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Date: n

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**

University of Nicosia, Cyprus / University of Patras, Greece

- **Collaborative Institution(s):**

University of Nicosia/ University of Patras

- **Town:** Nicosia, Cyprus / Patras, Greece

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Medical School, University of Nicosia / School of Medicine, University of Patras

- **Department/ Sector:** Primary Care and Population Health, University of Nicosia / Department of Internal Medicine, University of Patras

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

In Greek:

Οικογενειακή Ιατρική (1,5 έτη, 90 ECTS, Μάστερ, Εξ αποστάσεως, Διαπανεπιστημιακό)

In English:

Family Medicine (1.5 years, 90 ECTS, Master of Science, E-learning, Joint programme)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme's status:** New programme of study:
☒
Expected to operate in the Winter / Spring semesters of the academic year 2024/25
- **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.

(extensive information accessible beforehand, well-organised site visit with enthusiastic faculty, reflect upon what this program is and what it isn't - relate this program to residency training, "filling a gap in clinical training")

The onsite evaluation for the proposed MSc in Family Medicine, a joint initiative between the University of Nicosia (UNIC) and the University of Patras (UP), was conducted as part of the external quality assurance process for accreditation. During the visit, the evaluation committee met with a broad range of stakeholders, including programme administrators, faculty members, current students, and quality assurance teams from both institutions.

The purpose of this visit was to examine the programme's alignment with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The committee reviewed various aspects of the programme, including the curriculum design, e-learning resources, student support services, faculty qualifications, and quality assurance mechanisms to assess their adequacy for a distance learning programme delivered in Greek.

Discussions with stakeholders provided valuable insights into the programme's structure, pedagogical approach, student experience, and the collaborative framework established between UNIC and UP. Given its focus on family medicine education for a Greek-speaking audience, this programme aims to provide healthcare professionals in Cyprus and Greece with accessible postgraduate training that is aligned with regional healthcare needs. The visit enabled the committee to evaluate both the strengths of the proposed programme and areas where enhancements could further align the initiative with national and international standards, ensuring its ongoing relevance and sustainability.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Professor David Weller	Professor of General Practice Programme Co-Director (Master of Family Medicine) Co-Head of Centre for Population Health Sciences	University of Edinburgh, Scotland
Professor Patrick Redmond	Professor of General Practice	RCSI University of Medicine & Health Sciences, Dublin, Ireland
Professor Roman Hari	Dean of Education, Medical Educator, General Practitioner	University of Bern, Switzerland
Professor Stefan Hrastinski	Professor, Digital Learning	KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden
Mr Pavlos Petrou	Student Representative	University of Cyprus

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

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

Findings

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

Strengths

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

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

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

Sub-areas

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

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

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

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

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

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

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

We found the programme met internationally-recognised standards for QA. We spoke to teachers, programme developers, administrative staff and senior faculty from the university and medical school. There is a strong culture of QA at both participating institutions – it draws extensively on EU and international QA guidance for higher education institutions. It is formally recognized, and is readily accessible for staff, students and external evaluators.

This programme is quite a complex undertaking – it involves two different universities, and it targets doctors working in a very broad range of clinical environments. We found that QA processes underpinned all key elements, including recruitment, feedback, teaching standards. Further, there is a clear understanding for teaching and administrative staff (and students) of relevant QA procedures and responsibilities.

While we didn't explicitly discuss academic freedom and integrity, we noted that the academic principles underpinning the course were evidence-based, and unconstrained by procedural regulations. There are strong mechanisms in place to guard against academic fraud. There is a similar culture of intolerance towards any form of discrimination, and there are sound mechanisms promoting equality and diversity. We found the university and the course organisers to be extremely internationally engaged, and keen to involve external stakeholders. We were given several examples of the programme and institution drawing from best international practice.

