

**Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in  
Higher Education**

**Republic of Cyprus**

**External Evaluation Report  
Program of Study**

**Institution: Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics  
Program of Study: Masters In Biomedical Research**

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## **INSTRUCTIONS:**

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 2016” [N. 136 (I)/2015].

**The document is duly completed by the External Evaluation Committee for each program of study. The ANNEX (Doc. Number 300.1) constitutes an integral part of the external evaluation report for the external evaluation accreditation of a program of study.**

**EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE:**

| <b>NAME</b>       | <b>TITLE</b>             | <b>UNIVERSITY / INSTITUTION</b>                       |
|-------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Sandip Patel      | Professor                | University College London                             |
| Milan Macek       | Professor                | Charles University Prague                             |
| Ioannis Ragoussis | Head of Genomce Sciences | McGill University and Genome Quebec Innovation Centre |
| Stavria Spyrou    | Student                  | University of Cyprus                                  |
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## **INTRODUCTION:**

### I. The External Evaluation procedure

**The evaluation committee received the documents related to the WFME standards for Masters in Medical and Health related profession, document 200.1, Institute brochures, Powerpoint slide presentations from Kyriakos Kyriakou, Marios Cariolou and Leonidas Phylactou.**

**The onsite visit included meetings with the CING Provost, the Dean, the program coordinator, members of the quality assurance committee, members of the faculty, the administration staff, student support staff and the students.**

**The teaching facilities were visited (e.g. library, lecture rooms). Several research labs and core facilities were also inspected as well as a visit and discussion with the newly established Bioinformatics group, which represents a strategic investment by the Institute. Discussions with faculty members were conducted during the lab visit.**

**A separate, face-to-face meeting was held with past and present students on the Program.**

**At the end, a useful wrap-up meeting was held with the Dean and the Program coordinator to discuss findings, clarify points and course logistics.**

### II. The Internal Evaluation procedure

**The committee found the application for evaluation/accreditation acceptable with adequate information. The preparatory documentation was complemented by the onsite visit of the evaluation committee. The Institute as a whole and the program coordinator in particular were fully compliant and accommodating.**

## **FINDINGS:**

### **1. EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING WORK – AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

#### **- Organization of Teaching Work**

- 1. The organization of the teaching work was overall excellent and the committee was impressed. The appropriate number of students in the classroom allows for direct interactions with the lecturer and encourages effective student participation. Up to 50 possible research projects are offered to the students representing a wide spectrum of training possibilities in the biomedical research field.**
- 2. There are currently 8 students that have successfully completed the program, the majority of which are Cypriots. The program accepts a maximum number of 15 students, which is appropriate and in line with the capacity of the CING research groups that accommodate student projects.**
- 3. The Institute's course webpage offers enough in terms of supplementary materials in order to guide students through the eligibility requirements and the application procedure.**

#### **- Teaching**

- 1. The overall quality of teaching is excellent and impressive. The lecturers' expertise are complementary and synergistic, consistent with the mission of the Institute. The committee would like to highlight the impressive number of educational activities that encourage student participation in the learning process.**
- 2. The program coordinator is clearly a committed individual and impressed the committee.**
- 3. Teaching materials provided were excellent, including access to modern facilities and cutting edge technology.**

#### **- Teaching personnel**

- 1. The teaching personnel are highly qualified with complementary expertise that covers a wide spectrum of disciplines, which assures an extraordinarily stimulating environment. The Institute should be commended for achieving this high standard.**
- 2. We would like to highlight the favorable the mentor-student ratio of over 1:1, which provides more than adequate supervision and mentoring.**

3. **The course coordinator is experienced and an authority in his field with full commitment to the course**
4. **The Institute should be encouraged to expand their visiting professor program to strengthen their regional and international reputation, and thus its attraction.**

## **2. PROGRAM OF STUDY AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Purpose and Objectives and learning outcomes of the Program of Study**

1. **The purpose and objectives and learning outcomes of the program of study were particularly clear.**
2. **The introduction of a predominantly research project based program is new, yet complementary to the existing programs.**
3. **Currently, the course is currently labeled as MSc, we would recommend a relabeling as MRes in the future, to highlight the fact that is more research based.**

### **- Structure and Content of the Program of studies**

1. **The committee was satisfied with the structure and content of course, the embedding of research activities from the outset was a particular highlight. The blend of laboratory research work and taught courses in the form of a new course was a welcome development within the Institute's curriculum.**
2. **We would recommend a further reduction of the formally taught part to include skill development courses, directly relevant to the individual research projects in the future.**
3. **The accredited points are consistent with the ECTS including the summer period, as discussed in detail with the course coordinator.**
4. **All students will study and carry out their research projects within the Institution. This simplifies procedures and assures consistent supervision standards.**

### **- Quality Assurance of the Program of studies**

1. **The evaluation committee appreciated the high quality assurance of the program that involves members of academic, administrative, support and ensures broad student participation.**
2. **Highly qualified academic and administrative staff are involved in this process, thus ensuring the implementation of international standards.**

- **Management of the Program of Study**
  1. The committee was impressed by both the program coordinator Prof. Cariolou and the manager Mr Voukis in their role as effective professional and administrative managers of the program.
  2. The committee found that any issues with students were resolved in a constructive manner to the benefit of all.
  3. The 70 ECTSs assigned to the research project are justified considering the primary research focus of the course.
  4. The student research project is carried throughout the entire course period, including the critical summer period and takes place entirely in research labs within the Institute.
  5. The Institute is commended for implementing an excellent Student Welfare and Support structure that deals with any problems and difficulties. Examples of cases that needed to be resolved were presented and committee is satisfied with the demonstration of effective student support.
  
