

Doc. 300.1.2

Higher Education Institution's Response

Date: 23/07/2021

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) Cyprus

- **Town:** Larnaca

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

In Greek:

Πτυχίο Επιστημών του Αθλητισμού και της Άσκησης

In English:

Sport and Exercise Sciences [4 years/240 ECTS/BSc
(Hons)]

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: N/A

In English: N/A



The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws of 2015 to 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*
 - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*



UCLAN CYPRUS NOTE

We would like to thank the members of the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for their valuable feedback regarding the accreditation of the BSc (Hons) Sport and Exercise Sciences programme offered by the School of Sciences at UCLan Cyprus. We are very pleased that the Committee recognises the strengths of the programme as a result of the work of the academic team involved in the design and delivery of the programme. We are committed to maintain the excellent student learning experience we offer and continue evaluating and enhancing the programme's quality of learning and teaching. As such, we have taken into due consideration the Committee's constructive feedback and have embraced it in efforts to develop further the BSc (Hons) Sport and Exercise Sciences programme, as it is illustrated in the following sections.

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

EEC REPORT

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The general impression of the programme was very good and considered to be consistent with European standards. The admissions procedure is clear, the programme is well structured and appropriate. The study programme has the clear competitive advantage of being delivered in English and having a double certificate with professional recognition in two countries (UK and Cyprus).

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Robust governance structures are in place to ensure that the quality of taught provision is at the required level. The School has academic quality leads that sit on the main Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee of the University. The School also has representation on the University Student Experience and Engagement Committee and the Research and Innovation Committee. These committees monitor the implementation of quality assurance policy across the different domains of the business.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

A good range of work experience placement opportunities is available to students on the programme in the final year(s) of their studies. These placement opportunities are representative of some of the career pathways available to Sport and Exercise Science students, e.g. elite sports performance, physical activity for health and physical education, perhaps with more emphasis on the latter. The students place a lot of value on these placements but feel that more opportunities to engage in work experience during the earlier stages of the programme, either via such placements or summer internships, would bring added value and increase the number of hours engaged in work placement activities. For this reason, **the EEC recommend that the programme team consider ways to increase opportunities (and support for) work experience earlier in the programme. We also recommend exploring ways to access to public schools for placement opportunities but understand the political challenges this may bring.** In addition, **students expressed a need for more career advice throughout their studies, in particular, the career opportunities open to them as graduates of the Sport and Exercise Sciences and how they can use the skills they develop to open up career opportunities.** Employability is always an important issue. **By embedding professional experiences earlier in the course and working to ensure that all classes have a balanced weight of theoretical and practical application, students will be more confident of being “ready-to-work” on graduation.** It also seems that there is a need to more clearly delineate the final year consultancy project from the work experience placements in the final year of study. Most students chose to undertake a research project in their final year so it is unclear what the value of the consultancy project is to the programme, or how it differs from the work experience placements. **The EEC recommend that the difference between the independent research project and consultancy project is more clearly defined in the course descriptions and learning outcomes.** Finally, although the links with UCLan-UK brings many benefits for the programme, this relationship should not constrain alternative development perspectives. **The EEC recommends that the Programme Team and the Faculty should also be looking to build other collaborations and partnerships, especially related to the interests of potential students.**

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

‘the EEC recommend that the programme team consider ways to increase opportunities (and support for) work experience earlier in the programme’.

We agree with the EEC and we consider it important for our students to be able to practise the knowledge and skills acquired through their studies in real world environments and beyond the programme curriculum. Although we currently offer such opportunities to our students through our several partnerships with sports related organisations (e.g. sports related summer schools, fitness centres, athletic clubs) as well as our own sports lab, we are committed to continue and enhance our efforts. Further opportunities will be provided to the students for work experience in an extracurricular and volunteering manner during the summer and also in parallel to their studies. Moreover, more efforts will be made to further engage our existing network of collaborators and to establish new partnerships. These work experience providers can play a vital role in supporting the students who are willing to volunteer.

‘We also recommend exploring ways to access to public schools for placement opportunities but understand the political challenges this may bring’.

We agree with the EEC and steps towards a liaison with the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth have already be taken for this purpose. However, we also agree that this action might showcase political barriers. As an additional measure, the team has also contacted different private schools, fully accredited in the Republic of Cyprus in view of offering placement opportunities to our students for the next academic years.