The design of the programme has been a rigorous process. We were impressed by the variety of stakeholders who had provided input to this process, including staff and students. It has been adapted, to a degree, from the existing English-language course, but has required considerable modification to adapt it to a different target group (including doctors across Greece) with different learning needs. We asked about how the course would foster professional development and opportunities, and expands students' knowledge base in primary care – we are confident it meets these aspirations. There is a huge amount of knowledge required to become a competent, holistic family medicine doctor, and no programme can cover every area – we were, however, impressed with the scope and depth of the course material. The programme is student-centred, and the developers and faculty have taken steps to ensure smooth student progression, with assignments and exams which match ECTS numbers and workload. It is clearly going through several institutional approval processes. Students will be made aware of the nature of the qualification they receive, and who it will be accredited with, compliance with NQFH. There was a strong sense of keeping abreast of the latest ideas and principles of primary care medical education, and embracing contemporary research outputs – this will be continually monitored – there are also plans to keep the programme under frequent review, from the perspective of a range of key stakeholders including students and accrediting institutions.

We were impressed by plans to make key aspects of the programme publicly available, through websites, information-provision events and use of the faculty's extensive networks in medicine, education and family medicine. There is an explicit intention to make information available, where possible, on all aspects of interest to students (including pass rates, graduate employment opportunities etc). We weren't however, presented with specific strategies, which are still under development

As the programme hasn't started yet there weren't specific data to present. But based on the existing programme we were impressed by the quality and rigour of the planned process for collecting and analysing this information. While we didn't hear a lot about career paths of graduates, we were told this is a high priority in shaping future programmes.

Strengths

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

We identified a number of considerable strengths – some of these are listed below:

- The developers had thought extensively about bilateral programmes; UNIC manages administrative supports, while both institutions collaborate in delivery and quality assurance
- Learning Outcomes: Aligned with RCGP and WONCA frameworks, updated regularly with literature
- Potential to expand asynchronous social learning activities (discussion boards, peer feedback) to support working HCPs
- Learning analytics was used to flag issues in courses, such as low participation, which were then discussed with mentors, faculty, or students
- Evaluation collected at the end of courses, used by the joint committee for programme improvements.
- Strong sense of learning and adaptation, based on evaluation

- The programme capitalises on its experience from the existing master's programme in English, which enables efficient organisation and high quality.
- We heard detailed accounts of the design and development of the programme, from a range of different stakeholders. There has been extensive consultation with faculty and administrative staff. We gained a strong sense of engagement and 'buy in' from relevant stakeholders
- There are excellent governance structures in place. The course developers have had the additional challenges of accommodating structures and processes from 2 different universities, but this hasn't posed significant challenges. There are excellent processes in place for key areas including registrations, students with special needs, registrations and conferring of degrees. There had been some discussion about whether to use a 'dual degree' or a 'joint/unified' degree. The course developers decided on the latter, as it was thought it would be a better fit for accreditation purposes - and it was in keeping with both of the universities' ambitions. Having two institutions has implications for QA, but representatives of both universities have worked hard to ensure their QA systems harmonise well
- We heard a lot, during our discussions, about 'feedback informed developments'. The course developers have embraced this concept, both in existing courses, and in the development of this new course

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 felt there may be potential to perform a more thorough market analysis of potential students (with a focus on social contract issues)
- Generalism: As the programme progresses, this could potentially be considered as a distinct curriculum topic to better align with a comprehensive care philosophy. We liked the secondary care input, but there's an obviously need to ensure that all faculty are viewing the course through a primary care lens, with its concepts of holistic care and co-ordinated care
- A clearer academic pathway may be of benefit highlighting, for example, opportunities to progress from the masters to PhD fellowships – this was also a wish of students we talked to
- Thinking about current Greek/Cyprus medical students: new graduates have more sophisticated concepts of patient-centredness (than, say, 10 years ago) which the programme should take account of
- What is the status of current residency programmes? Are there any plans to formalise their curriculum?
- The course organisers might want to place the course on the spectrum of master in primary care programmes internationally. Some teach, almost exclusively, more advanced topics such as quality of care, professionalism, health systems, chronic disease management (for example postgraduate.degrees.ed.ac.uk/?r=site/view&id=870). This programme clearly needs to focus on more basic clinical skills. What aspects of these might they include? (acknowledging that some are already included in elective offerings)
- **Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:**

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

- 2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
- 2.2 Practical training**
- 2.3 Student assessment**
- 2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities**

