Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report

(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**

  University of Nicosia

- **Town:** Nicosia

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Medical School

- **Department/ Sector:** Basic and Clinical Sciences

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

  In Greek:

  Διδακτορικό στις Ιατρικές Επιστήμες (3 Έτη / 180 ECTS, Διδακτορικό)

  In English:

  Doctoral Degree (PhD) in Medical Sciences (3 years / 180 ECTS, Doctoral Programme)

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

- **Programme's status:** Currently operating programme of study

Programme title on the last accreditation: Doctoral Degree (PhD) in Medical Sciences (3 years / 180 ECTS, Doctoral Programme)
Reference number: 07.14.336.099
Expiry date of the last accreditation: Registered by ECPU

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

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

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The panel visited the Department of Basic and Clinical Sciences, University of Nicosia Medical School on 26th June 2023.

We first met with the Rector of the University who presented an overview of the University as a whole, its strengths, achievements and its international focus. He presented details of the overriding structure of the organisation, its vision, strategy and some future developments.

We then met with the Executive Vice President for Health, UNIC Health and the Dean of the Medical School who gave a presentation about UNIC Health and the programmes offered. He introduced the senior members of his team. We had an in-depth conversation about departmental activity and strategic development. We then heard from the Department Head and the Programme Director of the PhD programme who provided a thorough review.

We spent time with senior and other administrators who described the overall administrative structure and harmonious way of working to support University function. This meeting highlighted to us how Faculty and Administrators alike are supportive and encouraging of diversity across all protected characteristics (such as disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy, race, religion or belief).

Finally, we met with students from the Department who stressed the personalised support provided, academic opportunities and way in which many managed study alongside teaching roles in Department and family lives.

Because of the in-depth discussions, we skipped a tour of the facilities. Details of the day, our findings and recommendations are included through the remainder of this report.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Professor Nicki Cohen	Professor of Neuropathology & Medical Education, Dean of Medical Education	King's College London, UK
Professor Reinold Gans	Professor of Medicine	Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, University Medical Center Groningen, The Netherlands
Professor Tea Lallukka	Professor of Medical Sociology, Head of the Department of Public Health	University of Helsinki, Finland
Stephanos Hilides	Medical Student	University of Cyprus, 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)

> <u>**Sub-areas**</u>
>
> **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

<u>Standards</u>

- *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**

<u>Standards</u>

- *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)*

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- o *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
- o *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
- o *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
- o *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- o *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- o *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- o *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- o *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- o *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

- ● *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
    - o *key performance indicators*
    - o *profile of the student population*
    - o *student progression, success and drop-out rates*

- o *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
- o *learning resources and student support available*
- o *career paths of graduates*

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

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?*

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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.

As explained in the materials, the Medical School is the largest in Cyprus offering three medical programmes and four postgraduate degrees: Master in Family Medicine, Master of Public Health, Master in Health Services Administration, and *Doctorate in Medical Sciences*. This is an emerging programme with 14 enrolled students to date. None of them has yet completed their PhD. We therefore cannot say a great deal about graduation statistics or drop out rates.

The Medical School of UNIC has a quality assurance programme in place, monitored on an annual basis, to ensure the quality of all aspects of its programmes, including the PhD programme. This is publically available and supports the teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities with regard to the programme. There is an internal and external QA process in place.

The design, approval and ongoing monitoring and review are developed according to the Bologna process, the Framework for Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area, and European Qualifications Framework (EQF) level 8. The exams, assignments and workload correspond to the level of the programme and number of ECTS. The programme is tailored to individual circumstances of the student. There is a formal institutional programme approval process in place.

Selection criteria, intended learning outcomes, the qualification awarded, teaching, learning and assessment procedures etc are all satisfactory. The pass rates are not applicable to this situation but we did hear of procedures to modify progression according to performance. We understand these are being used appropriately. Based on the conversations with PhD students, we could see that they all had individualised plans for advancing their academic position based on the future award of the PhD.

