

Doc. 300.2.2

# Institution Response (Institutional Evaluation)

Date: 12/7/2022

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY CYPRUS
- **Town:**  
NICOSIA, CYPRUS
- **Institution Status:** Currently Operating



**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].**



**The Department of Dentistry, School of Medicine of the European University Cyprus wishes to express its sincere gratitude to the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for the evaluation of the Department of Dentistry.**

**It is with great pleasure that the Department of Dentistry and the School of Medicine noted the positive feedback of the EEC and we appreciate its insightful recommendations, which provided us the opportunity to further improve the quality and implementation of the programme. In the following pages, we respond in detail to all recommendations for improvement suggested by the EEC and we provide all relevant information to explain the actions taken to ensure that the newly accredited programme is of high quality.**

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

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.2.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the Institution in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, in the section building facilities, student welfare services, infrastructure, the HEI must respond on the comments and scoring of the EEC.*
- *Under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*
  - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
  - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*
  - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.2.1).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*



## **BUILDING FACILITIES - STUDENT WELFARE SERVICES - INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **1. Building facilities**

#### **1.1 Plans and licenses**

[Click here to add text.](#)

**No recommendations were provided by EEC**

#### **1.2 Other facilities**

[Click here to add text.](#)

**No recommendations were provided by EEC**

### **2. Student welfare services**

[Click here to add text.](#)

**No recommendations were provided by EEC**

### **3. Infrastructure**

[Click here to add text.](#)

**No recommendations were provided by EEC**



## 1. Institution's Academic Profile and Orientation

### Sub-Areas

- 1.1 Mission and strategic planning
- 1.2 Connecting with society
- 1.3 Development processes

[Click here to add text.](#)

**No recommendations were provided by EEC**

## 2. Quality Assurance

### Sub-Areas

#### **2.1 System and quality assurance strategy**

#### **2.2 Ensuring quality for the programmes of study**

[Click here to add text.](#)

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

Greater involvement of external stakeholders in curriculum design would be helpful. For example, the use of external examiners, would offer annual opportunity for development rather than the five-year review, or a mid-term review with external

### **Response of the Department of Dentistry**

Thank you very much for your positive comments. The Department of Dentistry has a well-defined program management system, which under the leadership of the Chairperson have the responsibility and authority for planning, implementing, and monitoring the curriculum, to ensure that intended educational outcomes are reached.

A vital element of the program management, in addition to the Chairperson, is the Curriculum/Program Committee which works under the direction of the Chairperson. Collectively the aim is to monitor, review, and revise the undergraduate dental education curriculum of the Department of Dentistry to ensure continuous quality improvement toward meeting all competencies required of the contemporary dentist. The Curriculum Committee receives formal and informal feedback from students, as well as input by course coordinators to ascertain that the curriculum runs to the highest possible standards. To this effect, when data point towards immediate and long-term decisions for curriculum improvement, the Chairperson is informed as to whether an urgent change should be made in the curriculum or the curriculum delivery. These minor changes do not need to undergo the formal procedure of a major curriculum reform. In case of a long-term change in the existing curriculum the committee advises the Department Council of all necessary changes and the Department undergoes the Program Evaluation Review (PER) procedure periodically.

The Curriculum Committee uses several instruments to monitor and improve the curriculum. Those include: student evaluation forms, qualitative data compiled by a convenience student sample, interviewed periodically, reports from the course coordinators, advice from the Advisory Board, and feedback from professional bodies, along with input from the various management committees. These reports help the Curriculum Committee determine whether the most appropriate teaching methods and assessments are applied for each course, and by using the expertise of the various stakeholders, is able to incorporate changes and or innovations in the curriculum. These are submitted to the University Senate and are reviewed by the National Agency for formal approval.



The Bachelor of Dental Surgery Program was reviewed and approved by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education in July 2017 and by the Dental Council of the Ministry of Health in June 2018.

Following the EEC recommendation, the Department of Dentistry will invite, in addition to Advisory Board, external examiners once a year at the end of Spring Semester to assess all aspects of the Bachelor of Dental Surgery Program.

The first external stakeholders will be invited for the Spring 2023 semester and will be selected among the following:

- Cyprus Dental Association
- Dental Council of the Ministry of Health
- Graduates of the Department of Dentistry, School of Medicine, European University Cyprus

### 3. Administration

[Click here to add text.](#)

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

Monitor needs for changing administrative support as the Dental School and University develops.

#### Response of the Department of Dentistry

We appreciate the EEC's acknowledgements of our administrative structure and function. Our administrative staff is fully engaged in the Department's activities and facilitates the smooth function of the Department. We take great pride in our Administrative and Technical staff, who are not only very well educated and trained, but strive for personal improvement. The entire support staff has been proven wholeheartedly supportive to all changes that have taken place over the last years, and more importantly have proven pivotal for these changes to take place. The Chairperson have always taken into serious consideration the suggestions from both Administrative and Technical Staff, and has always worked closely with staff. We work very closely with our technical and administrative staff and informally consult with them on a wide range of issue.