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

Standards

- *The e-learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.*
- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*
- *A specific plan is developed to safeguard and assess the interaction:*
 - *among students*
 - *between students and teaching staff*
 - *between students and study guides/material of study*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the students focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of e-learning delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the e-learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

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

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

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

2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

The committee has received detailed information and presentations regarding the Master's Programme in Family Medicine. A similar programme is currently offered in English, while the planned program will be offered in Greek. A variety of teaching approaches and technologies to be used in the courses were presented. Students are required to be working professionals with the opportunity to apply what they learn at their workplace. Students discuss their work experience and share videos of their consultations. Student assessment is mainly based on a final exam or assignment but also on participation in webinars, completion of interactive activities and coursework (assignments). A very detailed faculty manual and an example of a study guide were provided.

Strengths

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

The committee was impressed by the detailed description of the teaching and learning process and the variety of teaching approaches and technologies integrated into the programme. The current and previous students we spoke to were very positive about the programme. Student-centred teaching methods were also highlighted, including webinars, discussion boards and peer feedback. Student participation in research is a strength.

The programme provides practical training in different ways. Since the students are required to be working professionals they have the opportunity to apply what they learn at their workplace. Students also discuss their work experience and share videos of their consultations.

Student assessment incorporated formative and summative methods, primarily focusing on a final exam or assignment (60%). Additional components included participation in webinars, completion of interactive activities and coursework (assignments). Workplace Based Assessment used videos and reflective essays. Formative feedback was provided, with example submissions available.

The study guides are well-structured and include detailed descriptions of the course layout, content and interactive activities. A faculty manual had been prepared to support faculty in writing course outlines and study guides.

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 programme aims to recruit around 30 students, though it could still operate with as few as 15. Despite potential financial challenges with a smaller cohort, fewer students present valuable opportunities to develop more student-centred teaching and assessment methods. The synchronous webinars were well-received, although the number of sessions offered is limited due to students' commitments as working professionals. Faculty might consider incorporating more asynchronous social learning activities, such as discussion boards and formative peer feedback, allowing students to interact flexibly.

The fact that all students work with patients daily provides a valuable pool of experiences that could be leveraged more in teaching. Self-directed learning formats, such as regular small-group meetings in a peer-to-peer format, could be used to discuss everyday issues (both clinical and administrative aspects of practice). An appreciated feature that could be used more frequently is recorded videos of examinations. Since the number of students is quite small, more opportunities to share experiences in asynchronous discussions, such as discussion forums, could be considered. It is important to check whether the Moodle platform provides sufficient security to upload patient data (videos of personal consultations).

Regarding assessment the process for standardised assessment could be further elaborated, especially considering the heterogeneity of workplace environments.

Discussions arose regarding online student assessment and also the role of AI in evaluation. The university has a system in place for online proctored exams. We would also encourage the faculty to continue developing student-centred assessment methods. Faculty knowing students well—which is possible with a smaller student group, as in this case—can also help mitigate issues related to academic integrity. Introducing AI during some selected parts of the programme could be beneficial; for instance, encouraging students to use AI in support of their academic writing, with the expectation that they describe how they utilised AI technology. It is essential to clarify that students are personally responsible for the assignments they submit. In the future, graduates will likely use AI in their professional roles, and the programme could help prepare them for this emerging competency.

More detailed data on graduate outcomes from the existing English language programme would be helpful. Where are the graduates working? How has it contributed to their career progression? This could help shape the new curriculum as it evolves to meet student needs and priorities.

It could be further elaborated on how the expected learning outcomes align with Bloom's taxonomy. It would be good to see a stronger reference to Bloom's taxonomy in the programme development documents.

Patient centredness is referred to yet several resources related to communication. It might be worth considering a text with a stronger focus on patient centredness. We can recommend the following book: Stewart, M., Brown, J. B., Weston, W. W., Freeman, T., Ryan, B. L., McWilliam, C. L., & McWhinney, I. R. (2024). Patient-centred medicine: transforming the clinical method. CRC press. Given the nature of patient centred care: it would be good to emphasise/embed interprofessional and interdisciplinary concepts. We did get a strong sense that the programme wanted to graduate students with skills in working in multi-disciplinary primary care teams, but this could be emphasised more strongly in study materials.

