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Doc. 300.1.2

## Higher Education Institution's Response

Date: 24 March 2025



• Higher Education Institution: European University Cyprus

• Town: Nicosia

### Programme of study Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

## In Greek:

"Καρδιακή Ανεπάρκεια και Καρδιομυοπάθειες (18 Μήνες/90 ECTS, M.Sc.)"

## In English:

"Heart Failure and Cardiomyopathies (18 Months/90 ECTS, M.Sc.)"

- Language(s) of instruction: English
- Programme's status: New
- Concentrations (if any):
  - In Greek: Concentrations In English: Concentrations

KYΠPIAKH ΔHMOKPATIA REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS



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. 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 300.1.1/1 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. The answers' documentation should be brief and accurate and supported by the relevant documentation. Referral to annexes should be made only when necessary.
- In particular, under each assessment area and by using the 2<sup>nd</sup> column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:
  - the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC
  - the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC
- The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report <u>without any interference</u> in the content.
- In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in \*.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The students are not very much aware on the career path from graduating to PhD. It is not clear for the students and for the administrative staff whether graduates of the medical school may enter a PhD programme even in the absence of a MSc degree. This information should be better disseminated in the academic community and made public. Otherwise, there may be a risk that some students withdraw from a MSc program when they realize that they can enter a PhD program directly after medical school.	InstitutionWhile many of our MDgraduates have successfullyentered PhD programs directlyafter graduation, weacknowledge that some MDstudents present at the sitevisit may not have been fullyaware of this pathway. Thisinformation is included in ourcomprehensive studentorientation at the start of theMD program. However, toensure broader awareness,we will further highlight thisoption during the annualCAMESM scientific meeting,specifically in the career pathworkshops where students areinformed about residencypathways. Additionally, theadmission criteria for allprograms, including MSc andPhD, are clearly outlined onthe EUC website.As per the concern of studentsleaving the MSc program tojoin a PhD program, pleasenote that the MSc program isdesigned to provide an in-depth understanding of heartfailure and cardiomyopathies,focusing on enhancing clinicalpractice through improveddiagnosis and management.In contrast, the PhD programis research-oriented,equipping graduates with theskills needed to conductindependent research. Whilewe recognize the possibilitythat some students may	Choose level of compliance:
	reconsider their enrollment in	

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	the MSc program upon learning they can directly pursue a PhD, we believe that each program serves distinct educational and professional goals, and as such, the risk is minimal. None-the-less, as noted above we will ensure that students are well- informed about their options so they can make the best decision based on their career aspirations.	
There is some contradictory information regarding the content of some courses. For instance, device-based therapy for valvular heart diseases appears once in the course dedicated to chronic heart failure and in another place in the course of advanced heart failure. Keeping this in the chronic heart failure chapter would be more accurate, in line with the current definition of these two entities (chronic and advanced heart failure)	In agreement with the EEC's recommendation, we have removed content related to device-based therapy for valvular heart diseases from the course on "Advanced Heart Failure" (HFC610). This content remains only in the course "Chronic Heart Failure" (HFC600) as suggested. Please find attached in Appendix I the revised Syllabus of the course. We have highlighted with yellow the changes made for the convenience of the EEC.	Choose level of compliance:
Some students may need additional courses or support, given their different background.	While we anticipate that the initial cohorts of students will primarily consist of cardiologists, we recognize the importance of accommodating diverse academic backgrounds. By considering the varying abilities, needs, and opportunities of students, we strive to create an inclusive and adaptive learning environment that fosters success for all. To achieve this, we employ differentiated instruction personalized	Choose level of compliance:

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the	For Official Use ONLY
The digital or e-learning	The Heart Failure and	Choose level of compliance:
The digital or e-learning programs should be defined more clearly and in more detail.	The Heart Failure and Cardiomyopathies MSc program is a conventional, face-to-face program. However, we recognize the importance of integrating digital skills into the curriculum to enhance students' overall competencies. These skills are embedded throughout various educational activities to ensure students are well-equipped for academic, professional, and personal success.	Choose level of compliance:
	To achieve this, we incorporate technology into learning experiences, encourage collaborative projects, and utilize real-world digital tools. Our approach focuses on four key areas:	
	<ul> <li>Digital Literacy: Instructors integrate digital tools, helping students develop essential technology skills. Activities include document creation, online research, and collaborative work on digital platforms.</li> <li>Learning Management Systems (LMS): Platforms like Blackboard allow students to access course materials, submit assignments, participate in discussions, and receive feedback</li> </ul>	

