

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 02-04-2021

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
KES College
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **Programme of study
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Βοηθοί (Τεχνικοί) Φαρμακείου (2 Έτη/120 ECTS,
Δίπλωμα)

In English:

Pharmacy Assistant (Technician) (2 Έτη/120 ECTS,
Diploma)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **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 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

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.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, 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 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.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

A. Extracts from the EEC Report.

Findings of the EEC

- 1.1 *“The proposed Pharmacy Assistant (Technician) programme at KES College is an already running 2-year full-time study, 120 ECTS, Diploma programme that has been designed to cover a specific need, i.e. to provide the private and hospital pharmacies, as well as pharmaceutical companies and health care providers, with well-trained Pharmacy Assistants/Technicians. The purpose, structure, objectives, and learning outcomes of the programme were comprehensively presented, and its structure and content were found to be well-aligned with the intended objectives, with the exception of one case where the title of one course (“Specialized Pharmacology: Formulation”) is not well-aligned with the course content. It was convincingly presented that KES College has the necessary facilities to continue the effective implementation of this programme. Although all courses at KES College are currently delivered online, due the COVID-19 pandemic situation, the laboratory exercises do take place at the College facilities in accordance to state-imposed health protocols and safety measures”.*

Areas of improvement and recommendations, which need response by KES College

- 1.2 *“The EEC noted that the CVs of the teaching staff included in the application were not fully updated, and included titles that do not really exist, e.g. cPhD (candidate PhD) can be easily confused with someone who already holds a PhD title”.*
- 1.3 *“The title of the course “Specialized Pharmacology: Formulation” should be revised (in both English and Greek) to better align with the course content. A potential title could be “Specialized Pharmacology: Formulary” («Ειδικά Μαθήματα Φαρμακολογίας – Φαρμακευτικά Προϊόντα»).*

B. Actions taken by KES College on Study programme and study programme's design and development:

- 1.1 The course title “Specialized Pharmacology: Formulation” (Ειδικά Μαθήματα Φαρμακολογίας – Σκευασματολογία”) has been revised to “Specialized Pharmacology - Formulary” (Ειδικά Μαθήματα Φαρμακολογίας - Φαρμακευτικά Προϊόντα”) as indicated by the EEC. The revised course was given a new code: PHARM309. Please find the corresponding corrections highlighted in Table 2, in Annex 1 and in the course syllabi, in Annex 2.
- 1.2 Although, the intentions behind the statement “cPhD” included the practical use of an abbreviation instead of using the whole phrase: “PhD candidate”, the statement has been removed in order to avoid any inconvenience. Please find the corresponding corrections in the teaching staff qualifications, highlighted in Table 3, Annex 3.
- 1.3 Please see our response in paragraph 1.1 above, Actions taken by KES College.

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment

(ESG 1.3)

A. Extracts from the EEC Report.

Findings of the EEC

“KES College has all the available resources and has made a successful transition to web-based teaching.

2.1 *The assessment processes are sufficiently described although some more details on the examination format should be included in the syllabus of each course (this information was presented during the web-based site-visit but was not included in the submitted documents.)”.*

Areas of improvement and recommendations, which need response by KES College

2.2 *“The IT department of KES College comprises one staff member (although some aspects of IT support are outsourced), which generates a high risk for potential disruptions in academic activities given their dependency on IT systems. The EEC advises that the College should either recruit an additional IT staff member or devise a detailed risk mitigation plan that covers issues of IT support in cases of emergency”.*

2.3 *“The assessment processes are sufficiently described although some more details on the examination format should be included in the syllabus of each course”.*

B. Actions taken by KES College on Student – centred learning and assessment:

2.1 After receiving some clarification on the above from the ECC through CYQAA we can declare that the examination format is clearly communicated by the College to teachers and students before each examination period.

2.2 KES College is very much aware about the risks lurking from the IT system disruptions in interrupting academic activities, especially the current pandemic period. The IT staff member is fully alert securing the IT infrastructure during work-hours and via distance-remoting. Indeed, an outsourcing company has been recruited to support in case of emergency. After the EEC’s recommendations we proceeded in extending the outsourcing company’s responsibilities to fully support the academic procedures during online courses.

2.3 Please see our response in paragraph 2.1 above, Actions taken by KES College.

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

A. Extracts from the EEC Report.

Findings of the EEC

“The teaching staff is overall qualified to support the educational objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme”.