Simulated patients are frequently referred to. It would be good to elaborate more on how this is standardised.

It would also be good to add an exemplar of a learning contract (referred to in the study guide) as an appendix to guide students and tutors to maintain a consistent approach. See <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK560864/>

The study guide also mentioned that students will be required to watch selected patient-centred video consultations, which highlight the clinical communication skills associated with each theme. Could the organisers provide more insight into the reasoning behind including this component? Will there be an accompanying analysis and critique of the videos?

Regarding the Essential Learning Outcome (ELO) to "name and describe the historical development of the medical session," could you clarify what this entails?

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant
2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	Compliant

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the teaching staff focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*
- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Is the teaching staff qualified to teach in the e-learning programme of study?*
- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

Findings

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

The teaching staff for the Master's Program in Family Medicine, a joint effort between the University of Nicosia and the University of Patras, is mainly recruited internally, supplemented by cross-institutional collaborations. Recruitment planning is thorough, addressing both immediate needs and long-term faculty development. Faculty development is an integral part of the institution's strategy, with regular training sessions and consultations in areas such as course design, online teaching, and interactive tools. All faculty members are required to complete a mandatory 36-hour teaching training, which includes interactive methodologies, distance learning, and formative and summative assessments, as part of continuous professional development.

At the University of Nicosia, teaching faculty are recruited both in the Department of Primary Care and Population Health (PCPH) as well as from the clinical staff of the University of Nicosia Medical Centers (UNMC). The majority of faculty members at the University of Patras are engaged in secondary care, although primary care teaching staff are expected to increase as the field develops in Patras.

Strengths

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

The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study. Based on faculty numbers and estimated student numbers for the first cohort (n=30), the ratio will be in the region of 1 faculty member to 1.1 students, which is an excellent ratio. Currently there is no visiting staff. The teaching staff of the Master's Programme in Family Medicine demonstrates a high level of commitment, both from the faculty and administrative staff. This dedication is reflected in the extensive faculty development programmes that are in place, particularly in the field of distance learning and e-learning technologies. Faculty members are required to complete a rigorous 36-hour training course that covers essential aspects of teaching and learning, including course design, online education tools, and assessment strategies. According to statements made on-site, around 80% of the active faculty have completed this programme, which represents a very high standard. This foundational training ensures that all educators are well-prepared for the challenges of modern teaching environments. Generic faculty development provided by UNIC is complemented by courses targeted to medical educators by the medical faculty.

Moreover, the programme benefits from significant cross-institutional collaboration. This collaboration facilitates the sharing of resources and expertise between the University of Nicosia and the University of Patras, ensuring that staff have access to a wide range of teaching tools and development opportunities, namingly the training provided by the The Distance Learning Unit at the University of Nicosia. The continuous training provided to the faculty helps ensure that they remain current with the latest educational technologies and methodologies. These ongoing development initiatives help to maintain a high standard of teaching, benefiting both faculty and students alike.

The programme benefits from the long-standing experience of the faculty in distance-based learning. While other universities are still lagging behind and were only forced to engage with distance learning methods due to the COVID pandemic, there seems to be a high level of competence and readiness among the faculty here.

It became clearly evident that teaching holds a high status at both universities. Both institutions conduct research on topics relevant to the programme, such as public health, chronic disease management, and epidemiology. While individual specialisations are meaningful, it should be ensured that as many members of the teaching staff as possible have personal research experience, at least in the past, and that as many researchers as possible are actively involved in teaching.

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.

Increase capacity building in primary care faculty: We noted the impressive representation from secondary care colleagues. Of course primary care is very non-disease specific; it features multi-morbidity, chronic disease management, dealing with an ageing population, increasing frailty, holistic care, continuity of care. The specialist colleagues present had a good grasp of these concepts (many had worked in primary care environments) but the concepts could be stated more explicitly, following a curricular framework for "generalism" (e.g. <https://sapc.ac.uk/sites/default/files/rcgp-curriculum-guidance-oct-2018.pdf>).

Strengthening the representation of primary care faculty as planned in Patras will strengthen not only the delivery of content but also the credibility and the impact of the faculty in the political process.

