career readiness*
- *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?*
- *How and to what extent are external stakeholders involved in the quality assurance process of the program?*
- *How is external stakeholder feedback gathered, analyzed and implemented,?*
- *In what ways do external stakeholders assist in making program information publicly available?*
- *How do external stakeholders contribute to evaluating graduate success in the labor market and obtaining feedback on employment 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.*

- 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, 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 instil joy in creating and writing.

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

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

## 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**

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

#### Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of 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 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.*
- *Detailed schedules in course materials are included, explicitly stating the expected hours for lectures, self-study, and group projects, ensuring transparency in time allocation.*
- *A system is integrated where each learning activity is assigned a weight proportional to its importance and time requirement, aiding in balanced curriculum design.*

### **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.*

- *The expected hours for different components of practical training, such as lab work, fieldwork, and internships are clearly documented in the training manuals*
- *A weighting system is applied to various practical training elements, reflecting their significance in the overall learning outcomes and student workload.*

## 2.3 Student assessment

### Standards

- *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 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.*
  - *The time allocation for each assessment task is explicitly stated in course outlines, ensuring students are aware of the expected workload.*
  - *A balanced assessment weighting strategy is implemented, considering the complexity and learning objectives of each task, to ensure fair evaluation of student performance.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *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.*

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

- The teaching methodologies reflect a student-centred approach. Individual and social development is supported by small class sizes and personalized learning. Students are expected to take an active role in any learning activity, small class sizes provide adequate circumstances for this. Experiential learning is another foundational principle of the program. Experiential learning is realized during seminars and workshops, the on-site visits and observations and the practicum placements.
- Tailor-made learning is also ensured by flexibility in curriculum design (e.g. elective courses, the option to write a thesis etc.).
- There is a comprehensive and well-designed system of support, mentorship and supervision for students during their studies ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher. The multi-level system of support includes the subjects' supervisors, peers and nursery teacher mentor.
- The courses included in the curriculum of the programme respond to the contemporary challenges and needs of the profession, which includes the use of technology to improve teaching and learning.
- Teachers plan to use a wide range of tools to create a holistic learning experience (e.g. audiovisual material, technological material, and other active learning techniques such as brainstorming, case studies stemming from contemporary pedagogical issues).

- Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.
- Each learning activity is assigned a weight proportional to its importance and time requirement. Weight assignment seems to be uniform across the courses (Attendance and participation during the course (10%), Individual or group assignment (40%), Final Examination (50%)).
- The rights and responsibilities of stakeholders in the teaching and learning process are well-defined, this ensures the framework for mutual respect and fruitful collaboration for all the parties involved in the process.

#### Practical training:

- Practical training is a core element in the program. As a first step of professionalization into the domain of early childhood education, it provides students with an excellent and unique opportunity to link theory and practice and to capitalize on the knowledge they gain during their courses provided by the university.
- The organisation and the content of practical training support the achievement of planned learning outcomes and ensures that students are prepared to meet the needs of different stakeholders. Students do not only get to cooperate with in-service ECEC teachers/professionals but they also have a chance to cooperate with parents.
- During the 4-stage-practical training students earn (5+5+5+15) 30 ECTS. The practicum starts in the 3rd semester and finishes in the 7th semester.
- A weighting system is applied to various practical training elements, reflecting their significance in the overall learning outcomes and student workload.

#### Student assessment:

- The diverse student assessment methodologies are appropriate for yielding a wide and rich data pool about students' academic profile and progress. They enable the identification of bottlenecks in students' development trajectory and the design of appropriate intervention(s).
- From the Programme Director's presentation we learnt that formative assessment is prioritized throughout the program to improve students' learning.
- The portfolio lists a wide range of methods to assess student performance. These include group and individual assignments, case studies, projects, development of lesson plans and activities, critical analysis of the literature, presentations, and class attendance and participation.

- The Assessment policy and procedures and grading system communicated to students with the UoL Undergraduate Student Handbook and courses syllabus.
- Assessment is typically carried out by one examiner (the teacher), however, during the program, the students benefit from feedback from peers and mentors as well, which may compensate for the lack of multiple examiners.
- Student assessment is transparent, the criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, will be published in advance.
- A regulated pipeline for student appeal is defined.

### Strengths

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

- The programme can be considered outstanding in terms of the amount of practice offered for students. While other programmes offer 3 practicums, this particular programme includes 4 practicum stages. The requirement of the practicums follows an increasing complexity and difficulty in terms of what (and what level/extent of) involvement is expected of students.
- While students' progress is ultimately evidenced by summative educational assessment (i.e. the grades attained after the completion of a certain course), we are delighted to see that an emphasis is laid on formative assessment methodologies as well. It is also admirable that student assessments are not reduced to one-size-fits-all procedures.
- The development and delivery of a personal portfolio in pairs and individually as part of students' school experience assessment is a great asset in students' assessment.
- Research activity is considered to be very important by the University. It is not only teachers who are expected and encouraged to conduct research but teachers themselves motivate their students to join their research projects or launch one of their own. The dissemination of the results of students' research projects at national or international conferences is highly valued.

### 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 information/data collected during the practicums by means of observation and interviews could be presented in the form of student research seminar series or conferences and could also pave the way towards well-designed large-scale data collections. Conferences are great ways to promote student agency and achievement.

- Since formative assessment is brought to the forefront of student assessment, we would like to point out that integrating Duckor's and Holmberg's framework (2017) for formative assessment (Mastering Formative Assessment Moves: 7 High-Leverage Practices to Advance Student Learning) could further enrich the methods the Faculty uses.
- Since the landscape of educational assessment in different domains is constantly evolving, external or internal trainings should be held for assessors/teachers to familiarize themselves with innovative testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.

