



Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 14/09/2021

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Nicosia

- **Town:** Nicosia

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

In Greek:

Κοινωνική Εργασία (3 εξάμηνα, 90 ECTS, Μάστερ)

In English:

Social Work (3 semesters, 90 ECTS, Master in Science)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek and English

- **Program'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 program 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.*

Program Design and Development

Introduction:

We would like to thank the EEC members for their online evaluation visit and for the effort to study and review the documents submitted to the CYQAA about our MSc in Social Work (E- Learning and Conventional) program of study. Below we provide answers to the questions raised and the comments made by the EEC in their report clarifying further issues regarding the courses' content, the structure, and the philosophy of this particular program in its current format.

For convenience reasons, we decided to divide each section (Findings/Strengths/ Areas of improvement and recommendations) into thematic paragraphs; in order to not confuse the reader our answers are given in colour.

Findings:

There is a quality assurance program in place, including input from stakeholders and students. It is not clear how the internal quality program is informed by a range of data such as enrolment, student attrition, performance or graduate destinations. It also remains unclear how the program design is informed by this quality insurance program. One example is that the program coordinator and teaching staff argues for the mental health concentration saying this is a request of the students, while this is not confirmed by the students.

The design of the program contains many optional courses and most courses are directed to practice (doing things right), but have little theoretical and fundamental social work-related reflection (doing the right things). In relation to the international definition of social work (ifsw.org, 2014), stating that "social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline), the overall impression of the EEC is that the design of the program is more aligned with the former than with the latter.

The EEC doubts the implementation of the European standards in relation to the workload of the ECTS points in the degree program. There are too many elective courses, no final regular thesis. No quality system to verify the European quality standard was apparent to ECC. A quality system exists that monitors student and stakeholder satisfaction

Findings

There is a quality assurance program in place, including input from stakeholders and students. It is not clear how the internal quality program is informed by a range of data such as enrolment, student attrition, performance or graduate destinations. It also remains unclear how the program design is informed by this quality insurance program. One example is that the program coordinator and teaching staff argues for the mental health concentration saying this is a request of the students, while this is not confirmed by the students.

Answer:

In most of the courses teaching faculty receive official and unofficial feedback on strengths and weaknesses, based on faculty improved course content. Since most of the students are professionals, the program takes in great consideration their comments. The great majority of students are satisfied with the program as it addresses areas related to contemporary social work practice. Additionally, as all faculty members have strong

connections with stakeholders, the program in place does reflect current needs. In particular, the faculty have strong links with public organisations (Social Welfare Services, Asylum Services, Mental Health Services, Educational Services) and non-governmental organisations that provide services to vulnerable groups such as refugees, victims of domestic violence, mental health patients, drug users, school population etc.

Regarding the internal quality assurance and how this system operates, you can refer to Annex A where there is a description of how it operates.

Findings:

The design of the program contains many optional courses and most courses are directed to practice (doing things right), but have little theoretical and fundamental social work-related reflection (doing the right things). In relation to the international definition of social work (ifsw.org, 2014), stating that “social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline), the overall impression of the EEC is that the design of the program is more aligned with the former than with the latter.

Answer:

We would like to thank the committee for the above comment regarding the design of the MSc.

1. Students registered to attend the course titled **“Working with groups/SOWK-520”** are taught particular group therapeutic models; the theoretical material (see Yalom, I. (2008). Handbook on Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy, Basic Books, 5th edition; or Nelson-Jones, R. (2012). Introduction to Counselling Skills, SAGE Publications Ltd, 4th edition) is taught and supported by books and articles. In addition, students are, week after week, exposed to a series of skills from therapeutic models (Systemic, Gestalt, Psychodrama) and are requested to perform these skills on weekly activities and short assignments.
2. Additionally, in the module titled **“Interagency Collaboration in Social Care and Health Settings/SOWK-533”** different types of interagency collaboration are discussed in depth along with the advantages and disadvantages of the working together model; the *Handbook for Interprofessional Practice in the Human Services: Learning to Work Together*¹ is used to show the various applications of interagency collaboration in social work practice. Students are requested to submit an assignment on a case scenario from their professional experience, where they are asked to describe the steps of working together, the type of interagency model, the positives and negatives. Assignments always include a theoretical component, a case study (depending on the module), and a discussion element, where students link theory to practice.
3. Moreover, in the module **“SOWK-510 DL: Theory & Practice of Social Work in Adult Services”** we emphasise the role of theory in social work practice and offer the opportunity to students to study in depth the core social work theories and to analyse and evaluate theoretical frameworks (e.g., bio-ecological, psychosocial, life, risk and resilience, person-environment schemes). Through this module students study specific clinical theories that are grounded in research to inform how they implement clinical practice in a methodological manner.

¹ Littlechild, B. (ed.) & Smith, R. (ed.), Sep 2012, Pearson Education. 352 p

As far as optional courses we wanted to give a diverse choice of optional courses (n=5) to most of the students as they come from various professional settings thus this provision of many courses make the program more attractive. Especially when students choose thesis then they only select one optional course.

Findings:

The EEC doubts the implementation of the European standards in relation to the workload of the ECTS points in the degree program. There are too many elective courses, no final regular thesis. No quality system to verify the European quality standard was apparent to ECC. A quality system exists that monitors student and stakeholder satisfaction.

Answer:

We would like to thank the committee for the above comment. All programs offered by the University are aligned with the European standards in relation to the workload of the ECTS points. Students of this particular MSc are very committed and take part in all the activities needed for the advancement in the program. Thus, the active participation of students in all activities is taken into consideration in the final grade. Those who are not active are warned by the DL Unit frequently. As you will read in this report, about one third of students drop-out the program, a fact indicating that quality in course assessment is safeguarded.

Furthermore, the program pathway includes 6 compulsory courses (60 ECTS) and 6 elective courses, one of which is the master thesis. Most of the elective courses support the compulsory ones in a way that students develop an even more in-depth understanding of theory and skills. For example, SOWK-522 and SOWK-531 address common areas but they do not overlap each other. SOWK-522 focuses on the organisation and management of social services and SOWK-531 concentrates on how Social Workers liaise with other professionals in social and health care settings.

The recommendation of the EEC is noted and we fully appreciate the academic value of the thesis element. The current University policy across Cyprus (set by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance in Higher Education) is that the thesis is not mandatory in Master-level programmes and our MSc has abided by this policy in order to offer flexibility that responds to the needs of the market and to our students' pedagogical needs for a broader professional development. As we have noted, an important number of our distance-learning students are mature, practising and experienced professionals. Nonetheless, recognising the value of the thesis element and the significant immediate and long term benefits associated with completing a Masters-level dissertation, the program committee has committed itself to more strongly encouraging students to opt for the thesis option.

The program adopts the EEC comment from below, where *"The students reported that there were structural as well as informal means to give feedback to teachers and they felt this feedback was efficiently and effectively taken into account. The EEC believes that continually evaluating the quality assurance of distance learning by non-mandatory external accreditation organisations is a good practice."*

As far as the comment “ no quality system...to EEC” it has to be noted that after a demanding process that started in 2008 and lasted over two years, all university programs were re-engineered (learning outcomes, tuning methodology etc.); this led to ECTS Label awarded in 2012 to the whole of the University².

Strengths

The public information is adequate. Courses are accessible both for Greek and English language students.

Answer:

We would like to thank the EEC members for this comment; we will continue making public information even more informative in the future.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

An internal quality system to monitor the European quality standards is necessary to be implemented. With regard to the internationalisation of studies and exchange of students, international standards should be taken more into account in the future.