Improve access to training for hard-to-reach faculty: While training opportunities are ample, those who may benefit the most from one-on-one consultations may be the ones who are most difficult to reach. It is critical to ensure also reaching those faculty members in training programmes. After the initial mandatory training, additional sessions, possibly required, could be considered to maintain faculty development momentum and engagement.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
3	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.*

Regarding 4.1

The two universities set the following admission criteria for the programme:

- MD degree from a recognized institution
- Registered in the respective medical council
- Have access to patients during the enrolment in the programme
- Two reference letters:
 - From the academic institution attended
 - One academic and one professional reference
- Acquired Greek proficiency

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.

The programme's admission standards are clearly defined, transparent, and in line with the quality assurance frameworks of both the University of Nicosia (UNIC) and the University of Patras (UP). Key admission criteria include holding an MD degree from a recognised institution, registration with the respective medical council, and proficiency in Greek. Additionally, applicants must provide two reference letters (one academic and one professional) and demonstrate access to a patient base during enrolment.

Candidates are selected through an online interview, designed to assess clinical knowledge, commitment to primary care, and motivation for completing the programme. Admission policies are reviewed by the Programme Coordinating Unit and approved by the Senates of both universities, ensuring that they align with institutional standards. UNIC's established Admissions and Selection Policy will be extended to this joint programme, reinforcing consistency and transparency. The Admissions Panel, comprising academics from both institutions, oversees the selection process, ensuring fairness and adherence to predefined criteria.

The programme's clear communication of admission criteria, selection procedures, and guidance materials supports applicants in navigating the application process.

Student progression is supported by formalised monitoring processes, including assigned mentors for each student. Mentors conduct mandatory introductory meetings, with further sessions arranged as needed, providing students with tailored support throughout their studies. A team of academic mentors, course leads, and programme coordinators regularly reviews student performance and provides additional support for students encountering difficulties.

Moodle, the programme's learning management system, facilitates tracking of student progress, offering analytical tools to identify academic challenges early. Regular feedback from instructors and discussion forums within Moodle promote a supportive learning environment and enable proactive engagement in students' progress.

The programme follows established protocols for recognising prior learning and higher education qualifications, ensuring that credits earned at other institutions can be transferred to this programme. The transfer process is facilitated by the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and Diploma Supplement, with the programme's criteria aligned with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. UNIC and UP also collaborate with relevant quality assurance agencies and ENIC/NARIC centres to maintain consistent standards for qualification recognition across Cyprus and Greece.

The programme's strong ties with national and international associations, such as WONCA and ELEGEIA, further ensure that the recognition process is robust and aligned with professional and educational standards. Specifically, UNIC's E-learning unit was evaluated by QS Stars Label and awarded the EADTU E-xcellence Award and the EFQUEL Certification

Upon successful completion, students receive a joint MSc in Family Medicine from both institutions. Graduates are provided with a Diploma Supplement that details the qualification, learning outcomes, and contextual information, ensuring compatibility with European and international standards.

Strengths

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

The MSc in Family Medicine employs clear, consistent admission criteria across both institutions, ensuring a fair selection process. The programme's mentorship structure provides tailored support through assigned mentors, which students have found helpful. Collaboration with respected organisations like WONCA and ELEGEIA enhances the programme's credibility and aligns it with recognised standards in family medicine. Graduates receive a Diploma Supplement detailing their learning outcomes, which meets European standards and aids further study or career progression.

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.

To strengthen student support, the programme could establish regular, scheduled mentorship meetings each semester. This would provide structured guidance on academic progression, mental health, and time-management, especially important for students balancing clinical responsibilities. Clarifying the programme's connection to professional accreditation pathways in family medicine within Greece and Cyprus would enhance its relevance, providing clear value to students aiming to advance in these regions.

Offering micro-credentials for individual modules should also be evaluated as a potential enhancement, allowing professionals to engage with specific aspects of the programme without committing to the full course. This approach aligns with current trends in European higher education and could make the programme more accessible to a broader range of healthcare professionals.