The Department of Dentistry has the administrative and professional staff that supports the full implementation of the activities and educational program & ensures good management & resource deployment.

The *School Administrator* manages the academic and administrative operations of the School and serves as the liaison between the School and other departments across the University (academic or administrative) for determining university-wide policy, procedures, and services. Among the various duties, the Administrator prepares School/Department documents; attends council meetings, keeps minutes and follows up with appropriate individuals to ensure agreed upon action is taken; prepares and forwards to the Senate, via the Rector's Office, all relevant documentation, liaises with other institutions, external agencies and government departments, administers procedures in relation to Faculty promotion and hiring (sets up meetings, circulates relevant documentation and keeps minutes), etc.

The *Secretary* of the Department of Dentistry is not a conventional secretary in any other School or Department. The Secretary in the Department of Dentistry is in effect the "*Secretariat of the Department*". Among various activities, the Department Secretary provides daily assistance to students and handles possible grievances and acts as liaison between students, teaching personnel, the Administration and the Chair; processes, proofreads and archives course outlines, and final examinations, prepares cancellation notes, e-mail correspondence, student notifications for cancellations and rescheduling of classes, preparation notes for rescheduled classes and has the responsibility of drafting the class cancellation report every month, processes final grades, etc.

The *Head Technician Administrator* schedules and monitors the activities of the laboratory facilitators, preclinical lab technicians, simulator technicians, nursing personnel and any other individuals involved in student practical training activities. The Head Technician is responsible

for ensuring adequate training of all technical personnel and maintenance of safety regulations within all practical training facilities.

*Procurement Officer* is responsible for the budget required for technical equipment and supplies, as well as computers for scheduling of labs, including instructor assignments of lab space.

*Technicians* serve critical role in allowing student laboratory training to operate accordingly. In addition to lab set-up, take-down, student monitoring, and other student training related activities, wet lab technicians are skilled in various methodologies to assist in Faculty and student research endeavors.

*IT technicians* maintain and support audiovisual and technological functions throughout the EUCMS.

The program expands in accordance with the increase of students, instructors, and faculty members. The Department of Dentistry does intend to increase its faculty, support staff, administrative support and resources, and by doing so, scale up its teaching efficiency. In addition, European University Cyprus has started building new facilities in contact to the old building and, thus, increase its resources to further accommodate clinical training of students. In the new 5-floor building, three floors will be dedicated to the School of Dentistry for the expansion of simulation laboratories and the dental clinic. The surface area of each floor will be approximately 900 square meters.

## 4. Learning and Teaching

### Sub-Areas

#### **4.1 Planning the programmes of study**

#### **4.2 Organisation of teaching**

[Click here to add text.](#)

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

We noted that undergraduate dental students assisted each other in clinics, which seems to be acceptable both to staff and students. However, in very many European countries, the traditional model would be the students to be assisted by a dental nurse/assistant. We presume that local graduate dentists will work with such an assistant in general dental practice. In addition, many international graduates will definitely be working with a dental assistant. We recommend that consideration be given therefore for dental nurses to be employed, so that students can gain the necessary teamwork experience.

Representatives of the students expressed that they preferred more short lecture sessions and more small group seminar workshops and lab hours.

We recommend considering peer teaching and support across the curriculum.

The growth of student numbers in the following years must be addressed by expanding the number of facilities and recruiting more patients.

### **Response of the Department of Dentistry**

The Dental Clinic of the Department of Dentistry started operating in November 2020. Starting with a low patient flow, it increased rapidly and in July 2022 eighty-nine students performed various dental procedures on more than 2500 patients. Students offer comprehensive dental care to each patient, and the graduating students have been able to complete, in several disciplines, more dental procedures than the minimum number described in the logbook “Clinical Training Requirements”.

The Clinical Training Committee monitors the needs for specific dental procedures of each student and appropriate patients are allocated to the respective students. The Clinical Training Committee also reviews the needs of the patients whose treatment could not be completed by students who graduate, and transfer these patients to junior students considering the type of dental procedures needed by the next student.

Finally, a Memorandum of Understanding is being signed with the Ministry of Health on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 2022. According to this Memorandum, the EUC Dental Clinic will provide dental care to patients registered in the waiting lists of the Public Dental Services of the Ministry of Health. Comprehensive dental care to these patients will be provided by the EUC Dental Clinic under the same financial conditions as in the Public Dental Services.



The European University Cyprus has started building new facilities in contact to the old building and, thus, increase its resources to further accommodate clinical training of students. In the new 5-floor building, three floors will be dedicated to the Department of Dentistry for the expansion of simulation laboratories and the dental clinic. The surface area of each floor will be approximately 900 square meters. In the new premises, the students will be assisted by nurses and thus gain the necessary teamwork experience.

## 5. Teaching Staff

Click here to add text.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

We understand that there may not be a system in place for external examiners and would recommend this.