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

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

- *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:*

- *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. This will ensure the quality and sustainability of teaching and learning. In addition to nine TRF members (from lecturers to professor emerita), two special teaching staff members would work for the programme.
- 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 TRF members are encouraged to use innovative teaching methods, for example, by applying digital technology and practical methods. Digitalisation is also a focus point at the department level.
- The publications are within the disciplines of the planned programme 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 applying for external funding, and this is also supported based on the teaching hour requirement.
- It is reported that through their research activity, staff members develop new pedagogical approaches, methodologies and tools that support effective learning and broaden students' professional skills, which contributes significantly to linking theoretical knowledge with practical application in teaching. Also, the synergy between research and teaching is achieved through the continuous updating of course content.
- TRF members have national and international research networks and collaboration, which further enriches the teaching and international dimension of the programme.

### Strengths

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

- There exists a really competent group of TRF to carry out the programme. There is 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 are in place.
- The allocation between teaching and research time is appropriate. This will ensure also enough research time for the TRF and applying for external research funding, 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.*

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>
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 the programme.
- The programme defines the minimum requirements in terms of students' prior educational achievements from high school, GCE A Level exams, or having international baccalaureate, as well as for English language proficiency (although the latter requirement is not applicable for candidates for programmes in Greek).
- Each student can transfer up to 50% of their completed credits if the degree they have already obtained is equivalent to a Bachelor's degree.
- 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 counsellors 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 administrative 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.
- Students can transfer up to 50% of their completed credits if the degree they have already obtained is equivalent to a Bachelor's degree.

### 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**

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *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 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.*
- *Students receive support in research-led teaching through engagement in research projects, mentorship from research-active faculty, and access to resources that enhance their research skills and critical engagement with current studies.*

*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.
- Students emphasize the importance, as practiced in the existing programmes, of a good and personalised mix of shared student activity and individual work.
- Both staff and students attach great importance to the interconnection between theory and practice, for example through case-based teaching and learning, practical experience, and involvement of stakeholders in teaching.
- Physical resources such as classrooms, student space, and library fulfil the basic requirements but could be improved considerably. Plans for the new campus were presented and will substantially increase the quality of the physical infrastructure.
- Learning management systems and library resources are adequate for the purposes of the 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 counselling is available throughout the programme.
- The teaching staff are 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 are also some courses in English for incoming students. Limited detail was provided 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.*

- Academic and other staff have convincingly demonstrated their expertise in dealing with diverse student bodies in interactive and engaging ways.
- Academic staff expressed a strongly positive opinion on the university and the overall support they receive.
- 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.
- The technology infrastructure is robust and widely used.

### 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 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.
- Further pedagogical training for academic staff is recommended. 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. Also, the EU's AI Act specifies the risk levels for different aspects of AI in education and training and can provide useful guidance.
- While it is clear that the current premises are only preliminary, more could be done until the final premises are established. For example, the design of the interior including walls etc. could reflect more the fact that this is an educational institution, for example by showing works of students and making some fitting visual decorations that make it an educational place. Moreover, the library, even though it is quite limited in space, should be made more inviting for students, responding to the students' needs. Ideally, this could be designed together with the students.
- 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, the role of and interaction with incoming students, 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. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

### Sub-areas

#### 6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

#### 6.2 Proposal and dissertation

#### 6.3 Supervision and committees

### 6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

#### Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
  - *the stages of completion*
  - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
  - *the examinations*
  - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
  - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

### 6.2 Proposal and dissertation

#### Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
  - *the chapters that are contained*
  - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
  - *the minimum word limit*
  - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

### 6.3 Supervision and committees

#### Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
  - *regular meetings*

- reports per semester and feedback from supervisors
- support for writing research papers
- participation in conferences
- The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?
- Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?
- Are the criteria reflected in dissertation samples?

### 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.*

Click or tap here to enter text.

### Strengths

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

### 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.*

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
<b>6.1</b>	Selection criteria and requirements	Not applicable
<b>6.2</b>	Proposal and dissertation	Not applicable
<b>6.3</b>	Supervision and committees	Not applicable

## 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.*

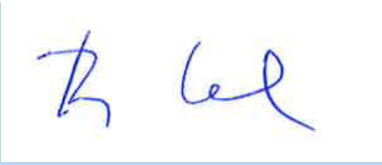
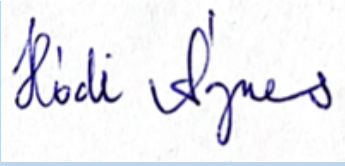
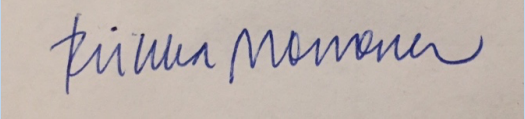
Overall, this is a well-prepared and well-designed programme which takes into consideration the complex challenges of teaching and learning about early childhood education. There is a dire need for early childhood educators in Cyprus and beyond, and it was argued convincingly at the site visit that preschools are very interested in hiring the students once they have graduated, in particular if they have had the opportunity to get to know them (e.g. through internships or practical experiences). Hence, the establishment of the programme can be considered both an adequate response to societal needs and a wise investment in the market of higher education.

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 pedagogical knowledge in higher education teaching and in particular regarding the use of GenAI. 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 would also like to encourage staff to think about building larger data collections, storing (anonymously) e.g. data from practical experiences, student/researcher observations etc.

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

## E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Barbara Schulte	
Ágnes Hódi	
Riikka Mononen	
Angelina Angelidou	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

**Date:** February 26, 2025