Finally, the programme could benefit from developing a portfolio-based framework, allowing students to compile evidence of their learning and experiences, particularly in practical and reflective skills. Such portfolios could support submissions to Advance HE's fellowship scheme (see [Advance HE Fellowship](#)) or the Academy of Medical Educators' (AoME) accreditation scheme (see [AoME Accredited Courses](#)), enhancing the professional value of the MSc for students interested in careers in medical education or family medicine.

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

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

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

- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of e-learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

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

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

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

5.4 Student support

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*

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

Findings

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

The proposed MSc in Family Medicine, developed as a collaboration between the University of Nicosia (UNIC) and the University of Patras (UP), builds on UNIC's existing English-language distance learning programme. Delivered in Greek, it aims to broaden access to family medicine education for healthcare professionals in Cyprus and Greece, particularly in underserved and rural areas.

The programme aligns with Standard 5.1 by incorporating weekly interactive activities, problem-solving scenarios, and clinical simulations designed for real-world decision-making and reflective practice. These resources are managed by a dedicated pedagogical planning unit to ensure adherence to international e-learning standards while adapting materials for a Greek-speaking audience.

Physical resources (Standard 5.2) are met through a robust online infrastructure. UNIC provides virtual access to library resources, IT support, and an organised virtual learning environment. This structure ensures that students have the necessary academic and administrative support despite the programme's fully online nature.

Human support resources (Standard 5.3) include a structured mentoring and tutoring system, where each student is assigned a personal mentor for the duration of their studies. Administrative staff at UNIC are cross-trained, ensuring continuity in student support, especially important in a distance learning environment.

Finally, student support services (Standard 5.4) are designed to accommodate diverse needs, including those of part-time and international students. A learning analytics system facilitates early identification of students who may need additional support, allowing for timely interventions to aid engagement and retention.

Strengths

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

The MSc in Family Medicine is well-designed to provide a high-quality distance learning experience, building on the established success of UNIC's English-language programme. This Greek-language

adaptation enables accessible education for healthcare professionals in Cyprus and Greece, supporting local and regional healthcare needs.

A key strength is the pedagogical planning unit, which oversees the development of high-quality e-learning resources, such as interactive simulations and problem-solving activities. These tools enable practical, skills-based learning that aligns with international standards for family medicine education.

The support framework is another asset, providing students with personal mentors and access to cross-trained administrative staff. This system ensures that students receive personalised support, which is critical in an online environment.

Further, student support services are responsive to the demands of a part-time, distance-learning audience. Learning analytics allow for early interventions, while remote access to comprehensive library resources and IT support ensures that all students, regardless of location, have the tools needed for successful study.

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.

While the MSc in Family Medicine is well-structured to deliver quality distance learning, there are several areas that could be strengthened to enhance regional relevance, improve support mechanisms, and ensure sustainability.

Firstly, although the programme effectively adapts UNIC's existing English-language model, it could better address the specific healthcare needs of Greece and Cyprus. Integrating regionally focused content, such as rural healthcare delivery, would allow the curriculum to align more closely with the realities of family medicine in these areas. Additionally, including "generalism" as a standalone topic within the curriculum could reinforce the holistic care approach that is foundational to family medicine. Incorporating optional modules or case-based studies on quality improvement initiatives would also provide students with practical tools for driving change in their local contexts.

The mentorship framework, while well-structured, could adopt a more proactive approach to better support working professionals. At present, mentors are available as needed, but establishing regular check-ins each semester would ensure consistent engagement and provide ongoing guidance, particularly useful for students balancing clinical and academic responsibilities.

The resources and IT infrastructure provided by UNIC are robust, yet it will be important to regularly evaluate their adequacy over time, particularly as student enrolment fluctuates. As the programme grows, expanded technical support during peak periods would help mitigate potential disruptions and ensure students have uninterrupted access to resources.

Finally, offering optional in-person events, such as a short summer school, could add significant value by enabling hands-on learning opportunities and facilitating peer connections. This blended approach would offer the flexibility of distance learning while creating space for meaningful face-to-face interactions, a balanced approach that could strengthen engagement for regional students.