Answer:

As demonstrated during the visit, the program is being monitored internally by an internal team of experts³ and an external team of experts. Especially based on the comments made by the three external experts, Prof. Teresa Bertotti (Italy), Prof. Hakan Acar (Turkey/UK) and Dr Ines Maria Amaro (Portugal) the program has implemented changes based on their reports. Those changes mainly focused on specific courses’ content. Regarding the comment “With regard to... in the future”, we intend to implement the recommendation suggested by the committee right after the establishment of an English language cohort. As a member of the executive committees in both European and International Associations of Schools of Social Work, the program is implying most of the international standards.

As far as internal quality system please refer to Annex A noted above.

²Please see [ECTS Label – University of Nicosia \(unic.ac.cy/5_ects-label\)](http://unic.ac.cy/5_ects-label) for further details.

³ Please see Annex A for further details.

1. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment

(ESG 1.3)

Findings

It is a small cohort of students, around 25 per year, recently this has increased up to 38, probably in relation to the COVID pandemic, according to the team. The limited number of students may offer the opportunity for personalised support and learning as more student-centred learning is possible in small groups. The students confirm the close relationship with the teaching staff and the swift feedback on their assignments.

The students in the Master program originate from various undergraduate programs, yet there is not an adaptation of the program to match these different backgrounds. A student with a bachelor in statistics receives the same program as does a student with a bachelor's in social work. Nearly all subjects utilise exams as the principal component of their assessment (usually 60%). In addition, a variety of assessments are deployed throughout the course, including practical work, projects, written assessments. There is less use of portfolios, peer evaluations and self-assessments. Most course have an impressive list of compulsory reading, both in English and Greek. The reading list has a good international orientation, yet contemporary references are rather limited, as many resources are from the early 2000's. Statistics about study results were not available for the EEC.

The management strengthened the importance of internationalisation and the international cooperations and accreditations. The EEC was not provided with figures on incoming and outgoing Erasmus. We were explained that this is not applicable to the Master in Social Work and this was confirmed by the graduates. Anecdotal evidence of teacher mobility was provided. The nature of the program is compatible with distance learning delivery and the methodology provided is appropriate for the particular program of study.

The university's distance learning quality assurance is evaluated by external and voluntary accreditations, such as THE, QS Stars or EFQUEL. The university's learning management system supports online teaching, learning and administrative processes. This is a Moodle installation with all the basic online services available. The platform specifically provides synchronous (through Webex) and asynchronous tools to support the interaction needs of students with the lecturers, the other students and with the materials. The platform also provides e-assessment procedures through quizzes with automatic feedback in order to assess students' knowledge. The provision of more complex forms of e-assessment to assess competences and skills, such as critical thinking and teamwork, is also provided though was not shown during the meetings. Each course has a minimum of 9 hours of synchronous communication between teacher and students.

Collaboration among teachers and students (and among students) is conducted through the online forums of the subject and other forums that can be created ad-hoc for facing special needs. In addition, collaboration among students is promoted by collaborative activities based on project-based learning, though it was not detailed the design, procedure and technical support for these activities. Formative assessment of the courses is based on submitted essays and reports with provision of personalized feedback during the course counting up to 40% of the final grade while summative assessment is based on a mandatory final exam counting up to 60% of the final grade. Assessment procedure during the course is completed with a number of weekly online quiz-based assignments. Optional formative (self-assessment) activities are included in the weekly study guides in order to self-evaluate student knowledge and skills of the course.

Findings:

It is a small cohort of students, around 25 per year, recently this has increased up to 38, probably in relation to the COVID pandemic, according to the team. The limited number of students may offer the opportunity for personalised support and learning as more student-centred learning is possible in small groups. The students confirm the close relationship with the teaching staff and the swift feedback on their assignments.

Answer:

The program would like to thank the EEC for pointing out positive areas in this section. Regarding the number of students registered in the program it is expected that on average these will also be the figures in the future. By controlling the registration numbers, we can assure high quality teaching, as well as productive interaction between students and faculty in every module.

Findings:

Most course have an impressive list of compulsory reading, both in English and Greek. The reading list has a good international orientation, yet contemporary references are rather limited, as many resources are from the early 2000's. Statistics about study results were not available for the EEC.

Answer:

References (books, articles etc.) are updated on a yearly basis, something indicated during the site visit. Greek resources are rather limited, thus the faculty is using the most recent and available ones. Additionally, students have access to e-books and e-journals in social work and related disciplines. Characteristically students can have access to 228 references in social welfare topics, 564 social sciences and humanities subjects and in at least 18 social work journals⁴.

Findings:

The students in the Master program originate from various undergraduate programs, yet there is not an adaptation of the program to match these different backgrounds. A student with a bachelor in statistics receives the same program as does a student with a bachelor's in social work.

Answer:

The program is a generic Master in Social Work addressed to a number of candidates in addition to social workers. This specific program does not lead to a professional qualification thus some of the entrance requirements are:

- A degree in social work or relevant discipline (psychology, sociology, social pedagogy)
- Proof of professional experience in social work/social welfare either paid or voluntary.

It is important to highlight, that if a student does not meet the first requirement, then, in the letter of acceptance it is clearly stated that extra reading is required in order to understand social work concepts and theories. Additionally, when students, from different background to social work, apply and they do not meet the second requirement then they are clearly informed about the need of extra reading on foundations in social work practice and theory.

Findings:

The management strengthened the importance of internationalisation and the international cooperations and accreditations. The EEC was not provided with figures on incoming and outgoing Erasmus. We were explained that this is not applicable to the Master in Social Work and this was confirmed by the graduates. Anecdotal evidence of teacher mobility was provided. The nature of the program is compatible with distance learning delivery and the methodology

⁴ <https://www.library.unic.ac.cy/ejournals-0>

provided is appropriate for the particular program of study. The university's distance learning quality assurance is evaluated by external and voluntary accreditations, such as THE, QS Stars or EFQUEL.

The university's learning management system supports online teaching, learning and administrative processes. This is a Moodle installation with all the basic online services available. The platform specifically provides synchronous (through Webex) and asynchronous tools to support the interaction needs of students with the lecturers, the other students and with the materials. The platform also provides e-assessment procedures through quizzes with automatic feedback in order to assess students' knowledge.

The provision of more complex forms of e-assessment to assess competences and skills, such as critical thinking and teamwork, is also provided though was not shown during the meetings. Each course has a minimum of 9 hours of synchronous communication between teacher and students. Collaboration among teachers and students (and among students) is conducted through the online forums of the subject and other forums that can be created ad-hoc for facing special needs. In addition, collaboration among students is promoted by collaborative activities based on project-based learning, though it was not detailed the design, procedure and technical support for these activities. Formative assessment of the courses is based on submitted essays and reports with provision of personalized feedback during the course counting up to 40% of the final grade while summative assessment is based on a mandatory final exam counting up to 60% of the final grade. Assessment procedure during the course is completed with a number of weekly online quiz-based assignments. Optional formative (self-assessment) activities are included in the weekly study guides in order to self-evaluate student knowledge and skills of the course.

Answer:

The program welcomes the positive comments made above and ensures the EEC that these areas will strengthen in the future based on the committee's suggestions and comments. Critical thinking and teamwork are developed during the course of the program through real life case scenarios and/or analysis of movies/cases, where students have the opportunity through collaborative activities (group work during WebEx sessions) to develop these skills. Breakout rooms during group activities, as well as chat forums allow the interaction of students in the e-learning format.