There is an effective information management system, with feedback from students and PhD supervisors available. All interviewed students were highly satisfied and happy with the learning resources made available to them and student support.

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

1. We have observed and been told of excellent practices relating to Equality, DIversity and Inclusion across all protected characteristics. This fits with the Department's high standing in the Times Higher Educations's Good Health and Wellbeing rankings.
2. We would like to recognise the efforts and strategic vision of the Programme Director and Associate Dean for Research in supporting students, and for recognising the vast array of opportunities for expansion. This is particularly noted given the Programme Director's relatively short period in post.
3. The individualised Personal Development Plan provides opportunities for individual students to develop broadly, including in transferable and "soft" skills which will help them in future employment and development.

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.

With regard to the following standards:

- o _ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud_
- o _supports the involvement of external stakeholders_

1. We would advise that there is a formal Scientific Integrity Policy and obligatory training for all staff and students to evidence that they have undertaken.
2. We would advise that formal consideration and explicit planning is undertaken around the involvement of external stakeholders, particularly patient/public involvement.

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

Sub-area		_Non-compliant/_ _Partially Compliant/Compliant_
1	Policy for quality assurance	compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	compliant
1.3	Public information	compliant
1.4	Information management	compliant

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

> ### Sub-areas
> **2.2 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
> **2.3 Practical training**
> **2.4 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.*

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
- *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.*

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.

The medical school has a process for student-centred teaching and learning methodology in place, which includes the new PhD programme. Processes around student-centred learning are exemplary. Learning and support is tailored to the individual needs of the student. PhD students and staff appear to co-create the research journey together, and students referred to working in partnership with all three supervisors.

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

1. Individualised approach to students.
2. Peer presentation and feedback is organised through conferences and online meetings.

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.

1. Given the way that students feel that they work in partnership with supervisors, in the future and as the programme grows, we feel that a formal policy would provide a route for students to register complaints if required, independently from the Programme but ideally below the level of the rector.
2. Greater links between the PhD students on the programme may be difficult given their wide dispersal, but should be considered within the programme and across the University. This would provide greater opportunities for peer learning and shared experience, as staff have already recognised.
3. We heard, in addition, student enthusiasm for some shared social events. We recognise these were in place before COVID, but there would be benefit in developing and signposting these again now.
4. We note that a proportion of PhD students undertake data collection and many aspects of their programme overseas, returning twice a year for programme requirements. Care should be undertaken that the QA processes for these students are fit for purpose and address potential differences, which may include data management requirements, for example.
5. The department should explicitly demonstrate and require that scientific data management is organised according to FAIR data principles.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
2	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.

There is a formal training programme for PhD supervisors in place. We understood from conversations that this was meant for inexperienced supervisors.

The Department drives academic pursuit in its teachers, this is also documented through their recent pivot towards more research time in academic job plans. Along these lines, it is striking that many of the PhD students themselves have enrolled as (part time) students while working as educators within the medical school: the PhD is currently for many a career development opportunity, and this is likely to further enhance the standing of the Department since most explicitly stated their desire to stay local on graduation.

The research strategy is currently broad and it is recognised that in time this may be focused to align to the stronger research areas in Department

In the main application it is stated that University has a number of strategies intended to support their faculty members in pursuing research and also connecting research and teaching. There are also specific requirements regarding following publications within the fields of expertise and updating teaching materials accordingly each year. This sounds excellent but it is not possible to confirm this from the materials. It is not clear if this is monitored and how and by whom.

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

1. New PhD supervisors receive support from more experienced supervisors.
2. Open communication within the Department is such that we anticipate members are more able to ask for help if needed.

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.

1. CVs of academic staff should be published and regularly updated to inform and attract prospective students.
2. The Associate Dean for Research should put a process in place to assure that all PhD supervisors are trained to supervise and have regular ongoing refresher opportunities.
3. We support the Department's longer-term strategy to focus its research towards the areas of strength.
4. Efforts should be made to ensure greater alignment between Clinical and GHS academics, in terms of appointment, promotion and appraisal.