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We acknowledge the concern of the EEC and we would like to note that currently we offer several employability related activities to the students at the programme level as well as the University level. Career and Professional Development Days are being organised on an annual basis at the University, where various representatives from companies and organisations are giving career-related presentations, webinars and talks. During this time, students also have the opportunity to engage with those representatives and build a network, get acquainted with the profile of the organisations, learn more about the area of expertise of various industries and be informed on employment opportunities. Furthermore, one-on-one sessions are organised between the students and their Academic Advisor throughout their studies, with at least one session per year focusing on future careers and opportunities. Moreover, the University’s Career Officer is available to provide guidance to the students upon request. Nevertheless, we understand that the EEC’s recommendation originated from their discussion with the students and that there is a need to offer more support to the students regarding their future careers. To this end, we will ensure to better inform the students about the opportunities available to them as well as enhance our employability related activities. It should be noted that beyond the industry specific employability related seminars organised for the students, following the discussions with and recommendations of the EEC during the online visit, for the new academic year, we have already planned seminars for our students on setting up their own business, as this is a common career path for our graduates.



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‘The EEC recommend that the difference between the independent research project and consultancy project is more clearly defined in the course descriptions and learning outcomes.’

We acknowledge the fact that there was no clear distinction between the final year Consultancy Project module and the Work Experience Placement module and similarly, between the Independent Research Project module and the Consultancy Project module. During the EEC’s online visit, this matter was discussed and the EEC provided extensive and constructive feedback to the programme team. Reflecting on this feedback and having the students’ best interest in mind, the team has decided to remove the optional Consultancy Project module from the programme. In addition to the feedback received by the EEC, this decision was also based on the fact that for the last 7 years of the operation of the programme, none of our students selected the Consultancy Project module, as all students find the Independent Research Project module more valuable and at the same time, they can acquire the knowledge and skills offered through the Consultancy Project, through the Work Experience Placement module and the Independent Research Project module. We believe that this change will eliminate any potential confusion.

‘The EEC recommends that the Programme Team and the Faculty should also be looking to build other collaborations and partnerships, especially related to the interests of potential students.’

We agree with the EEC’s recommendation. We consider it vital to build and sustain external relationships and develop a strong network of partners as well as long-term collaborations with depth and breadth. We strongly believe that our network of collaborators, especially industry partners and organisations, cannot only benefit the research and outreach activities of the programme, but more importantly, it can benefit our students and their learning experience and future employability. For us, pursuing new partnerships and collaborations is a continuous process and we always strive to enhance our existing network. We would like to inform the EEC that further exploration of collaborations and partnerships is already undergoing with the support of the academic team. These expansions of the collaborative network consist of national and international partners. At an international level such examples include football academies with emphasis on athletes’ dual career opportunities (e.g. PFSA, International Football Academy), academic institutions (e.g. South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland), participation in Erasmus+ Sports collaborative Partnerships (e.g. Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Instituto Polytechnico de Leiria, University of Luxembourg, University of Bozen-Bolzano), etc. At a national level examples include the Cyprus Anti-Doping Authority, the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, Pancyprian Footballers Association (PASP), etc.

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment

(ESG 1.3)