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

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

6. Eligibility (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

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

6.1 Legal framework and cooperation agreement

Standards

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

6.2 The joint programme

Standards

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

6.3 Added value of the joint programme

Standards

The joint programme leads to the following added values:

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

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

The MSc in Family Medicine is a collaborative programme jointly offered by the University of Nicosia (UNIC) and the University of Patras (UP). It is designed to meet the legal and quality assurance frameworks of both Cyprus and Greece, ensuring compliance with national higher education regulations and European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). The cooperation agreement between the institutions defines clear terms regarding the management and delivery of the programme, addressing essential aspects such as degree denomination, admission criteria, assessment methods, and degree-awarding procedures. The quality assurance processes are collaboratively managed and will be jointly implemented by both institutions. Regular joint reviews and shared quality assurance responsibilities ensure that programme standards will be met.

Strengths

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

The two institutions bring complementary expertise to the table, including access to different populations of potential candidates.

The two institutions share core values and have common ideas in medical education. The cooperation profits from the shared cultural and linguistic background of both institutions, which fosters collaboration and enhances the learning experience for students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

The long-term viability of the joint arrangement between the two institutions should be regularly assessed. It is important to establish mechanisms that ensure sustained collaboration, addressing potential challenges such as diverging priorities between the institutions in the future. Proactive measures, such as shared strategic goals and regular joint evaluations, could help maintain alignment and strengthen the partnership over time.

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

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

D. Conclusions and final remarks

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

This evaluation has highlighted the strengths of the new MSc in Family Medicine, a thoughtfully developed programme by the University of Nicosia (UNIC) and the University of Patras (UP). Designed to address a clear gap in postgraduate family medicine education in Greece and Cyprus, the programme targets medical graduates who may currently be engaged in residency but lack a structured, formal educational framework. Through accessible online delivery, it enables students to develop essential family medicine skills—including holistic care, chronic disease management, and continuity of care—without disrupting their clinical roles.

In establishing this joint venture, UNIC and UP have effectively combined their expertise and resources, positioning the programme to serve the needs of regional healthcare systems. This partnership not only broadens access to family medicine training but also supports the development of leadership and academic skills, encouraging students to consider roles that combine clinical practice with teaching, research or management.

The committee were particularly impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment across both institutions - from senior leadership to teaching and administrative staff. This dedication is driven by clear, shared goals: to train family doctors equipped not only with clinical competencies but also with a profound understanding of the communities they serve. This approach aligns with the programme's vision of embedding primary care at the core of healthcare systems in Greece and Cyprus, ultimately aiming to improve health outcomes through locally focused, compassionate care. Graduates of this programme will be well-positioned to champion wellness and preventive care across the region, fostering stronger, community-centred healthcare.

While the programme has a promising foundation, there are a few areas for ongoing attention to ensure its continued relevance and sustainability. One key consideration is the need for UNIC and UP to maintain strong alignment in their partnership, as differing priorities or shifting institutional objectives could impact the programme's direction. Establishing shared strategic goals and conducting regular joint evaluations will help to address potential challenges and ensure the collaboration remains productive and mutually beneficial.

Additionally, the programme will need to consider recruitment strategies carefully, especially in the context of an evolving healthcare landscape where more holistic training is becoming integrated at the undergraduate level. As the skills and expectations of medical graduates evolve, the programme's appeal will depend on offering distinctive, relevant learning outcomes that meet the needs of healthcare professionals. To maintain its competitive edge, the curriculum will require periodic updates, particularly as advancements in primary care training and policy shifts may influence what postgraduate learners seek in family medicine education.

In a competitive international market for family medicine master's programmes, each with distinct focuses—ranging from clinical skills to advanced topics like leadership and healthcare management—the programme directors should also periodically assess the unique offerings of this MSc. The distance learning environment is also dynamic, and it will be vital to embrace new developments, such as the use of AI in virtual patient discussions. Issues such as capacity and succession planning will be important as the programme evolves - ensuring that the current highly-skilled faculty and support team is maintained.

We found it stimulating to see a new programme embracing international best practice in masters-level course development - and including critical elements of Family Medicine training. We extend our best wishes to all involved and look forward to observing the programme's impact and evolution.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Professor David Weller	
Professor Patrick Redmond	
Professor Roman Hari	
Professor Stefan Hrastinski	
Mr Pavlos Petrou	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 05.11.2024