Strengths

The consultation with students and alumni showed that students were highly satisfied of their studies, of the program and of the teaching staff. They appreciate the swift feedback on their assignments. They assert that they have received a practice-oriented training that prepares them for a job in the field. They particularly appreciate the generic approach of the curriculum. They explained that they found that the program of 90 ECTS was possible to combine with a full-time employment within three semesters. The students reported that there were structural as well as informal means to give feedback to teachers and they felt this feedback was efficiently and effectively taken into account. The EEC believes that continually evaluating the quality assurance of distance learning by non-mandatory external accreditation organisations is a good practice.

The EEC considers the university's distance learning model to be in line with the specific profile of full and part-time online students who have professional duties and need to learn effectively and in a timely fashion. The provision of personalized feedback in the submitted assignments and during the teleconference sessions as well as the feedback based on rubrics and peer-assessment are considered best practices, even if they were not shown during the meetings.

In addition, the EEC recognizes the many benefits of collaboration among students promoted by collaborative activities, project based, and discussions organized in online teams. Finally, the weekly study guides, which allow the students to

determine the work to be done every week, is also considered a best practice. The EEC urges the university to keep up these strong elements of their distance learning model while reinforcing them when possible.

Answer:

The faculty of the MSc would like to thank the EEC for the positive comments made such as “The students confirm the close relationship with the teaching staff and the swift feedback on their assignments”, “the EEC recognizes the many benefits of collaboration...in online teams.” We would also like to reassure that these points will remain in the years to come or even will be further strengthened.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The study lists 12 learning outcomes. However, the EEC believes that the program is ill adapted to ensure these learning outcomes are sufficiently met, compared to international standards for a MSc in Social Work. The EEC identified three areas that need improvement to match the ambition of the program.

- “Thoroughly comprehend the concepts, theories and processes of social work”. The number of theoretical courses is limited. The MSC curriculum is oriented to prepare students for executing their social work tasks, but less for theoretical depth and reflection; Contemporary social work theory and concepts are only marginally dealt with.
- “Acquire research skills”: The methodological courses are limited (1 course of 10 ECTS, with very little quantitative research). The EEC is particularly concerned with the choice to have the thesis as an option that students can take but that is not compulsory and wonders how the students who do not make that choice acquire the learning outcomes.
- “Analyse social policy”: there is no course where this learning outcome is the focus. The teaching staff ascertained that this is a course on the undergraduate level, but the EEC is concerned what this means for students with other backgrounds than a bachelor's in social work.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

“Thoroughly comprehend the concepts, theories and processes of social work”. The number of theoretical courses is limited. The MSC curriculum is oriented to prepare students for executing their social work tasks, but less for theoretical depth and reflection; Contemporary social work theory and concepts are only marginally dealt with.

Answer:

As already explained, the Program is currently offered in Greek; in all courses, theory is supporting the skills acquired. Obviously, the same applies to the content of the English program. It is unfortunate that we did not have the opportunity to demonstrate the full range of the teaching/learning material in Greek. For example, students who take the course titled “Working with groups/SOWK-520”, are learning particular group therapeutic models, where theoretical material (see Yalom’s Handbook on Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy or Nelson-Jones Introduction to Counselling Skills) is taught with and supported by books and articles. In addition, students are taught a series of skills from therapeutic models (Systemic, Gestalt, Psychodrama) and are requested to perform these skills on weekly activities and short assignments. In all cases students are required to understand theory in order to apply skills into practice.

The module titled “**Interagency Collaboration in Social Care and Health Settings /SOWK-533**” describes types of interagency collaboration, discusses in depth the advantages and disadvantages of working together model and uses the Handbook for **Interprofessional Practice in the Human Services: Learning to Work Together**⁵ to show the various applications of interagency collaboration in social work practice. Students are requested to submit an assignment on a case scenario from their professional experience, where they will describe the steps of working together, the type of interagency model, the positives and negatives. Assignments always include the theoretical background, a case study (depending on the module) and a discussion part, where students link theory to practice.

Additionally, courses such as research methods, organisation and management of social services and supervision in social work practices are by default and in great extent theoretical courses with the need of demonstrating application of theory into practice. Concepts and theories focus on the following areas depending on the course:

Supervision in Social Work practice (SOWK-530):

- Models of supervision, supervision as an educational tool,
- Reflective practice as part of supervision process,

Mental health promotion in families, schools and communities (SOWK-534):

- Mental health promotion in systems such as family, schools, community,
- Interagency collaboration
- The impact of early childhood experiences into adolescence and adulthood

Social Work with families (SOWK-520):

- Protective and risk factors in mental health resilience, child protection systems,
- Social construction of childhood
- Major models of family therapy

Decision making process (SOWK-511):

- Basic models in decision making process
- Ethics and principles in decision making process
- Trees in decision making process

Areas of improvement and recommendations

• “*Acquire research skills*”: *The methodological courses are limited (1 course of 10 ECTS, with very little quantitative research). The EEC is particularly concerned with the choice to have the thesis as an option that students can take but that is not compulsory and wonders how the students who do not make that choice acquire the learning outcomes.*

Answer:

As far as the thesis is concerned, the MSc follows the rules that apply to all postgraduate courses and provides the choice of thesis not to be compulsory. As stated during the site visit this is allowed by the local law of CYQAA. As already mentioned above “The recommendation of the EEC is noted and we fully appreciate the academic value of the thesis element. The current University policy across Cyprus (set by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance in Higher Education) is that the thesis is not mandatory in Master-level programs and our MSc has abided by this policy in order to offer flexibility that responds to the needs of the market and to our students’ pedagogical needs for a

⁵ [Littlechild, B. \(ed.\)](#) & Smith, R. (ed.), Sep 2012, Pearson Education. 352 p

broader professional development". However, as it can be deduced from the table below (2), 30 students have registered into this particular course since the establishment of the Master program.

Table 2. Number of Students registered in the thesis module.

	Students in numbers	% from total
Total registered	30	100%
Completed	19	63.3%
Dropped	1	3.3%
Still registered (not completed yet)	10	33.3%

Additionally, to the research methods module, students apply their research skills on the assignments submitted in each course. In each assignment students must produce a literature review on the topic of each assignment and in some cases, depending on the assignment request, they may need to carry out a case study/case scenario, where they apply theory to practice. This happens in courses such as 522, 530, 531, 533 and 534, where students use their own empirical material to conduct small case studies, developing further their research skills in the fields of literature review and interviewing techniques, relating theory to practice and applying their own suggestions.

The course outline of the research methods taught in the Master has been revised according to the EEC recommendations and it can be found as Annex B.

Findings:

"Analyse social policy": there is no course where this learning outcome is the focus. The teaching staff ascertained that this is a course on the undergraduate level, but the EEC is concerned what this means for students with other backgrounds than a bachelor's in social work.

Answer:

The context of social policy as a discipline has been embedded and informed the design and the implementation of the Master's Program in Social Work. It might not be included as a learning outcome or as separate module but given the current social policy conditions in both Greece and Cyprus faculty members are very well informed and include these attributes in their lectures. More specifically, as it was mentioned during the EEC visit, the concepts of social policy are elaborated and analysed in SOWK-522 DL (Management and Administration of Social Services), which offers the opportunity to students to explore the impact of welfare systems on service delivery and social care organisations.

In addition, the design of that specific course builds upon pre-existing knowledge but also supports and enhances student learning via a variety of supporting material, which enables students to explore social policy structures and concepts. Students from other disciplines than social work are also encouraged to explore relevant bibliography through weekly exercises and forum discussions in order to be able to answer and participate in the forum discussions. Moreover, the faculty make continuous efforts to add specific learning outcomes in relevant courses, update relevant material and thus enhance social policy analysis in the MSc Program. The course outline of this specific course has been revised and edited as to meet the EEC recommendations. It can be found on Annex C.