3.1 *“However, limited information was presented on teaching staff recruitment processes”.*

“The EEC received documents that highlighted the process for the evaluation of the academic programme by the students and teaching staff and include samples from past student evaluations. Overall, the quality assurance and the internal monitoring processes were presented with sufficient clarity, both in the provided documents and during the virtual on-site visit”.

Areas of improvement and recommendations, which need response by KES College

3.2 *“Information on the teaching staff recruitment criteria and processes to ensure that academic qualifications and teaching experience are adequate to achieve the learning objectives and outcomes were not fully clear”.*

B. Actions taken by KES College on Teaching Staff:

3.1 KES College has a standard and well-established recruitment and selection process for the academic staff. This structured recruitment and selection procedure is in place for attracting and hiring the best qualified candidates. Every recruitment position is posted on a variety of recruiting sources, both internally and externally, to attract the most qualified candidates to join the academic staff team. For each recruitment position an Evaluation Committee is formed consisted of the Academic Director, the corresponding Head of the particular Programme of Studies, the Educational Officer and the HR Manager.

The presence of the Head of the particular Programme of Studies secures that the potential candidates and their academic qualifications are strongly related with the learning objectives of each course. The candidates are short-listed based on their academic qualifications, teaching skills, research activities and experience and the description of the vacancy.

During the selection procedure the candidates are asked to present one topic of the subject that they will teach. During this process, each candidate is evaluated by the assigned Committee upon his teaching ability, contagiousness, the fluency of speech and the immediacy of teaching.

Especially for Programmes leading to bachelor degrees the possession of a PhD Degree, teaching experience and the involvement in research are considered as essential. The exception would be where someone has strong professional expertise for a professional course, where some staff might be recruited without a PhD but with a master’s degree and an extensive professional

expertise/expertise. These staff would also need some teaching education, provided by the Educational officer.

The new teaching staff attends the Induction Day, which secures the academic teaching quality. The training covers several topics, such as standard student-centered teaching techniques, digital teaching techniques, how to deal with students with special learning difficulties, as well as lesson plan designing. During the Induction Day, the Educational Officer emphasizes in the training of the teaching staff with limited teaching experience - but strong industrial experience. The Educational Officer further provides constructive remarks during the semesters, via the Courses Observation procedure, pointing out areas of improvement of teaching.

Furthermore, a new teaching staff evaluation system has been established in the academic year 2019 – 2020 and it is being used since then. Among the evaluation criteria are the teaching quality parameters and the degree of engagement in research activities during the last three years.

3.2 Please see our response in paragraph 3.1 above, Actions taken by KES College.

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

(ESG 1.4)

A. Extracts from the EEC Report.

Findings of the EEC

“The admission requirements for students are both clearly defined and appropriate. Additionally, the processes for student transfers, and course recognition are realistically presented.

Appropriate processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression are in place”.

Areas of improvement and recommendations, which need response by KES College

“No major areas for improvement were identified”.

5. Learning resources and student support

(ESG 1.6)

A. Extracts from the EEC Report.

Findings of the EEC

“KES College has appropriate physical facilities for the implementation of the academic aspects of this programme. Additionally, an adequate e-learning environment is available, which is particularly relevant in the current situation where the COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated the use of web-based learning approaches through e-learning tools.

Teaching classrooms and other on-site facilities, as well as online resources are of good standard. Resources and bibliography (recommended textbooks) have been provided in all course syllabi. The course material is easily accessible to students through e-Learning platforms (e.g. Moodle, e-library).

On-site and remote-based (telephone and online) support for students is available through the Student Welfare Centre.

Moreover, interviewed students and alumni of KES College expressed their satisfaction with the overall guidance provided to them from teaching and administrative staff”.

Areas of improvement and recommendations, which need response by KES College

5.1 *“The College seems to be conscious of the need for student support in relation to mental health and students with learning difficulties, but there is no system in place to explicitly support these students”.*

B. Actions taken by KES College on Learning resources and student support:

5.1 KES College has recently (March 2021) recruited Ms. Demetra Mavrou, who is a passionate, skilled and well-motivated registered clinical psychologist with in depth knowledge in therapy and research methods. Ms. Mavrou has a diverse experience in dealing with mental health conditions in a variety of clinical settings. She is an expert in variety of difficulties; such as bereavement, trauma, abuse, anxiety and stress, depressive and personality disorders, as well as in adolescents’ and adults’ mental health issues.