EEC REPORT

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Teaching, learning and student assessment procedures meet the relevant quality criteria. A good balance of theory and practical training is built into the programme and this extends to modular assessments, which tend to include a mix of written and practical examinations. Assessments are moderated internally and externally (depending on level of the programme) to help ensure that marking standards are appropriate and have been applied consistently and fairly. There is a strong emphasis on developing the skills needed for evidence-based practice, with Faculty staff at all levels having a strong commitment to research-informed teaching. The level of practical skills training overall, and across core sport science disciplines (i.e. physiology, biomechanics and psychology), is generally very good. There is a small Sport and Exercise Science laboratory, which includes all main items of equipment needed to support the development of practical skills in these core disciplines.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The students hold the programme in high regard and describe the teaching staff as having a solid character and respected reputation. They also feel that the teaching staff are very well qualified and their research-teaching synergies are clearly present and developed, as well as believing that their programme of study has a similar level of importance to other programmes in the School and wider university. Learner-teacher relationships are strong and there is a very supportive learning culture. There is clear evidence of flexible approaches to teaching and learning, which has been further emphasised during the Covid-19 lockdown period. Students commented very favourably on the remote support and quality of their learning experiences during the lockdown period, as well as the flexibility and adaptability of staff in maintaining student contact and in ensuring that some level of practical skills training is retained within the programme. Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process. The Sport and Exercise Science laboratory is highly valued by the students and provides excellent opportunities to interact with, and apply their learning to, elite level athletes in the context of physiological assessments and intellectual input into training regimens. The programme's demographic profile is made up of high achieving students, those with a more vocational outlook and mature students who may have non-traditional qualifications but considerable professional experience. Programme staff have a good awareness of the challenges associated with teaching disparate groups and make every effort to adjust their learning and teaching style to meet the needs of specific students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The Sport and Exercise Science laboratory is a highly valued facility amongst the students and is central to developing the practical skills many students will need in their future careers. There is a perception amongst programme staff that more career opportunities will be available to students graduating from the programme within the realm of elite level sport in the future. The ability to undertake accurate and precise physiological and biomechanical assessments is fundamental to careers in elite sport and has broad application for graduates entering the field of *exercise for health*, across a whole spectrum of populations, i.e. individuals at risk of developing non-communicable diseases and those with long-term (chronic) conditions. This emphasises the importance of the laboratory facility to students on the programme, and **the ECC**

recommends that every effort is made to maintain the quality and robustness of the equipment used for physiological and biomechanical assessments, while also taking every opportunity to extend this resource, should appropriate financial support become available. This laboratory facility will also be invaluable for the School's plans to implement its own programme of PhD scholarships.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

'the ECC recommends that every effort is made to maintain the quality and robustness of the equipment used for physiological and biomechanical assessments, while also taking every opportunity to extend this resource, should appropriate financial support become available.'

We agree with the EEC that UCLan Cyprus Sports laboratory is a highly valued facility amongst the students and is central to developing the practical skills many students will need in their future careers. As a result, the team and the University are committed to maintaining and continuously enhancing the existing laboratory equipment. We keep a consistent programme of servicing and maintaining the equipment at a high level, to ensure the equipment's robustness and longevity as well as to safeguard the health and safety of the users. Moreover, on an annual basis, the Laboratory Director along with the Course Leader review the resource needs of the laboratory and the programme as well as any new technologies/equipment available and how such technologies/equipment can be embedded in the laboratory and the programme. According to their review, during the yearly budget planning for the next academic year, they make any relevant budget requests for the purchasing of new equipment. Their request is then considered, and once approved, it is included in the budget plan for the next academic year. For requests related to expensive equipment (e.g. more than 50K), a long-term budget planning will be discussed so that the equipment can be acquired.

It is also worth mentioning that the laboratory serves more than 250 professional soccer players each year. Professional soccer players undergo through body composition analysis, isokinetic testing utilising the Humac norm and rehabilitation system (CSMi Medical & Solution, USA), cardiopulmonary exercise testing (CPET), flexibility as well as vertical jump performance assessments. In addition to the male and female professional soccer players, the laboratory serves semi-professional soccer players, tennis players, futsal players, professional shooters, track and field athletes, triathlon athletes, professional referees as well as individuals recovering from different injuries and/or surgical procedures (utilising the Humac Norm and Rehabilitation device). Last but not least, registered nutritionists refer their clients to the lab, in order to have their resting metabolic rate tested before the creation of their dietary plan. Conclusively, the lab's purpose is threefold 1) to provide the students with hands on experience on the latest advancements on fitness testing and assessment, 2) to allow students to conduct quality research with valid and reliable data and 3) to offer services to the community through the performance assessments, counselling, consultations and intervention programs.