Nevertheless, features of social policy are also included in courses such as SOWK-531 where students learn how to work in interdisciplinary/interagency environments either as practitioners or even as policy makers in order to take in consideration different disciplines in design welfare policy. Additionally, in the course SOWK-534 (Promotion of Mental

Health in Families, Schools and Communities) students become aware of policies and strategies focused on particular areas. Good practices in both courses are presented regarding policy and strategy in the specific modules.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC is also concerned with the fact that all students asserted that there was not major difficulty in acquiring the 90 ECTS in 3 semesters, along with a full-time employment. The EEC is concerned that this is yet another indication that the curriculum may not align with the European Qualifications standards. This also seems at odds with the very high number of books that are mentioned on the compulsory reading list.

The EEC was not provided with examples of how students may be involved in ongoing research, neither in the dialogue with students and alumni, nor in the dialogue with the teaching staff.

The EEC recommends strengthening the research in the curriculum, either by making the thesis compulsory, or by including students in other ways in ongoing research.

Answer:

As far as strengthening “research in the curriculum” please see answer above about “acquire research skills”. Despite that engaging online students in ongoing research projects is challenging, students are involved in small research projects as part of their module assignments (e.g. take a short interview and analyse it). , there are students who have submitted their thesis into conferences (7th International conference of Counselling Psychology in Volos/Greece and International Conference on Clinical Psychiatry in Dublin/Ireland), two have submitted their work into international journals, and one has progressed into a PhD at the University of Nicosia and another one is currently involved in an on-going project of the program. Unfortunately, the great majority of students are based in Greece thus being involved with on-going research is rather difficult at this point although it would be beneficial for both parts. Whereas it is possible it happens.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC recommends that the curriculum is revised to strengthen and deepen the social work theory according to international standards and in line with the international definition of social work. In addition, the EEC recommends that the curriculum is adapted for students with other backgrounds than social work to ensure they have the opportunity to acquire the learning goals.

Answer:

The program is specifically designed to allow students from various undergraduate backgrounds to adapt easily to its requirements. Additionally, the curriculum is designed to address contemporary working areas of practitioners such as management/policy making, mental health intervention, and community work. The course material in Greek makes clear that in most of the courses there is always introductory material that helps students with a different background to understand what will follow. For example, the first two classes in SOWK-520 provide all the necessary theoretical information on family; all students understand the concept of family and get prepared to follow the rest of the information. Another course that enhances this inter-disciplinarity, titled “Interagency and Interprofessional collaboration”/SOWK-531, allows the engagement of students with different backgrounds and provides an initial two-week introduction on the need of interagency collaboration and the role of each discipline within a multidisciplinary team. Student-teacher close relationship, mentioned already in the EEC comments in this report, provides the space to those students who have no close relationship to social work, neither academically nor professionally, to bridge the gap indicated by the Committee.

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

The EEC recommends that student and teacher mobility is enhanced, and that teacher mobility may be used for international benchmarking of the curriculum.

Answer:

As we explained during the site visit the program has been offered in E- Learning mode so far. Therefore, exchange of students is more difficult. However, when the program will run a conventional cohort, then all three suggestions will be taken into account adding to the internationalisation of studies. This is something that has happened with the bachelor and also, as the program is part of the EASSW and IASSW this will improve international benchmarking.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC wants to point out that onsite final exams may not be in line with the learning style of online students, and formative continuous assessment during the course could be reinforced instead. From the documentation provided and the information gathered from the meetings, it was not clear if gamification strategies are used to increase the student levels of motivation and engagement with the e-assessment process. In addition, more sophisticated forms of feedback based on intelligent tutoring systems and conversational pedagogical agents are also encouraged to support immediate and automatic feedback to students and self-evaluate their advances.

Answer:

Although the formative continuous assessment is more productive and relates better with this level of study unfortunately a non-onsite final exam would not meet the requirements set by DOATAP (official body for the recognition of degrees) that requires an exam component as mandatory section in the course assessment. As at the moment the majority of students are from Greece and Cyprus this requirement needs to be followed. However, it must be said that onsite final exam component content is very much focused on critical learning and critical thinking. The general philosophy of the exam is for the student to demonstrate knowledge and practice and how these two can be applied. For example, in the module SOWK-520, students are asked to develop a program for a specific group of people using a therapeutic approach and explaining the reasons for doing so.

As far as gamification there are modules which use this type of teaching and learning. In particular the a) use of real case scenarios, b) analysis of movies being watched during WebEx sessions and group work during teaching are some of the strategies used to increase levels of motivation and engagement. Characteristically the announcement of **a and b** techniques increase significantly the attendance of students during WebEx sessions. Students receive feedback on their weekly activities either through their lecturers or automatically, through moodle system, if it is a multiple choice activity.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

While the EEC emphasizes the benefits of any form of interaction and collaboration, the online synchronous teleconferences and the teamwork among students were perceived as problematic if in the next years the program is

expanded internationally and attended by many students across different time zones. It was not clear how the university would support this type of collaboration from the coordination perspective while recommending the constant adaptation of their distance learning model to support this situation by increasing the asynchronous online interaction and collaboration.

Answer:

During the visit the faculty has informed the EEC that this real challenge can be overcome as shown below:

1. Teaching time zones of online synchronous teleconferences vary from 8 in the morning until 9 o'clock at night. That means that even students from USA, Canada or even Asia, can attend a synchronous session as time difference to Cyprus, is 7 to 9 hours either behind or ahead. Additionally, international part-time staff can be hired so this issue can be tackled if local teaching staff cannot offer courses on other time zones.
2. Even in the event that the above scenario it is not possible, students have always the opportunity to listen and view the asynchronous teaching material after its completion as teaching content is recorded. More specifically, The DL Programs run through asynchronous connection. Each DL course includes a minimum of nine (9) hours for face-to-face meetings, which are held simultaneously through our teleconferencing system (WebEx - video conferencing facility). Students will be informed in advance about these meetings and are provided with relevant instructions. Participation is not mandatory. Meetings are recorded and can be viewed throughout the semester.

2. Teaching staff

(ESG 1.5)

Findings

There seems to be an adequate academic qualification among the staff, but there still seems to be room for a further focus on the core discipline of social work among the teaching staff. When it comes to safeguarding an appropriate balance between teaching and research the EEC recognize clear ambitions and efforts from the staff but in-house support from the University when it comes to research engagements could be emphasized and further developed. The university has a distance learning unit called "e-Learning Pedagogical Support Unit" (ePSU), which provides technical training and support of distance learning to the faculty members of the different University's Schools. However, the effectiveness of these training programs in the form of professional development relevant to distance learning was not shown during the meeting with the teaching staff. Faculty members can participate in training programs to increase their skills to conduct quality online teaching.

Answer:

All teaching staff completed the mandatory 36-hour seminar "Faculty Professional Development Seminar on Teaching and Learning" (which includes 12 weekly workshops, 3 hours each/ pls. refer to Annex D), that covered a variety of topics relevant to teaching, including online teaching techniques and practices (for the specific topics covered in each weekly workshop, please see Appendix A). Each weekly workshop has both a theoretical and practical aspect. The later requires teaching staff to edit and improve the teaching material in their courses (as it relates to the topic covered each week). Hence, the effectiveness of the Seminar can be seen in the quality of the course material in each of the courses, which constitute the improved versions of the courses after teaching staff attended the Seminar. All teaching faculty is using various techniques as to make the course more interactive. For example, real case scenarios' simulation, movie watching and analysis, using of small groups during teaching as to make the online sessions more interactive and weekly chat forums are some of the tools used to make the course more attractive and engaging.

