

**Higher Education Institution's
Response**

Date: 06/05/2021

- **Higher Education Institution: Frederick University**
- **Town: Limassol**
- **Programme of study, Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
In Greek:
Δημοτική Εκπαίδευση (4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο (BEd))
In English:
Primary Education (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor (BEd))
- **Language(s) of instruction: Greek**
- **Programme's 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 2019" [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

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) 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 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. 300.1.1).*
- *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, 1.8, 1.9)

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

Whilst the current cohorts are small and students enjoy the intimacy of getting to know Faculty well, in the long term it will need to grow to have a steady state of around 15-20 students to provide an efficient and pedagogically effective number. We suggest that the Department explore strategies and actively market and monitor the recruitment of students into the programme. We recognize the structural nature of the issues facing the Department (small size of Cyprus, the effects of the Catalogue, and the financial crisis with implication for public sectors), however it will need to be proactive to overcome the situation in the next four years.

Response

The faculty is aspired to introduce the latest issues in their courses and to have a progression from year to year regarding both school practice and courses at the university. The program is demanding and relevant to the demands of being a primary school teacher in our contemporary society. We are pleased that our aims and way of working is well received by our students and graduates and that these were visible to the EEC.

The faculty strongly supports the programme and spends a lot of energy and time to establish and maintain strong links between the schools and the programme, and the community and the programme. As the EEC notes, these links are visible and along with other characteristics of the programme, they make the programme unique. The Department acknowledge that the small number of students may raise the issue of sustainability and allocates efforts to better reach candidate students. Importantly, the issue of sustainability has been discussed with the university management and we are happy to note that there is full support from the management to assist the department in its efforts to increase intakes.

The faculty aims to attract around 15-20 students so as to provide an efficient and pedagogically effective number. To achieve a Departmental strategy has been developed for student recruitment that includes the following additional activities:

- Enhance collaborations with secondary public schools for educational programmes that introduce pupils to the study and profession of primary educators and strengthen the links with the prime target audience
- Promote a scholarship scheme that was approved by the University for this programme of study through more innovative actions.
- Work closely with the Communications and Outreach Service of the University to actively promote the Programme in Greece and in the diaspora. One such action was the online conference for the World Greek Language Day that was co-organized with the Office of the Presidential Commissioner for the Greek People at Diaspora and was used in order to indirectly raise awareness for our programs.

2. Teaching, learning and student assessment

(ESG 1.3)

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

A recommendation for the primary education programme could be that theory and practical training could be more integrated. For example, by students bringing their teaching issues from teaching practicum into the subjects and courses at the institute and, the other way around, to stimulate students to validate theories in teaching practice. Another recommendation could be to involve teachers as supervisors of the teaching practicum to make the connection between theory and practice.

Response

To enhance the connection between theory and practical training the following approaches/actions are adopted:

- a) Courses that run parallel to the teaching practicum at the third and fourth year of study should include activities that require students to bring into the course teaching issues around the particular course. Most of the courses in the third and fourth year of study are courses around the didactics of a particular subject area of the school curriculum.
- b) Faculty members will participate more actively in the seminars that take place at the University before the beginning of the school practice at the third and fourth year of study.
- c) Faculty members will visit schools and assess students during their third and fourth year of study along with the tutor responsible for the teaching practicum.

3. Teaching Staff

(ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

- A greater involvement of full-time staff in the school placement /teaching practice programme components.

Response

The programme is very well supported by the teaching staff, which is very active and pays attention to all aspects of the programme outcome.

To enhance greater involvement of the full-time staff in the teaching practice the following approaches were discussed and approved in the Council of the Department:

- a) Courses that run parallel to the teaching practicum at the third and fourth year of study should include activities that require students to bring into the course teaching issues around the particular course. Most of the courses in the third and four year of study are courses around the didactics of a particular subject area of the school curriculum.
- b) Faculty members will participate more actively in the seminars that take place at the University before the beginning of the school practice at the third and fourth year of study.
- c) Faculty members will visit schools and assess students during their third and fourth year of study along with the tutor responsible for the teaching practicum.

4. Students

(ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7)

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

Develop a more proactive plan for student recruitment.