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

EEC REPORT

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Most teaching staff are qualified to PhD level and have relevant expertise in the disciplines needed to deliver all modules on the programme. Teaching on modules is generally shared by more than one member of staff having the relevant skill-set for the particular module. Many staff are actively engaged in research and have a developing research publication profile. All staff are encouraged to work towards and achieve Fellowship of the Higher Education Authority, a respected teaching qualification which demonstrates a broad understanding of effective approaches to learning and teaching as a key contribution to high-quality student learning. Staff undergo an annual appraisal, in which their progress over the last 12 months is evaluated and objectives set for the next 12 months across the domains of Learning and Teaching, Research and Administrative Roles. The staff workload model is centred on a 40%:40%:20% balance of the latter. At the present time, most of the incentivisation for staff to engage in research is based on this aspiration to provide a 40% time allocation for research in the workload. Small levels of competitive internal funding are also available to pump-prime new research projects.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Staff in the School fully appreciate the value that active engagement in research brings to the taught provision. The School is currently working towards implementing its own programme of PhD studentships and this will be a step forward in raising its research profile. The recently developed research partnership with academic staff from UCLan-UK via a newly developed Research Centre for Applied Sport (and its Special Interest Group) is another example of the School's commitment to developing its research profile and establishing valuable international collaborations. Additionally, the School has recently expanded its staff resource, thereby broadening its areas of research expertise in the sub-disciplines of Sport & Exercise Psychology and Sports Rehabilitation. These initiatives will help to ensure that the School's taught provision is underpinned by high-quality research and that undergraduate students benefit from research-informed teaching via involvement in ongoing research projects and access to empirical research data in their studies.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The teaching staff are young, having the advantage of being able to communicate very effectively with the students and providing interesting amounts of energy to course. However, it is also true that deeper reflection of the groundings of Sports Sciences and cutting-edge (research-informed) application of knowledge may not be possible with such a young staff-base and so the programme would benefit from the input of more experienced academics. **The EEC would like to suggest that the programme would benefit from inviting international world experts to provide occasional teaching and research guidance.** This last point was particularly evident in the challenges of clearly identifying two or three core topics in which the Programme Team aims to excel in, and produce original research that can be transferred to the teaching programmes. The Programme's young staff-base also means that many members of the team are still developing their research profile. The research initiatives (cited above in "Strengths") that are being implemented by the School are commended by the EEC, will improve its research profile, and have much potential to bring lots of added value to the BSc programme by providing a much stronger platform for research-informed teaching. In particular, **the EEC recommends that the university encourages and support staff in developing**

their research profiles, and implementing its own programme of PhD studentships is seen as an important step forward, in this respect. In addition, advertising self-funded PhD opportunities could become a feasible proposition with the implementation of local student fee structures.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

'The EEC would like to suggest that the programme would benefit from inviting international world experts to provide occasional teaching and research guidance.'

We agree with the EEC and we consider it important for our course to be benefitted by inviting external international experts.

The School and the programme team are very supportive to host recognised visiting senior academic staff to the programme. Noteworthy is that the School recently applied for a teaching and research Fulbright incoming mobility so that we can host an established academic from the US in the area of sports. Beyond visiting positions, during each academic year, there are many guest lectures, seminars and workshops organised for our students, all delivered by external visitors (academics and practitioners). Some examples of visitors from the last few years include:

Academics

- Dr David Grecic, Head of Research & Innovation, Director of the Institute for Coaching and Performance (ICaP), UCLan.
- Prof. Phoebe Constantinou, Health Promotion and Physical Education, Ithaca College, NY.
- Prof. John Hughson, Director of the IFI and Chair in Sport and Cultural Studies, UCLan
- Dr Howard Hurst, Senior Lecturer in Sport, Exercise & Nutritional Sciences, UCLan
- Dr Antonis Alexopoulos, President of Cyprus Association of Graduates of Physical Education and Sports Science (ΠΑΣΥΠΕΦΑΑ)
- Dr Michael Petrou, President of the Cyprus Anti-Doping Authority (CyADA)
- Dr Klea Hadjistefanou Papaellina, University of Cyprus
- Dr Nicos Peristianis, President of Universitas Foundation

Practitioners

- Jim Ferris, Founder of GYM Ferris Fitness. Seminar on functional training techniques.
- Dr Samuel Lopez Carril, PhD in social media and sport management.
- Dr Katerina Michael, Systemic family therapist, psychologist, ECP/EFTA.
- Andria Louca, Owner of Lockdown Cross Fit. Seminar on cross fit training techniques.
- Flora Giorgalla, registered nutritionist/Dietitian. Seminar on dietary recommendations for elite soccer players and youth athletes.
- Evangelos Evaggelou, registered physical therapist. Seminar on blood flow restriction training.
- Leonidas Papadakis, CEO and founder of S11Ltd, Head athletic performance at Omonoia FC. Seminar on internal and external loading in professional football players.
- Antonis Kezos, UEFA B and A certified. Seminar on professional soccer players' performance.
- Ntinos Foinikarides, Journalist RIK. Seminar on Sports, Politics and Society
- Mikaello Papadakis, Marketing Manager Total Sport. Seminar on Media, Society and Sport
- Kaiti Loukaidou Hadjikyriakou. Cyprus Sports Organisation (CSO)
- Costas Theodotou, Referee Academy, Cyprus Football Association. Seminar on Gender Issues and Sport