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

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

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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*

  o *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.

The application process is described clearly. Because of the emergent nature of this programme, it is not possible to comment on many of the criteria in this section, but we have no specific concerns.

The Department has recently reviewed the necessary criteria for supervision. More variability is possible amongst the three supervisors, such as geography and departmental home. We are satisfied that the goal of overall excellent supervision is met, and see these changes as part of the evolution of this relatively new programme. Academic faculty interviewed did not describe a sense of feeling overwhelmed and we would not anticipate this, given the other conversations we have had.

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

1. In our discussions with Academics, Administrators and Students, we noted wide readiness among faculty and administrative staff to support students with a range of protected.
2. As note previously, the open communication is a general strength.

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.

N/A

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
4	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.*

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.

Elements of student support are clearly defined. The resources provided to students and staff are excellent. Future resources have been identified to support members of staff and to improve facilities (for example expansion of the UNIC clinic and the biobanking facility).

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

1. Plenty of support and services are available for the students. These are clearly presented in the student handbook. In particular, a lot of consideration is given to students with protected characteristics.
2. Resources are excellent, and resource planning was described during the site visit as a continuous process.
3. The relationship between administrators, academics and students is excellent with open lines of communication.
4. The diverse background of academic and administrative staff is a strength, and all have described the work as rewarding.

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.

1. Given the ambition and expanding direction that research is taking, an all-encompassing plan across UNIC health, to derive maximal benefit and impact from this investment is sensible.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
5	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:*
  - o *the stages of completion*
  - o *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
  - o *the examinations*
  - o *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
  - o *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:*
  - o *the chapters that are contained*
  - o *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
  - o *the minimum word limit*
  - o *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?*
- *Can you please provide us with some 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.

The standards required for admission are clear and published online, but an update of the online material is pending. Critical milestones are highlighted, a minimum and maximum time to complete the programme and how progress is assessed. A template for the thesis write up is provided, and likewise for the PhD proposal.

Clear criteria are published for awarding the degree, and the process underlying this decision. Similar is in place for the PhD proposal, and for supervision.

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

1. This PhD programme has benefitted from the procedures already in place in the Department for the delivery of MBBS and MD programmes.

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.

1. We have noted that there are multiple documents required for tracking the process of each student. As the programme expands, a mechanism to bring these online would be useful, and perhaps a tailored approach of monitoring to improve efficiency.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
6	Selection criteria and requirements	compliant
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	compliant
6.3	Supervision and committees	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.

A consistent feature of this programme is the positive and collegiate approach by students, academic and administrative staff. There is a real sense of shared purpose and common goals, and the leadership team should be commended for embracing this approach. Staff readily expressed their diversities, and how the international mix of staff was a draw to recruitment, and added to a learning environment that was supportive of those from all areas of society.
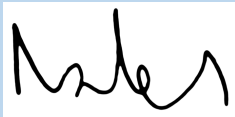
Particular note should be made to the newly appointed Programme Director, who has embedded herself well within departmental structures and has developed excellent knowledge and practice in directing the programme.

There is a sense that the PhD programme, still emergent, is the result of the desire to provide career development opportunities for existing staff, and this is to be commended. The PhD programme in this case supports the overall strategic aims of the Department. Given the ambition and drive of the Department we are certain that this will grow to be a sustainable programme in its own right in time. Strategic alignment of research aims to provide some more focus will be useful in the mid-term.

We are sure that aspects such as the strong MBBS alumni network can be applied to PhD graduates in time. This would also apply to opportunities such as the biobank and expanded UNIC clinic. A careful evaluation of the capacity for a prospective cohort study is advisable, in line with health care needs or specific characteristics of the Cypriot

population. We would suggest that this would make a strong case for internal and government funding (please refer to the Departmental evaluation).

D. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Nick Cohen	
Reinold Gans	
Tea Lallukka	
Stephanos Hilides	Stephanos Hilides

Date: 28 June 2023