Despite the fact, that faculty has invested a lot of its time in setting up both programs, it is true that more effort needs to be put in publications and conferences. However, most of our teaching faculty has developed local and international networks within its scientific area. Both programs are part of the European⁶ and International Association of Schools of Social Work.

The faculty serve as members in editorial boards in international journals (EJSW, journal of the School to be published in next year⁷), reviewers in international journals, editors in special issues in international journals, and they participate almost every year in international conferences (at least one is sponsored by the University) and they contribute with writing either articles in peer-reviewed journals, chapter contributions or books as projects' outcomes. Additionally, faculty members act as advisors in local authorities, ministries and other official bodies expanding their network within Cyprus and Greece. International reputation of the faculty is at good level.

⁶ In June 18th 2021, Prof. Christos Panagiotopoulos has been elected into the position of President of EASSW

⁷ <http://zealsshss.site/index.html>

Characteristically all faculty members are involved in International Projects, International Conferences (ECSWE, 2021; 2019).

Additionally faculty continues its professional development due to the continuous offer of seminars and trainings by the Faculty Training and Development Unit along with other programs offered from the University (*Research Skills and Development Programme - RSDP* (see link here: <https://www.unic.ac.cy/research-skills-development-programme/>)).

Strengths

The staff seems to be dedicated to enhance a sufficient teaching and research environment with a strong interaction with the surrounding society. Several best practices of outreach with research and development project were mentioned that exemplifies the staff's societal engagement and impact.

Answer:

We would like to thank the EEC for raising the area above as it happens to be one of the strong points of our program towards the development of an indigenous character too.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The staff's research output when it comes to publications, conferences etc. is fairly modest and should be strengthened more with substantial support by the University. The current level is currently insufficient. It would be recommendable to develop more international contributions in the master program by guest lecturers and professors.

Answer:

Despite the fact that faculty members are doing their best in order to produce high quality research, we do acknowledge the need for continuous international contribution. For more details in that area, please see the above (findings) response. We welcome the suggestion for more international contributions in the master program by guest lecturers and professors. This can be taken into consideration especially for the English program when it starts. Although we do occasionally invite guest lecturers (i.e. from the USA, Greece, the UK), this policy should be further enhanced and implemented on a more regular basis.

3. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

(ESG 1.4)

Findings

The EEC lacks essential statistics on acceptance, choices of courses, success/dropout rates etc. which complicates and limits our evaluations scope to determine on appropriate standards and progression for the program. There is also an uncertainty about the proportion of students following either the conventional or the e-learning program which blurs our abilities to recognize student achievements. Approximately half of the student population has not a social work degree on the undergraduate level. There were no explicit considerations how the master program handles the divergent student backgrounds to safeguard that the fundamental elements in the discipline of social work are fulfilled. The university's Moodle platform provides a wide range of learning analytics tools for monitoring student progression and performance based on collecting information from the student with lower grades, poor participation or with undelivered activities. The EEC would like to note that students benefit from a very good student-teacher ratio and student feedback is very positive.

Answer:

As shown on the site visit out of **199** students, **100** students are **social workers** and **60** students have either **relevant social science background** or prior/current **professional experience** in welfare agencies. The majority of students who are not social workers either work in refugee camps, local authorities or with various groups (i.e. juvenile offenders, elderly people, schools) thus their professional experience can support theory. Thirty nine students (n=39,24%) who do not have a social work background are always given the option of extra reading material and they are aware with an official letter sent with the acceptance letter, they will not be able to work as certified social workers due to the registration body of social workers in Greece⁸ and Cyprus⁹.

It is of utmost importance to mention that in Greece and Cyprus someone with a background in social sciences (sociology, psychology, anthropology, social policy, etc.) can work on a social work position despite the fact that he/she will not be called social worker. In addition, students from a different background to social sciences (i.e. education) on their personal statement make very clear that they want to follow this particular Master, because they work in an NGO and they want to enhance their academic knowledge or they want to change their professional career thus they decided to obtain a degree in Social Work.

Major courses ensure that all students are exposed to fundamental elements in the discipline of social work. Thus major courses focus in family concepts and theories, group theories and practices, management and organisation of social services, research methods, decision making process as a tool of involving service users in practice and contemporary methods of adult services. This major section covers areas of social work practice and it supports those who want to work as general practitioners to have an in-depth understanding of the above topics.

Apart from the required courses, all students will choose from the elective courses at least three out of the five offered or the final thesis plus another elective. One of the reasons that students can choose amongst five (5) elective plus the final thesis is because we wanted to address the needs of the majority of the students who are registered into the Master especially for this percentage (24%) who are not either social worker or of a related discipline.

Below, table 4 shows the actual number of students registered in specific elective courses in the last three semesters.

Courses	Spring 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Total
SOWK-530	20		9	
SOWK-531	16	10		
SOWK-532		7		
SOWK-534	28		19	

Please bear in mind that students who choose elective courses may be from different cohorts.

As already stated above, students could be offered the option of crash courses in order to get “a taste” of social work theory and practice, with introductory and methodology social work courses. Students who apply for this Master have shown on their application either a good knowledge of social work theory or their professional experience supports their learning experience. Students are aware of the lack of knowledge when they apply thus it is up to them to follow faculty’s instruction in order to improve their knowledge related to social work and be able to progress into the program.

Table 3 below provides ‘drop out’ data for the last three years. Almost one third of registered students the last three years have dropped out because of workload and difficulty to follow the material taught, family reasons

⁸ <https://www.skle.gr/index.php/el/>

⁹ <http://www.caswcyprus.org/>

and health problems. Drop out rates are not related to the educational background; as statistics indicate there is a rather balanced percentage of students scattered across all scientific disciplines (12 of 32 were social workers, 9 were social scientists and the rest had a background in education).

Table 3. Number of drop out students

Semester	Drop out
Spring 2021	5
Fall 2020	6
Spring 2020	0
Fall 2019	9
Spring 2019	4
Fall 2018	6
Spring 2018	2
Total	32

Regarding **accepted and rejected** students, 1 of 10 applications has been rejected. It has to be admitted that the majority of students meet the criteria of having either a social work background or relevant scientific degree and prior professional experience. The majority (75%) of our students are already professionals.

We would like to repeat that only the distance learning program is currently running, as no applications have been received for either the conventional Greek or the English program. However, the University is ready at any time to accept students in either modes of study and languages of instruction.

Strengths

A strength was noted around the very low drop-out rate (reported at 10%). In addition, student feedback was actively sought at course end and on an on-going basis throughout course delivery. However, the effectiveness of this information in terms of specific measures for improvement taken by the university was not shown.

Answer:

The faculty and the students have very close communication ensuring that there is a complete understanding of the learning material. Additionally, weekly activities provide the opportunity to teaching staff to provide feedback to students and monitor their progress. Another policy that keeps student drop-out rate low is the automatic monitoring of the daily and weekly engagements of students with the course which alarms teaching faculty in case of absence or non-active involvement.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A fully considered strategy for ensure the standards of social work academic requirements should be implemented, especially when considering students from other disciplines. More sophisticated forms of learning analytics mechanisms based on AI and specifically Machine Learning are encouraged to be used to monitor and predict student

performance and dropout in order to be able to provide timely corrective measures. This is strongly recommended in case of university's expansion plans through increasing the academic portfolio and the number of online students.