- Russel Rowell, Operation lead, Hawk-Eye Innovations. Seminar on VAR system, Cyprus Sports Organisation
- Lefteris Christou, National Tennis Athlete. Seminar on Sports Science support provision

We acknowledge that in the last two academic years visiting lecturers and mobilities were very limited due to the COVID-19 related international travel restrictions, but we did arrange for some online seminars to take place for our students. For example, some online seminars were delivered by representatives of

- EXOS: Human Performance Company,
- American College of Sport Medicine (ACSM),
- National Academy of Sport Medicine (NASM),
- International Physical Literacy Association (IPLA) and
- Human Kinetics Publishing House.

Once the COVID-19 pandemic is over, we plan to actively pursue further invitations to external academics to deliver guest lectures or even hold a visiting appointment with us, as well as take further advantage of our Erasmus collaborations for teaching mobilities. We believe that such opportunities will assist in enhancing the programmes profile and more importantly, our students' learning experience.

“the EEC recommends that the university encourages and support staff in developing their research profiles, and implementing its own programme of PhD studentships is seen as an important step forward, in this respect”

We would like to thank the EEC for the positive feedback with regards to the research environment of the programme and emphasise our commitment to continue supporting our academics and enhancing our research environment.

As acknowledged by the EEC, the School is continuously pursuing new ways to enhance its research environment and more importantly, provide further support to our academics to develop their research portfolio. This is evident by our recent research partnership with UCLan UK for the joint development of the Research Centre for Applied Sport, Physical Activity and Performance along with its Special Interest Groups (Applied Sport Science and Technology, Sport in Society, Health-related and Lifelong Physical Activity and Exercise, and Expertise Development: Coaching, Human Performance and Teams). The primary aim of the centre is to bring together young, early career researchers and well established researchers in the area of sports, from both Universities, for the purpose of implementing innovative, state-of-the-art collaborative research projects. Although the development of the centre is very recent (December of 2020), it has already proven beneficial for UCLan Cyprus academics, as they submitted joint proposals for research funding and they are currently co-supervising two new PhD students with UCLan academics. An additional benefit of the centre is the research mentoring of UCLan Cyprus academics by very well-established researchers of the centre. The University has developed a formal mentoring process between the two campuses, where academics from both campuses have regular online meetings as groups and as individuals. As these initiatives were implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic with many restrictions for physical meetings and travelling, we hope that once the pandemic is over we will be able to also have research mobilities and physical meetings for the members of the centre.

Moreover, it should be noted that the School supports the mobility of academics for research purposes, especially to other well-known research institutions in the area of sports. This is materialised through the



School's collaborations with other institutions, Erasmus mobilities and any other opportunities that may arise. Our latest example is the successful application for a Fulbright mobility, where Dr. Efstathios Christodoulides will be based at Ithaca College, NY, a leading US university in the area of sport and physical education, for 4 months, conducting research with the Ithaca College sports team.

Furthermore, the programme currently has strong collaborations with different academic institutions and international research teams, including: Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Instituto Polytecnico de Leiria in Portugal, University of Luxembourg, University of Bozen-Bolzano, South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland, International Physical Literacy Association (IPLA), Kauno Kolegija/ University of Applied Sciences in Lithuania, and many more. Evidence of the effectiveness of these collaborations is the submission of three Erasmus Sports proposals during the last month alone.

With regards to offering our own PhD programme, as noted by the EEC, UCLan Cyprus does not currently offer PhD degrees, but at the same time, academics of the programme act as PhD supervisors for PhD students from other Universities, primarily UCLan UK. The School is positive in offering its own PhD degrees and we believe that this will be an additional benefit to assist the School in further enhancing its research environment. Our intentions have been communicated to the University and discussions are currently taking place to explore the possibility of offering joint PhD programmes between UCLan Cyprus and UCLan UK, or independent PhD programmes by UCLan Cyprus.