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	<ul> <li>online, further strengthening their digital competencies.</li> <li>Online Research Skills: Students are trained to locate, evaluate, and synthesize information from credible online sources, fostering digital literacy, critical thinking, and effective information management.</li> <li>Innovative Teaching Methods: The curriculum incorporates case studies, simulations, and problem-solving exercises that encourage critical thinking.</li> <li>Additionally, all MSc students will have full access to EUC's support services and resources as presented during the site-visit, ensuring they receive the necessary guidance to develop their digital skills effectively.</li> </ul>	
	digital skills effectively.	
The University promotes studying abroad and student exchange programs, but the necessary ECT can only be achieved during the MSC courses. Similar courses are not accepted, and their achievements expressed in learning programs are not accepted as a learning achievement in the MSC program.	We thank the EEC for the remark that exchange programs, such as ERASMUS, are not feasible for this MSc program. However, the faculty has an extensive international network that students can leverage to enrich their academic experience and research opportunities abroad. While direct credit transfer from similar courses is not currently accepted within the MSc	Choose level of compliance:

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	program, students interested in gaining international exposure can explore collaborative research projects, short-term academic visits, and networking opportunities through our faculty's global partnerships. These avenues provide valuable learning experiences beyond the formal curriculum, further enhancing students' professional and academic development.	
MSC per definition is Master of Science. The MSC course applicants may choose whether they write a dissertation or just participate in MSC courses in the 3rd Semester. However, in the latter case, it should at least be required to a) present a scientific proposal, or 2) a written or personal exam to prove the acquired knowledge, if they do not write a dissertation, to prove the scientific skill.	We agree with the EEC on the importance of ensuring that MSc graduates demonstrate the scientific skills associated with completing a Master's thesis. To achieve this, the program includes various assignments designed to assess students' scientific reasoning, writing, and presentation abilities. Students who do not opt for a thesis will be required to complete assignments that test their ability to critically engage with scientific literature. Specifically, they will: • Conduct Literature Reviews: Students will identify course-related topics, perform literature searches, synthesize information, properly cite sources, and critically evaluate existing research. • Oral Presentations: In addition to written literature reviews, students will present their findings in class.	Choose level of compliance:

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	<ul> <li>demonstrating their ability to articulate scientific concepts and engage in scholarly discussion.</li> <li>Case Study Analysis: Students will also complete case studies in both written and oral formats, further reinforcing their analytical and scientific communication skills.</li> <li>While these assignments are more concise than a full thesis, they provide sufficient opportunities for students to develop and showcase their scientific competencies, ensuring they meet the</li> </ul>	
	academic standards of the MSc program.	
The student assessment should be adjusted to the to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)	The student assessments in the Cardiomyopathies MSc program are designed to align with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), ensuring that they appropriately evaluate knowledge, skills, and competencies at the required level. • Knowledge Acquisition: Written assessments are	Choose level of compliance:
	<ul> <li>carefully structured to align with the learning outcomes of each course, ensuring students demonstrate a solid understanding of key concepts.</li> <li>Skills and Competency</li> </ul>	

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Development:Assignmentsaredesignedtoassessstudents' ability to applytheirknowledge,criticallyanalyzescientificinformation,anddeveloprelevantprofessionalcompetencies.ConstructiveFeedback:Expertfacultyprovidetimelyandstructuredfeedback,guidingstudents in refining theirscientificskills,deepeningtheirunderstanding,andimprovingtheir	
This structured approach ensures that students meet the intended learning outcomes in accordance with EQF requirements, equipping them with the necessary expertise to advance in their academic and professional careers.	