Response

We pride ourselves in offering high quality student experiences and we will make sure that we keep up this quality. It is important to reach our target of having 15-20 students per year of study.

Actions taken to be more proactive in student recruitment, taking in to account the present limitations, are outlined in Section 1 of this response. This is an issue that sits very high on the agenda of the Department and we are working closely with administration in finding ways to further boost interest for the programme

5. Resources

(ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Ensuring the sustainability of the programme unless numbers grow to provide for the future resourcing of a programme of this quality

Response

The University and the Faculty have a very strong commitment to continue to support the programme. Energy and funds have been allocated to ensure sustainability. Apart from the normal recruitment student activities that take place, the faculty has recently developed an additional plan (discussed and approved by the Council of the Department) for student recruitment which includes activities related to a) the promotion of programme in secondary public schools, b) a new scholarship scheme and c) actively market of the programme in Greece and in the diaspora. These are already mentioned in more details in section 1, page 2 of this document.

We are glad to note that the university management is fully supportive of this strategy and necessary resources have been provided to ensure that the quality levels are maintained.

B. Conclusions and final remarks

EEC's comments (selection of comments regarding the BEd Primary Education)

The programs are coherent, challenging, and students in all programs comment on the excellence of the teaching, support, and their growth as learners. The Department has achieved a 'word of mouth' reputation for the programs that we have reviewed here that this is an excellent place to enroll, learn and flourish. We congratulate the Department and its program leads in achieving this. We offer the following program recommendations to strengthen an already good offer:

- 1. It has a relatively small number of core staff for the range of teaching activity; it will be important to use their expertise efficiently by addressing student numbers in the undergraduate (BEd) program [...].**
- 2. Explore more explicit ways of linking theory and practice in the various programs, and make good practices which were shared with us in our visit more visible to others in the Department. A level of this happens already, in part because of the small size and close relationships. This might form the basis of scheduled professional development conversations in the Department.**
- 3. Plan a set of strategies for increasing recruitment to the BEd to increase student numbers to around 15-20 each year (eg. a small bursary as an incentive; continue to target secondary schools; market the program in Greece and the wider diasporic community; more assertive marketing using the excellent feedback from students on the program) and monitor student intake in the BEd over the next four years.**

Response

The points raised have been addressed earlier in our response. Below is a summary of the key elements.

To enhance the connection between theory and practical training the following approaches were discussed and approved in the Council of the Department:

- a) Courses that run parallel to the teaching practicum at the third and fourth year of study should include activities that require students to bring into the course teaching issues around the particular course. Most of the courses in the third and four year of study are courses around the didactics of a particular subject area of the school curriculum.
- b) Faculty members will participate more actively in the seminars that take place at the University before the beginning of the school practice at the third and fourth year of study.
- c) Faculty members will visit schools and assess students during their third and fourth year of study along with the tutor responsible for the teaching practicum.

To enhance greater involvement of the full-time staff in the teaching practice the following approaches were discussed and approved in the Council of the Department:

- a) Courses that run parallel to the teaching practicum at the third and fourth year of study should include activities that require students to bring into the course teaching issues around the particular course. Most of the courses in the third and four year of study are courses around the didactics of a particular subject area of the school curriculum.
- b) Faculty members will participate more actively in the seminars that take place at the University before the beginning of the school practice at the third and fourth year of study.
- c) Faculty members will visit schools and assess students during their third and fourth year of study along with the tutor responsible for the teaching practicum.
- d) To increase number of students the following additional activities were recently discussed and approved by the Council of the Department:
- e) For the following school year, revitalize the action that includes collaborations with secondary public schools for educational programmes. The action was postponed due to the pandemic.
- f) Promote the new scholarship scheme that was approved by the University for this programme of study through more innovative actions.
- g) Work closely with the central services of the University to actively market the programme in Greece and in the diaspora. For example, an online conference for the World Greek Language Day was co-organized with the Office of the Presidential Commissioner for the Greek people at diaspora and was used in order to promote indirectly our programs.

Concluding, we would like to again thank the EEC for their constructive comments and diligent evaluation. We are happy to note the overall positive assessment of our work and we are working hard to address the various recommendations made.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
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Prof. George Demosthenous Rector

Date: 06/05/2021