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

EEC REPORT

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The student entry tariff and progression is comparable with other Sport and Exercise Science programmes across Europe. The admission requirements and progression, recognition and certification policies for the programme are clear and well-defined.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

A robust system has been established for student engagement, which includes well-defined processes for monitoring attendance and addressing the needs and challenges of students that are not engaging at the right level and/or underperforming. Student progression through the programme is accurately monitored and attainment of good degrees (First class, upper-second) is comparable with other Sport and Exercise Science programmes across Europe. Students place high value on the Dual Degree award, which sets it apart from competing programmes in the region. Mature students with non-traditional qualifications are interviewed prior to enrolment to ensure they have the necessary prior experience and study skills to succeed on the programme. A good level of attention is given to English language proficiency. Support for English language development is available prior to students enrolling on the first year of the programme via WISER (a group of services and tools to improve English language academic skills) and the IELTS entry standard was recently raised to 5.5. Also, for students with non-traditional qualifications at the time of application, the University provides summer period lessons in English, after which candidates have to pass an English exam before they can enrol on the programme. Students needing to develop their writing skills are encouraged to take an optional Academic Writing Skills module in their first year of study. Greek language training is available for international students who may want to pursue careers in Cyprus following graduation. The University (via the Language Academy) provides such language course at different levels (beginner, intermediate and advanced) for students who wish to learn a language that may be useful for their future career prospects.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Although some data are available for student progression following graduation (i.e. employability), **the EEC recommends that the Department would benefit from a more detailed understanding of employment destinations, particularly for graduates working across different elite sport and business settings.** There is evidence that a proportion of graduates establish their own businesses after graduation and a more in-depth analysis in respect of the latter would help to ensure that opportunities to develop appropriate business skills (e.g. engagement with the Centre for Entrepreneurial Development) are provided within the student journey. **The EEC recommends that the School makes every effort to maintain contact with its graduates, as a means of understanding career destinations and providing “future career role models” for students on the programme.** Finally, any strategy to increase recruitment of international students will need to take into account the importance of developing competency in the English language and the need to provide an increased level of support via English classes prior to, at the beginning of the programme.



UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

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We agree with the EEC’s recommendations and we acknowledge the importance of having such information available and sharing it with students. Indeed, the School and the University are actively working towards this.

Overall, collection of formal alumni information and communication is primarily handled centrally by the University’s Student Support Office and the University’s Alumni officer. Given the young age of the programme and the small number of students/graduates, programme alumni specific information was not available or representative so as to be formally shared with students, although anecdotal information is always shared with students as well as general information about future employability and potential career pathways.

In its efforts to strengthen the collection of information and further support its alumni, the University has recently established an Alumni Association, basic details of which are specified on its website at <https://www.uclancyprus.ac.cy/connect/alumni-association/>. The University has also established the UCLan Cyprus Alumni Steering Committee after elections in July 2020. The steering committee is now in office and comprises of a dynamic group of graduates who together with the UCLan Cyprus academics, support the University in its efforts to establish a strong alumni network, whilst administering the Alumni Association of the University. The members of the committee aspire to provide a constructive platform for networking with fellow graduates and aim to support current students by sharing knowledge and expertise on how to advance their career path post-graduation. Moreover, aiming to establish a strong and mutually beneficial relationship with its graduates, the University has an open communication channel and a procedure in place for the graduates to subscribe to the Alumni Association leading to an already available database of alumni that we intend to grow as the University is further developing. All latest news and announcements as well as the e-form for subscription to the Alumni Association can be found on the University’s website (<https://www.uclancyprus.ac.cy/connect/alumni-association/>). Moreover, the UCLan Cyprus Alumni has its own Facebook group, where announcements, promotional material and other related info are published.

It is worth noting that besides the alumni association activities, programme graduates who consist of successful cases in terms of employability are invited as guest lecturers in modules such as ‘Professional work experience 1 and 2’. Through their case studies and sharing of experiences, the current students can initiate a process of personal critical reflection and developing self-awareness. In addition to the guest lectures, roll-ups and banners with successful students or dual-career athletes or high achievers are placed around the campus showcasing these ‘role models’. Moreover, our Marketing Department is in the process of collecting personal life stories and testimonials from the programme’s alumni with the aim to communicate and promote those via our social media outlets and website, throughout the academic year.