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## 3. Teaching staff

(ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Future programme needs an active fulltime professor in the HF field.	The MSc program is currently supported by four full-time faculty members who are active clinicians in the field: three cardiologists—Dr. K. Lampropoulos, Dr. N. Karpettas, and Dr. V. Polydorou—and one cardiothoracic surgeon, Dr. G. Georgiou. Among them, three faculty members—Dr. Lampropoulos, Dr. Karpettas, and Dr. Georgiou—are actively involved in heart failure. Notably, Dr. Lampropoulos, an Associate Professor eligible for promotion to the rank of Professor, has significant expertise in heart failure. He is a member of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) Working Group on Heart Failure, the President-Elect of the Valvular Heart Disease section of the Hellenic Cardiology Society (HSC), and a member of the Working Group on European Valvular Heart Disease of both the ESC and HSC.	Choose level of compliance:
The faculty (Visiting experts) could be chosen from all over Europe to support the international character of the course. With the current teachers and anticipated post grad students there is hardly a reason to provide the education in English.	We fully agree with the EEC's recommendation, and as discussed during the site visit, visiting experts will be included from across Europe to further trengthen the program's international character. The core faculty and coordination team are actively engaged in	Choose level of compliance:

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the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) and its Heart Failure Working Group, fostering strong collaborations across Europe. Additionally, faculty from our School of Medicine - Frankfurt Branch will be invited to contribute to the MSc program, further enriching its academic offerings.	
To expand research collaborations and enhance international engagement, we will also explore opportunities to involve experts through networks such as the EU- CARDIOPROTECTION COST Action (CA16225).	
Lastly, we would like to emphasize that all programs within the School of Medicine, including this MSc program, are conducted in English.	



4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
During the EEC visit, the course presentation involved patient case reports. However, non-medical students without previous clinical practice will be unable to present cases. In such cases virtual patients may be reported, or specific additional explanations might be required, eg. basic molecular mechanisms on cardiomyopathies, required from the biochemistry student, or mechanisms of artificial valves for improvement of valve-disorder related heart insufficiency may be required from the biotechnology student.	We acknowledge the EEC's concern that non-medical students may face challenges in presenting patient case reports. However, as discussed during the site visit and mentioned above, we view this as an opportunity for these students to explore disease mechanisms relevant to their specific academic backgrounds. For example, biochemistry students may focus on the molecular basis of cardiomyopathies, while biotechnology students could examine the mechanisms of artificial valves and their role in managing valve-related heart insufficiency.	Choose level of compliance:
	The Medical School follows a student-centered approach, and instructors will provide guidance tailored to non- medical students to ensure they can effectively engage with case-based assignments. Additionally, we will encourage interdisciplinary group presentations, allowing students from diverse fields to collaborate. This approach will foster peer-to-peer learning, improve communication and teamwork skills, and promote interdisciplinary dialogue. Lastly, we anticipate that the initial cohorts of students will primarily consist of cardiologists, further supporting a balanced and	



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#### 5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and	Actions Taken by the	For Official Lise ONILY
recommendations by EEC	Institution	
recommendations by EEC The diverse background of students, even though highly appreciated regarding trends for the need of trained non- physician healthcare personnel, has the drawback of creating misbalanced learning outcomes for students with the only provision towards its resolution being the different types of case-reports assigned to different students and the assurance that final examinations are the same for all.	Institution We acknowledge the EEC's concern that the diverse backgrounds of students may pose challenges in aligning learning outcomes and assessments. However, as previously discussed, we have implemented structured approaches to address these differences, including facilitated case discussions and graded assignments tailored to students' backgrounds. We would like to reassure the committee that all final examinations will be identical for all students, ensuring a standardized assessment process. The exams will be carefully designed to evaluate the specific learning outcomes of each course, ensuring fairness and academic integrity	Choose level of compliance:
Recommendations for this aspect are for a student feedback methodology to be set in place throughout the semester to address areas of discrepancy that may arise followed by the appropriate support through guidance in terms of extra literature resources and opportunities to have open conversations with the teaching staff in terms of course requirements and the curriculum.	The School of Medicine, including this program, actively implements student feedback methodologies throughout the semester. Faculty members are encouraged to conduct midterm surveys within their courses to identify any gaps in student learning, allowing for timely intervention. Furthermore, courses are designed with multiple assessment points, enabling faculty to closely monitor	Choose level of compliance:

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	student performance and address any emerging issues. Based on this feedback, faculty can provide additional resources, such as extra literature, and offer opportunities for open discussions with students regarding course requirements and the curriculum.	
Implement peer-to-peer teaching especially for practical aspects of the course so that students with no prior knowledge of clinical practices that are interested in exploring the field can be encouraged. Similarly, students that are not well versed in laboratory techniques can be guided by their peers with the potential of future interdisciplinary collaborations in the clinical, academic or research field.	We agree with the EEC that peer-to-peer teaching can be a highly effective tool for fostering cross-learning among students. As previously mentioned, the course will engage students in peer-group case studies, where students from different backgrounds (when applicable) will collaborate to address various aspects of a case. For instance, a medical school graduate may provide insights into the pathophysiology and treatment of myocarditis, while a biology graduate could explain the biological assays used for diagnosis and the role of genetic mutations in disease etiology. Each case study will be tackled as a team, with each member responsible for teaching their peers about areas they are less familiar with (e.g., clinical, laboratory, genetics). This approach will ensure that all students gain a comprehensive understanding of the case from different perspectives, promoting interdisciplinary learning and collaboration.	Choose level of compliance:

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Provide insight in research	Throughout the program,	Choose level of compliance:
opportunities throughout the	students will gain valuable	
programme	insight into available research	
	opportunities through various	
	ongoing activities. To promote	
	interdisciplinary dialogue, the	
	School regularly hosts Insight	
	Lectures—seminars featuring	
	external experts. These	
	lectures provide both graduate	
	and medical students, as well	
	as the wider scientific	
	community, with the	
	opportunity to learn from and	
	world leading experts on a	
	range of topics. The goal is to	
	create a rich transdiscinlinary	
	forum that inspires and	
	engages participants in the	
	ever-evolving scientific	
	landscape.	
	In addition to these lectures,	
	the School organizes	
	regular <b>Research</b> Meetings,	
	where both students and	
	research alongside lournal	
	Club meetings These	
	atherings aim to foster	
	communities of practice that	
	enhance critical thinking.	
	analysis, reasoning,	
	evaluation, communication,	
	and teamwork—all essential	
	skills for scientific inquiry.	
	Given that the School offers	
	Concer Diological	
	Clinical Opeology and Dublic	
	Health MSc students in the	
	Heart Failure and	
	Cardiomyopathies program will	
	have ample opportunities to	
	interact with PhD candidates.	
	as well as faculty, further	

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broadening their research exposure. For example, one current PhD project focuses on Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation in Heart Failure Patients, providing a direct research link to the MSc program. We believe that encouraging MSc students to actively participate in these research activities will significantly enhance their understanding of the research opportunities available throughout their program.



#### 6. Additional for doctoral programmes

(ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
N/A	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:



### 7. Eligibility (Joint programme)

(ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
N/A	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:



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#### B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Conclusions and final remarks by EEC The evaluation of the programme raised enthusiasm among the committee members There is an unmet need for a post grad programme in heart failure reaching out to Cyprus and also Greece. The programme proposed is clear and focussed addressing most relevant issues on modern cardiology. It has been clarified why and how participants will be selected from a mixed background. The faculty is well equipped and can definitely kick off this 18- month course. The evaluation of the programme and student requirements are clearly indicated. The facilities and student support programmes are impressive and very well documented. Not all the programmes seem relevant for a post graduate educational course. The staff and especially the external stake holders have (very) high expectations of the HF training course. In every section we listed	Actions Taken by the Institution We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the External Evaluation Committee for their time to visit and review our MSc Program "Heart Failure and Cardiomyopathies" and for sharing their invaluable expertise through candid discussions and constructive recommendations for areas of enhancement. We are pleased that they recognized the strengths of our program, and we look forward to demonstrating our progress in future re-evaluation processes.	For Official Use ONLY Choose level of compliance:
In every section we listed recommendations to further enhance and strengthen the programme and make it competitive at the international level.		



#### C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Prof. Elizabeth Johnson	Dean, School of Medicine	
Dr. Theodore Lytras	Chairperson, Department of Medicine	
Prof. Filippos Triposkiadis	Program Coordinator	
Dr. Nikos Karpettas	Program Co-Coordinator	
Dr. Konstantinos Lampropoulos	Program Co-Coordinator	

Date: 24/03/2025