Answer:

The faculty welcomes this particular comment and recommends to the EEC that especially in international cohorts, based on screening of each application those students who have no relevance either theoretical or professional to social work to be offered a conditional offer based on the attendance of an introductory period of 6 months to social work concepts and skills as to enhance their knowledge and prepare them for the Master. It is important to say that in Greece and Cyprus many professionals who are hired in social work jobs are not necessarily of social work background. Thus, in our MSc we have students who may not be of social work or relevant background but they have professional experience from a social work position.

In addition, through the Faculty Portal, faculty members, Department Heads and Deans are provided with statistics on grade distribution, and performance at all levels: student, course, and program level as to identify low performing students. These students are then contacted by their academic advisor and can take advantage of the Student Success Center through which they can attend a series of tutorials at no additional cost.

As part of the early identification of students at risk, course/classroom attendance is also monitored electronically via the Faculty Portal and students who fail to attend a series of lectures, are contacted by their academic advisor via email and over the phone.

Various monitoring systems have also been implemented in UNIC's LMS as to monitor clickometry, participation and overall student engagement in course activities, forums and online discussions. More sophisticated forms of learning analytics mechanisms are scheduled to be implemented as to further enhance student monitoring and early identification of students at risk.

4. Learning resources and student support

(ESG 1.6)

Findings

Our assessment of physical resources is necessary incomplete as we were reliant on information provided the university through a virtual, promotional tour, and written documentation. From this material we assume the physical resources to be, but we were unable to verify this by visiting the site. Students have access to a number of facilities and it was ascertained to the EEC that the library gives access to major international journals as well as e-books. The impressive list of compulsory reading is not included in the e-library. The proposed courses have a complete syllabus plus a weekly study guide that, even if poorly presented, it includes relevant information: objectives, learning outcomes, material to use, activities to perform, and complementary bibliographic references and recommended study time. Each course has an adequate number of hours of synchronous communication between teacher and students.

The university's ePSU unit is responsible for providing pedagogical support for designing, creating, implementing and evaluating online courses. The Unit addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative and summative assessment in accordance with international standards. The Unit also provides a Faculty Handbook with guidelines for the development and delivery of distance learning that establishes the main characteristics a distance learning course should have. It is a good reference that guarantees the quality and homogeneity of the distance learning courses. Finally, the Unit includes certificated training programs to faculty members in the form of professional development workshops, seminars relevant to distance learning.

The university has an interesting set of services in place for student support (personal and academic counselling, student success centre, ...) Counselling is provided for students physical or mental health needs through the Centre for Research and Counselling Services (KESY). However, none of the students and graduates the EEC met, were aware of this possibility.

Answer:

Due to the online character of the visit, the faculty did not have the chance to show all services set for supporting students' needs. Students are not aware of KESY as they all are attending the online program. As far as the e-books and the e-journals provided by the library these can be found on this address <https://www.library.unic.ac.cy/>, searching either for e-books or e-journals.

Some of the databases student can search for social work books, articles or related material are [Social Science Database \(ProQuest\)](#) and [Sociology Database \(Proquest\)](#). These two particular databases can be found on the following url address <https://www.library.unic.ac.cy/databases?search=Social%20Work&l=>.

It is also important to highlight that teaching faculty has the option of ordering new books, registering in journals or order other material that is useful for the enhancement of the teaching material.

Strengths

The ePSU unit, even if not shown during the meeting, is considered a best practice, due to its potential structure, resources, infrastructures and services devoted to enhanced distance learning. The EEC believes that it can be a

powerful support for guaranteeing and maintaining the quality of the provided teaching while providing a good ground to faculty members to face distance learning. Support structures are in place for students who experience hardship, including those related to learning. The university provides support in addition to the governmental support for students experiencing economic difficulties. Access to on-line materials and on-line learning is well supported through a number of platforms.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

While the online courses include a good variety of learning materials (e-books and articles, videos, etc.) which are good for distance learning, the EEC suggests that some considerations should be taken into account to the recorded teleconferences and video lectures to be more usable and accessible for students: make them short, include the teacher in all the videos to provide non-verbal communication, and add subtitles for accessibility. Finally, the EEC would like to note that the compulsory material of the program (books, etc) should be made available for free to the students either from the university's library or from any other digital or physical repository. The facilities for counselling may be better announced so that all students are aware of the services available to them. The EEC also recommends re-evaluating the list of recommended books and offer additional possibilities for students to access these (or part of these) through the library.

Answer:

We thank the EEC for the above suggestions with special attention to books. Recorded teleconferences are available and accessible on the Moodle and received through email, to all students a few hours after the end of each recorded teleconference. In the weeks amongst the teleconferences students have the opportunity to listen to short videos where faculty present the main areas covered each week. These can even be seen on the English courses. The EEC suggestion "compulsory material... free to the students" is most welcome by the program faculty. Material needed for the courses is available on the library¹⁰ either in a format of e-books or e-journals or hard copies in case of ground courses.

¹⁰ <https://www.library.unic.ac.cy/ejournals-0>



5. Additional for doctoral programs

(ALL ESG)

N/A



7. Eligibility (Joint program)

(ALL ESG)

N/A

B. Conclusions and final remarks

The current generalist orientation of the conventional and online Master's degree program should be maintained and strengthened. The sense of the idea of a future specialisation in mental health cannot be assessed conclusively by the EEC. There is no data or evidence to support this. However, in view of the national practice of social work, the low number of students and the challenges in the current master's program, an additional specialisation does not appear to make sense from the EEC's point of view. It also conflicts with existing challenges: The high proportion of students from outside the discipline (around 50 percent without a BA in Social Work) is critical for the successful establishment and quality of the Master's program (data on the admission procedure and the proportion of rejections were not available). A Master's program in social work should qualify students in particular for the conceptualisation and management of projects (and programs) in practice, for socio-political positioning and for staff management and/or research.

Here, the consistency and workload of the current curriculum is unclear in essential points. In view of the low student numbers, the courses are presumably also open to students from other disciplines. Overall, measured against international standards, it is too arbitrary in terms of content and in relation to the competences that are to be imparted to the students.

The workload of the online offerings seems questionable, as it was studied in 1.5 years by students working full-time. This also raises questions about the assessment of the online courses. With regard to academic standards, the volume of publications and the integration of research into teaching should be improved. The nature of the program is compatible with distance learning delivery and the methodology provided is appropriate for the particular program of study.

Answer:

The faculty once more would like to thank the EEC for visiting our program and offering the opportunity to elaborate on the MSc in SW program. Through exchange of information, views and opinions and reading the EEC report, we are sure that we have provided all the necessary information to satisfy the EEC expectations.

The faculty will follow the advice of the EEC not to add a specialization in Mental Health.

Concluding this report and responding to the EEC final conclusions and remarks "the workload... online courses", we would like to highlight that 50% (table 1) of our students are part time. This is an indication that students recognise the workload of a postgraduate degree thus they register on a part-time basis. Table 3 seconds this statement and responds to the argument of the EEC that "the consistency and workload of the current curriculum is unclear in essential points". Additionally number of students who dropped out of the program in the past three years is 32. This number represents 30% of the total number accepted the past three years. Out of this 30% a number of students either request extension of their studies due to other issues that interfere with their studies or they drop out.

Table 3. Number of graduates the last three years

Semester	Graduates
Fall 2020	15
Spring 2020	13
Fall 2019	8
Spring 2019	13
Fall 2018	5
Spring 2018	11

Total	65
-------	----

As far as the comment of the EEC that “the workload of the online offerings seems questionable, as it was studied in 1.5 years by students working full-time. This also raises questions about the assessment of the online courses...” please either see answer given just above or earlier in this report.