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

EEC REPORT

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

There are sufficient resources available for this programme. The students have access to a broad range of learning materials, including well-equipped library resources and access to e-journals. The learning environment is state-of-the-art, with well-equipped computer rooms and other teaching spaces and a Sport and Exercise Science Laboratory. There is disabled access to all facilities, including a large lecture theatre. A range of up-to-date technologies is used for learning and teaching and ensures that the taught material can be delivered in a way that is innovative, engaging and relevant to contemporary Sport and Exercise Science students.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Students are generally very satisfied by their learning experience and feel well-supported by departmental staff and student support services. There is effective communication with the teaching staff and personal tutors and student welfare is safeguarded. The Sport and Exercise Science laboratory is an asset to the School and is highly valued by the students. A competent team of administrators provide a good level of support to academic staff and students and are strongly committed to improving the efficiency of systems and processes. School administrators have representation on Faculty and higher level committees and feel that they are able to play an active role in key decisions and initiatives. In particular, the IT was showed to be completely aligned with an adequate development and monitoring plan.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

More laboratory space and equipment would be needed to support any expansion of student numbers.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

‘More laboratory space and equipment would be needed to support any expansion of student numbers.’

Overall, we would like to thank the EEC for all the positive comments related to the infrastructure of our existing Sports and Exercise laboratory as well as programme related equipment available (see response in Section 2, page 8).

We agree with the EEC’s recommendation and we are aware of the need for expansion of our equipment and lab space in the case of a higher number of students. The School is committed to support the programme and expand the lab facilities and resources when the need arises. Within the yearly budget of the School, there is a specific budget allocated to the programme and its resources, which is calculated based on and it is proportional to the needs of the programme and the projected recruitment for the academic year.



6. Additional for doctoral programmes
(ALL ESG)

NOT APPLICABLE



7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

NOT APPLICABLE

B. Conclusions and final remarks

EEC REPORT

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

The EEC found the meetings to be interactive and productive, with full engagement from all sections of the academic community. Faculty members from the School of Sciences were receptive to discussions of current practice and recommendations for the review of practice. They interacted very well with the EEC and showed a strong commitment to towards a collective effort. A major strength of the programme was considered to be the very enthusiastic and cooperative team of high quality teaching staff, having both scientific and clinical experience. The EEC also feels the programme aligns with the needs of the labour market but that some additional measures should be implemented to ensure that students feel well-equipped for the job-market. The Sport and Exercise Science laboratory is a highly valued facility amongst the students and is central to developing the practical skills many students will need in their future careers. For this reason, every effort should be made to maintain the quality and robustness of the equipment, while also capitalising on opportunities to extend this resource, should appropriate financial support become available. There are robust quality assurance processes in place, both at course and programme level. The reputation of the University and double certification were highlighted as important strengths of the programme. In our opinion, overall there is a good balance between practice and theory. Furthermore, English language support for foreign students is remarkable. Questions raised by the EEC were answered very thoroughly, providing ample reassurance of a high level of professionalism in maintaining/improving standards, listening to and addressing the needs of students.

UCLAN CYPRUS RESPONSE

The School of Sciences and the BSc (Hons) Sports and Exercise Sciences team would like to thank the EEC members for their valuable feedback towards enhancing our BSc (Hons) Sports and Exercise Sciences programme. The constructive discussions with the EEC members during the evaluation visit as well as the comments provided on the EEC report enabled our team to reflect on our existing practices and identify opportunities to strengthen them.

We agree with the EEC that our team consist of very enthusiastic, cooperative and energetic staff excelling in both scientific and clinical practice. The result of this synergy is a collective effort towards a successful outcome ensuring that our graduates are well equipped for the job market. As per our internal quality assurance processes we will continue to actively monitor the operations of the programme and take any additional measures needed to maintain and further enhance the quality of our programme at all levels.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Dr Efstathios Christodoulides	Lecturer in Sports and Exercise Science Course Leader BSc (Hons) Sport and Exercise Science	
Dr. Koulla Parpa	Lecturer in Sports and Exercise Science Course Leader MSc Sport and Exercise Sciences	
Dr. Josephina Antoniou	Assistant Professor in Computing and Course Leader of MSc Computing School of Sciences Quality Lead at Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee	
Dr Cosmina Theodoulou	Director of Academic Quality and Compliance Chair of Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee	

Date: 23/07/2021