Thus, Ms. Mavrou will be exploited in the support of the students, acting as a consultant through the procedural follow-up of cases with learning disabilities, in collaboration with the Educational Officer. Program Coordinator, in contact with the teaching staff, provides reasonable adjustments to coursework and examinations for students with learning or mental health difficulties. The Educational Officer, Dr. Elena Anastasiou holds a MA in Special Educational Needs and a PhD in Education, qualifications that provide her the ability to support students with specific learning difficulties and dyslexia in accordance to her educational background and experience in working with these students.

The Mental Health Student Support comprises by the Program Coordinator, the Tutors, the Student Affairs and Welfare Services and the Clinical Psychologist. Poor mental health has been associated with poorer academic outcomes and students which cannot manage stress and pressure, are unable to perform given tasks productively. In the first instance, responsible for noticing mental health issues among the students is the Program Coordinator or Tutors. Any member of staff should therefore liaise with the Program Coordinator if they have



concerns about a student, subject to the requirements of confidentiality. Good communication between teaching staff and students is particularly important. When new cases of poor academic outcome and mental health issues arise the Program Coordinator or Tutor will discuss the issues with the student and inform the Student Affairs and Welfare Services in which students are encouraged to refer themselves. However, more serious emotional and psychological problems require professional intervention by the assigned Clinical Psychologist, Ms. Mavrou. Information about the support available to students with mental health difficulties will be given upon the Orientation Day of the beginning of the 1st Semester and during private appointments of the students with the Program Coordinator or Tutor.



6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Findings

N/A

Areas of improvement and recommendations

N/A



7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

Findings

N/A

Areas of improvement and recommendations

N/A

B. Conclusions and final remarks

“The EEC examined thoroughly the programme specifications and structures, the relative documents, the facilities, and had extensive web-based discussions with the administration, teaching staff, students, alumni and support personnel.

The EEC recognizes the usefulness of the Programme and its positive effects on significant aspects of health services and on the employability of its graduates. The presentation of the programme was well-thought and appropriately structured. It highlighted all relevant aspects of the programme delivery, including available human resources (teaching staff and administrative and support personnel) and Institutional infrastructure, which are overall appropriate.

Since this 2-year/120 ECTS/Bachelor study programme entitled "Pharmacy Assistant (Technician)" meets the academic criteria necessary for a programme of the Diploma level, it is proposed that it should be accredited subject to a few minor adjustments”.

These adjustments that need to be made are:

- 8.1 *“Revision of the title of the course "Specialized Pharmacology: Formulation", in both English and Greek, to better align with the course content, e.g. "Specialized Pharmacology: Formulary" and the Greek title being "Ειδικά Μαθήματα Φαρμακολογίας – Φαρμακευτικά Προϊόντα”.*
- 8.2 *“A recommended process to deal with students with learning difficulties and mental health issues”.*
- 8.3 *“Due to the increased use of web-based and e-learning teaching processes, it would be advisable to expand IT staff of the Institution or provide an appropriate risk mitigation plan”.*

B. Actions taken by KES College

We have studied the EEC report very carefully and we have decided to make all the necessary steps to address the areas of improvements identified by the EEC:

- 8.1 We have revised the title of the course “Specialized Pharmacology: Formulary” to the new title “PHRM309 Specialized Pharmacology – Formulary”, in both English and Greek, exactly as the EEC recommended, please see our response in paragraph 1.1 above, Actions taken by KES College..
- 8.2 We recruited a Clinical Psychologist to join the Mental Health Student Support (with the Program Coordinator and the Student Affairs and Welfare Services) to establish a detailed process where students will meet support, consultation and actual help when dealing with minor problems like anxiety and stress to more important and serious mental health issues, please see our response in paragraph 5.1 above, Actions taken by KES College.



- 8.3 The outsourcing company's responsibilities on IT have been extended to provide a more consistent and daily support during online courses in order to secure the seamless academic activities, please see our response in paragraph 2.2 above, Actions taken by KES College.



C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Petros Th. Stylianou	Director	
Demetrios Englezakis	Head of Academic Affairs	
Dr Androulla Miliotou	Programme Coordinator	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
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Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	

Date: 2 April 2021