The faculty believes that students, who work full time, may indeed have the pressure of time. Nevertheless, the following reasons make students respond effectively to the program needs satisfying the required workload:

1. Students who work can relate fast and efficiently with theory and understand the application of theory into practice due to their working experience.
2. Full time professionals choose to register in an online postgraduate program because they do not have to travel to study¹¹, so, the time they would have spent attending a conventional weekly program is spent for their “weekly activities” and reading material.
3. The E-Learning program has at least three online WebEx sessions where teaching faculty and students go through the teaching material, concerns and questions. During the teaching sessions, students communicate with emails and online sessions where necessary. One of the strengths of the Master’s Program, reported by students and highlighted by EEC, is the close relationship between students and teachers that ensure quality of teaching and quality of assessment.

So far, there was no indication from the student evaluations that the workload is way too much for full time students. Please, bear in mind that those students who have difficulties with their course-load have the option for part-time studies. The assessment of the online courses is based on EU and USA standards, following the same procedures as in EU and USA social work programs. The faculty would like to indicate to the EEC that the average student assessment of courses is above 4 with the highest rating being 5. During this assessment, students assess course content, teaching methods, teacher-student communication and course material.

Ending the responses’ sections to the EEC report the faculty of the program would like:

- a) To build on the strengths of the program, for example, close relationship with teaching faculty, satisfactory number of online activities, good course material, courses relevant to social work practice, generic character of the Master and
- b) Work on the weaknesses such as research output, adding contemporary references, and increase ways of helping students with diverse background during their studies.

¹¹ Students from Greece should spend 2-3 hours travelling or they would need to stay for a few days away from home in order to attend the course, as SW postgraduate programs are offered only in Northern and Central Greece.

Annex A

University of Nicosia Internal Quality Assurance Committee (UNIQAC) – Composition and terms of operation.

The University of Nicosia Internal Quality Assurance Committee (UNIQAC) comprises of the following members, in line with The Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws, 2015 and 2016:

1. The Vice Rector for Academic Affairs: Chair
2. One TRF representative from each School with significant research contribution and extensive academic experience / holding the rank of at least Assistant Professor
3. Up to two TRF with extensive experience in Quality Assurance, including one actively involved in the delivery of Distance Learning programmes / courses
4. One staff member representing the staff
5. Two student representatives (one 1st Cycle student, one 2nd or 3rd Cycle student).

Selection and Term of Office of the UNIQAC's members:

1. The responsibility of the selection of the TRF representatives to the UNIQAC is with the UNIQAC Selection Committee (UNIQACSC) comprising of the Rector, Senior Vice Rector and Vice Rectors. UNIQACSC is chaired by the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs. Self-nominations are submitted to UNIQACSC together with a cover letter and a CV within a specified deadline and following a call sent by the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs.
2. The student representatives are selected by the Student Affairs Committee of the Senate, following consultation with the Student Union. The 1st Cycle student must have completed at the University at least 60 ECTS and have a minimum CPA of 2.0.
3. The term of office of all UNIQAC's members is 3 years. In the case of the student members they also serve for 3 years or for the duration of their studies whichever comes first.

University of Nicosia Internal Quality Assurance Committee (UNIQAC) – Responsibilities

1. Reports to the Senate through the Chair of the Committee;
2. Develops a quality culture at the University;
3. Is in charge of academic quality assurance at the Institution level;
4. Develops, implements, monitors, audits and evaluates a QA framework which comprises of the strategy, standards, policies, processes, mechanisms;
5. Provides support in all academic/professional internal and external accreditation activities and prepares documents, reports for external quality assurance requirements and requests;
6. Develops indices and quality measures/indicators;
7. Develops QA manual, templates and tools;
8. Develops IT tools to assist the recording, processing and production of useful information;
9. Maintains a central repository of QA reports, data and information;
10. Oversees the QA of Schools, Departments and programmes;
11. Oversees QA pertaining to the Distance Learning operations of the University;
12. Suggests improvements to the university, its processes, its structure, resources, programmes, teaching/learning methods, etc.;
13. Ensures quality of teaching/learning and research;

14. Establishes effective channels of communication to ensure the dissemination of good QA practices within the University;
15. Prepares reports for QA audits;
16. Deals with all QA issues pertaining to academic issues

Departmental Internal Evaluation Committee

Internal Evaluation Committee	Title and Rank
Marios Adonis	Head of Social Sciences Department Associate Professor
Mark Sullman	Professor
Marianna Galazi	3 rd Year Student, BSc Psychology

The Internal Programme Evaluation Process (IPEP)

The Internal Programme Evaluation Process (IPEP) is conducted as follows:

1. IPEP is initiated 2 years after the accreditation of a programme by the Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (DIPAE). It is a 2-year process and is completed 1 year before the 5-year DIPAE accreditation of the program expires, which is within the timeframe for submitting the programme for re-accreditation. In what follows, X denotes the year during which IPEP is initiated. The process is initiated at the beginning of October of an academic year.
2. The Department to which the programme belongs will appoint the Internal Team of Reviewers (ITR) and the External Team of Reviewers (ETR):

ITR

- 2 senior TRF from the programme (excluding the co-ordinator); one is appointed as chair
- 1 student from the programme

ETR

- 1 faculty member from another University who is an expert in the programme area
- 1 industry expert (where applicable)

– **November X.**

3. Each Programme coordinator will complete DIPAE's relevant form(s) (those submitted for programme accreditation) and will send them to ITR and ETR.
– **December X.**
4. ITR will solicit feedback for the programme from faculty, students, alumni and industry experts and will examine relevant documents, course syllabi, learning and assessment material, human and physical infrastructure, etc.
– **April X+1**
5. Each member of ETR will evaluate independently the programme and complete DIPAE's External Programme Evaluation form(s) and send it/them to the chair of ITR
– **April X+1**
6. ITR will evaluate the programme and complete DIPAE's External Programme Evaluation form(s) incorporating and clearly indicating ETR's comments/evaluation and send the form(s) to the Programme coordinator
– **June X+1**
7. The Programme coordinator will prepare a report based on the ITR's form(s) and present it to the Department Council and the Dean.
– **October X+1**

8. Changes to the programme curriculum, requested budget for the programme, hiring (if any) of new faculty members will take place, subject to the approval of the Department, School, Senate and Council.
– **Academic year X+1/X+2.**
9. The programme coordinator will amend DIPAE's relevant form(s) (completed as per point 3), under the instructions/in consultation with the Head of Department/Dean and submit it/them to the University Internal Quality Assurance Committee (UIQAC).
– **April X+2.**
10. UIQAC will provide feedback to the programme coordinator.
– **June X+2**
11. The programme coordinator will prepare the final form(s) for submission to DIPAE.
– **September X+2**

Annex B

Course Code	Course Title	Credits (ECTS)
SOWK-512	Social Research Methods	10
Department	Semester	Prerequisites
Department of Social Sciences/Social Work Programme	A, B	None
Type of Course	Field	Language of Instruction
Required	Social Work	Greek/English
Level of Course	Year of Study	Mode of Delivery
2 nd Cycle		
Course Leader(s)	Telephone	Email
Dr. Stefeanos Spaneas	+357 22842 xxx	Spaneas.s@unic.ac.cy
Appointments with Students	Course webpage	
Personal arrangement, skype and webex sessions	http://moodle.lll.unic.ac.cy	

Objectives of the Course:

The main objectives of the course are to:

- Understand in-depth the concepts, theories and processes for the design and implementation of social research;
- relate social research to the daily activities and the professional practice of Social Sciences;
- understanding of theoretical and conceptual issues related to social research;
- understand the interrelated design phases of research process and learning strategies to collect data;
- train and understand the different research strategies;
- train and understand the research analysis strategies;
- write research papers

Learning Outcomes:

Upon the completion of the course students are expected to:

1. Become capable to identify the various theoretical examples that are related to the studies of social work with various research methodologies;
2. understand the epistemological assumptions which underlie the qualitative and quantitative methodologies;
3. demonstrate ability to define research problems by utilising quantitative and qualitative methods, to select appropriate methods for formulating research questions, and implement social research programmes by using various research strategies;
4. identify how various research tools are constructed in relation to the particular research questions;
5. apply social research techniques, following an analytical design, implementation and quantitative or qualitative data collection.