### **Response of the Department of Dentistry**

Following the EEC recommendation, the Department of Dentistry will invite external examiners once a year at the end of Spring Semester to assess all the criteria and assessment methods of the Bachelor of Dental Surgery Program. The first external examiners will be invited for the Spring 2023 semester and will be selected among the following:

- School of Dentistry, University of Zurich
- School of Dentistry, University of Manchester
- School of Dentistry, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
- School of Dentistry, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

## 6. Research

Click here to add text.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

A research strategy should be developed, so there are clearly focused areas of research that will show impact, in addition to high quality publications. This will enable the building of research reputation and international recognition for the new school.

We also recommend the appointment of high-profile experienced researchers to lead research teams. This will lead to the opportunity to attract PhD students.

### **Response of the Department of Dentistry**

We agree with the EEC that after our initial focus on establishing our educational program, research has now become a primary focus for our development. As such, one of the primary pillars in our Strategic Plan focuses on Research. Noteworthy, across the 5 years of the Department's existence there has been a notable increase in the number of PubMed publications by the Faculty. In addition, we have had the opportunity to recruit Faculty with both educational and research experience from other Dental Schools, including the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, University of Kentucky, etc.

In order to enhance opportunities for research among both Faculty and students, and to incorporate components of research and scientific methodology in dental sciences throughout the 5-year BDS program, the Department of Dentistry has implemented the following changes:

- Research is a distinct pillar in the Department's Development Strategy Plan
- The Department has refocused its strategy in staff recruitment plan to attract expert personnel in research
- We offer courses in Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Research Methodology and Critical Appraisal of the Literature
- Dedicated seminars for review of the literature, and presentation of research proposals prepared by students
- University-wide research incentives, e.g. through teaching hour reduction (THR), is utilized by the academic staff of the Department
- In the MoU that will be signed between the Ministry of Health and the European University Cyprus, there is provision for the participation of our students in preventive programs of the Ministry of Health

According to the EEC's recommendation the Department Council of Dentistry and the Council of the School of Medicine proposed, and the Senate of the European University Cyprus approved the employment as Adjunct Professor Dr. Andreas Stavropoulos, Professor of Periodontology, School of Dentistry, University of Malmö, Sweden. Professor Stavropoulos will be employed in September 2022.

## 7. Resources

[Click here to add text.](#)

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

Three-dimensional image techniques (particularly CBCT) should be provided.

It is unclear to the EEC how many patients are treated by year, so it is hard to evaluate whether the number and type of clinical treatments will be enough to meet student and patient needs.

### **Response of the Department of Dentistry**

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The Clinical Training Committee monitors the needs for specific dental procedures of each student and appropriate patients are allocated to the respective students. The Clinical Training Committee also reviews the needs of the patients whose treatment could not be completed by students who graduate, and transfer these patients to junior students considering the type of dental procedures needed by the next student.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the BDS Program, we offer the course External Rotations, and the students visit Hospital Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Clinics where they observe various surgical procedures. In the Dental Clinic, the students are exposed to minor surgical procedures, but they do not perform implant surgery although they are taught during the Oral Surgery, Periodontology and Prosthodontics courses. This is due to the lack of the appropriate facilities for the implementation of such surgical procedures.

Finally, a Memorandum of Understanding is being signed with the Ministry of Health on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 2022. According to this Memorandum, the EUC Dental Clinic will provide dental care to patients registered in the waiting lists of the Public Dental Services of the Ministry of Health. Comprehensive dental care to these patients will be provided by the EUC Dental Clinic under the same financial conditions as in the Public Dental Services.

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During the Dental Radiology course, the students are taught the three-dimensional image techniques including CBCT, and the Dental Radiology Unit is equipped with an apparatus that is both for panoramic and three-dimensional images (CBCT).



## B. Conclusions and Final Remarks

[Click here to add text.](#)

The Dean and the Chairperson as well as the faculty, staff and students found the EEC's candid discussions a constructive learning process. We all believe that this review was a positive experience and feel that we were provided with important input on how to move effectively forward. All of our staff members were enthusiastic about participating in the review process. The Department thoroughly reviewed the findings, strengths and areas of improvement clearly indicated by the EEC following their review. We have attempted to respond to each item specifically and succinctly, indicating our actions. By embracing the EEC's comments and suggestions, we are convinced that our Department will be able to more effectively advance its program, ensure the learning outcomes of its students, and the well-being of the Dental Department community. The Department of Dentistry leadership has imbued the need for excellence in the Department, recognizing that this is achieved not by a momentarily action, but rather, by habit. More importantly, the excellence that all members of the Department have strived to obtain in the program and School is dependent upon accepting critical evaluation of our performance and acknowledging areas that need improvement. In this regard, we are grateful to the EEC for their candid discussions regarding our program, and the insightful comments and suggestions throughout their report.



### C. Higher Education Institution Academic Representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
<b>Professor Athanasios E. Athanasiou</b>	Executive Dean, Department of Dentistry	
<b>Professor George Palaghias</b>	Chairperson of the Department	

**Date:** 12/7/2022