Course Contents:

1. Introduction to social research and Presentation of theoretical approaches / Principles of Ethics
2. Design and implementation of Quantitative Research
3. Utilisation of questionnaires
4. Sampling process
5. **Data analysis using SPSS**
6. **(Probability & hypothesis testing)**
7. **Descriptive statistics, inferential statistics and distributions)**
8. **Presenting quantitative data**
9. **Comparing 2 groups: The T-test**
10. Design and implementation of qualitative research/
11. Qualitative Interviews.
12. Design and implementation of focus groups research strategy.
13. case study
14. Ethnographic Study
15. Design a social research by using the Internet

Learning Activities and Teaching Methods:

Lectures, Practical Exercises (**use of SPSS**), **analysis of data set**, and Assignments.

Assessment Methods:

Design Project (essay), activities on SPSS, and Final Exam.

Required Textbooks/Reading:

Authors	Title	Publisher	Year	ISBN
Robson, C. επιμ. Μιχαλοπούλου, Κ.	Η έρευνα του πραγματικού κόσμου	Gutenberg - Γιώργος & Κώστας Δαρδανός,	2007	978-960-01-1132- 3
Ιωσηφίδης Θ.	Ποιοτικές μέθοδοι έρευνας στις κοινωνικές επιστήμες	Αθήνα: Εκδ. Κριτική	2008	978-960-218- 599-5
Ιωσηφίδης Θ. και Σπυριδάκης, Μ. (επιμ.)	Ποιοτική κοινωνική έρευνα: μεθοδολογικές προσεγγίσεις και ανάλυση δεδομένων	Αθήνα: Εκδ. Κριτική	2006	978-960-218- 451-6

Δημητρόπουλος, Ε,Γ.	Εισαγωγή στην Μεθοδολογία της Επιστημονικής Έρευνας. Προς ένα Συστημικό Δυναμικό Μοντέλο Μεθοδολογίας Επιστημονικής Έρευνας	3 ^η εκδ.).Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Ελλην	2001	
Sarantakos, S.	Social Research	3rd edition. London: Macmillan	2005	

Recommended Textbooks/Reading:

Authors	Title	Publisher	Year	ISBN
Mason, J. Μετ. Κυριαζή	Η διεξαγωγή της ποιοτικής έρευνας	Αθήνα: Ελληνικά Γράμματα	2003	
Bryman, A.	Social Research Methods	3rd edition Oxford: Oxford University Press	2008	
Denzin, N. K., Lincoln Y.S. (Ed.),	The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research	3Rev Ed, Sage, Thousands Oaks, CA	2005	
Johnstone, P. L.	Mixed Methods, Mixed Methodology: Health Services Research in Practice,	' Qualitative Health Research, 14(2): 259-271	2004	
Denscombe, Martyn	Ground rules for good research a 10 point guide for social researchers	Buckingham: Open University Press	2002	
SPSS survival manual (6th edition).	Pallant, J.	Open University Press	2016	978-0335261543

Annex C

Course Code	Course Title	Credits (ECTS)
SOWK-522 DL	Management and Leadership of Social Care Organisations	10
Department	Semester	Prerequisites
Department of Social Sciences/Social Work Programme	A,B,C	None
Type of Course	Field	Language of Instruction
Required	Social Work	Greek/English
Level of Course	Year of Study	Mode of Delivery
2 nd Cycle		
Course Leader(s)	Telephone	Email
Dr. Despina Cochliou	+357 22842213	cochliou.d@unic.ac.cy
Appointments with Students	Course webpage	
Personal arrangement, skype and webex sessions	http://moodle.lll.unic.ac.cy	

Objectives of the Course:

The main objectives of the course are to:

1. Critically discuss what is meant by leadership
2. Examine how the advanced practitioner acts as a lead in practice setting and in policy development, within a multidisciplinary team, or in partnership with other professionals.
3. To explore and be able to elaborate on the theories of management for social care organisations based on examples from European countries and USA.
4. To understand the relationship of administration and social policy

Learning Outcomes:

Upon the completion of the course students are expected to:

1. Critically evaluate how leadership has been defined within practice.
2. Critically examine theories of leadership and their relevance to practice.
3. Critically discuss external influences that shape the development of Leaders.
4. Critically discuss the implications of decentralisation for the practitioner as leader and resource manager. Develop an understanding of personal leadership styles and how this can shape practice.

Course Contents:

1. Introduction to Social Services Administration and Social Policy
2. Theoretical perspectives in Social Policy and Administration
3. Service Delivery Systems and Welfare Systems
4. Integrated Delivery of Social Care and Welfare Policies
5. Management & Leadership
6. Leadership Theories
7. Management Information Systems for Social Services
8. Organisational Culture and Behaviour
9. Organizational knowledge management
10. Motivation theories
11. Human Resources Management
12. Organizational Change and Management

Learning Activities and Teaching Methods:

Lectures, Practical Exercises and Assignments.

Assessment Methods:

Design Project (essay) and Final Exam.

Required Textbooks/Reading:

Authors	Title	Publisher	Year	ISBN
Hafford-Letchfield, T.	<i>Management and Organisations in Social Work.</i>	Learning Matters.	2006	
Kirkpatrick, I., Ackroyd, S. and Walker, R.	<i>The New Managerialism and Public Service Professions: Change in Health, Social Services, and Housing</i>	Palgrave Macmillan	2005	
Netting F.E., & O'Connor M.K.	<i>Organisation practice. A social worker's guide to understanding human services</i>	Pearson Education Inc.	2003	

Recommended Textbooks/Reading:

Authors	Title	Publisher	Year	ISBN
Aldgate, J., Healy, L., Malcolm, B., Pine, B., Rose, W., Seden, J.,	<i>Enhancing Social Work Management. Theory and Best Practice from the UK and USA.</i>	Jessica Kingsley Publications	2007	
Doherty, T., Horne, T.,	<i>Managing Public Services. Implementing Changes – A Thoughtful Approach.</i>	Routledge	2002	
Weinbach, R.W.,	<i>The Social Worker as a Manager. A Practical Guide to Success.</i>	Pearson	2003	



Annex D

Faculty Professional Development Seminar on Teaching and Learning Theory and Practice Seminar Schedule

Week 1: Developing Descriptors of Learning in the 21st century

Week 2: Cognitive and neuroscience research: Implications for education and learning

Week 3: Project and Problem Based Learning

Week 4: Developing a course with critical and creative focus

Week 5: Developing effective learning environments

Week 6: Including students with diverse needs in a university classroom

Week 7: Measuring learning outcomes and Assessment Methods for online and face-to-face courses

Week 8: Using interactive and collaborative tools in online learning

Week 9: Using video and multimedia in an online course

Week 10: Online Learning and Adult Education

Week 11: Library Resources & Open Educational Resources (OER)

Week 12: Effective use of Learning Management Systems (LMS) in an online course

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Prof Klimis Mastoridis	Dean	
Marios Adonis	Head of Department	
Prof Christos Panagiotopoulos	Program Coordinator	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	

Date: 14.09.2021