- **International Dimension of the Program of Study**
  1. The Institute is internationally recognized and in particular outstanding within its regional context. It has close ties with other Universities, hospitals and research centers within the Middle East and beyond. This fact gives the Institute a competitive advantage compared to other European Institutes of its kind, making it an effective gateway to the Middle East.
  2. The MSc in Biomedical Research program compares positively with corresponding programs in Cyprus and abroad. Its unique blend of research and medical application would not be out of place in Universities of perceived higher rank.
  3. The committee suggests that the visiting professor program should be expanded.
  
- **Connection with the labor market and the society**
  1. The proven track record of the Institute in benefiting the local society in terms of public health is impressive and this program will ensure its continued success in line with developments in the field.
  2. The program will generate high quality trained personnel in the field of biomedical sciences. Such personnel are expected to play a leading role in the introduction of new technologies and personalized medicine approaches in Cyprus in the future.

### **3. RESEARCH WORK AND SYNERGIES WITH TEACHING**

#### **- Research Teaching Synergies**

- 1. Research work and synergy with teaching is a particular strength of this program. All laboratories of the Institute are strongly involved in competitive and successful research programs, thus offering the perfect environment for students to conduct their research projects.**
- 2. The potential project supervisors are experienced and enthusiastic, complemented by postdoctoral and doctoral researchers supporting the daily supervision of individual projects.**
- 3. The Institute is successful in securing international and national competitive funding for its research and support for its services. This secures excellent infrastructure and a research-intensive environment that stimulates the students.**

**Student training in the research process is exemplary, including the presentation of research papers and their individual projects. Lectures offering complementary training (e.g. presentation, writing, computational etc) are offered regularly and allow students to acquire important skills.**

#### **4. ADMINISTRATION SERVICES, STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT OF TEACHING WORK**

##### **- Administrative Mechanisms**

- 1. The Institute is commended for implementing an excellent Student Welfare and Support structure that deals with any problems and difficulties. It is staffed very adequately with experienced as well as enthusiastic personnel.**
- 2. Examples of cases that needed to be resolved were presented and committee is satisfied with the demonstration of effective student support.**
- 3. Extracurricular activities are organized by the support personnel, which enhance further the learning experience.**

##### **- Infrastructures / Support**

- 1. The infrastructure provided for this course is excellent, it includes up to date teaching materials of all sorts (physical and virtual) easily accessible by the students.**
- 2. Core facilities covering all aspects of genomics, microscopy, and proteomics as well as animal house are available and accessible to students.**
- 3. Bioinformatics resources are being currently expanded and we would encourage a further expansion and capacity building.**
- 4. Training of teaching personnel was only occasionally described and should be further encouraged.**

##### **- Financial Resources**

- 1. The management and allocation of the financial resources of the program of study has to be commended. It provides a reasonable allowance to host lab for research consumables to offset the costs of the research.**
- 2. The distribution of funds to laboratories allows for the successful development of the program and positively impacts on teaching personnel.**
- 3. The allocation of funds is under the responsibility of the relevant academic departments.**

- 4. The tuition fees represent good value for money given the outstanding research-intensive environment the students are exposed to. One has to consider that research projects are expensive and need a significant amount of consumables and access to equipment in order to be carried out successfully. In that respect the current fees of 8,000 euros seems to be of good value.**

## **5. DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS**

**Not applicable**

## **6. DOCTORAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY**

**Not applicable**

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE<sup>1</sup>

- The present situation of the program, good practices, weaknesses that have been detected during the external evaluation procedure by the external evaluation committee, suggestions for improvement.

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**This is an excellent, new masters program. It represents a welcome addition to the Institute's master program repertoire by adding a research-intensive course.**

**Overall, the teaching work is highly effective with clear evidence of organized teaching by skilled teaching personnel. The program has a clear purpose, learning outcomes and objectives embedded within a highly structured framework with excellent content.**

**The program's coordinator has a proven track record in leadership and research thus ensuring the smooth running of the course. Further support is provided by qualified managerial and library personnel.**

**Quality assurance through the high profile internal committee and effective management result in a program that is well-connected with the labor market both nationally and internationally.**

**The committee is enthusiastic about synergies between research and teaching. The administrative mechanisms were excellent and underpinned by relevant infrastructure, support and financial resources.**

Overall assessment: This is an excellent, internationally competitive program

### Suggestions

**The committee offers the following recommendations:**

- 1. The research focus of the program is evident and welcome. However, the CING might consider reinforcing this element further by replacing one of the elective taught courses, with a series of enhanced research-specific elements. For example, a series of workshops covering methodologies directly applicable to the research projects such as biostatistics and bioinformatics. The latter would seem appropriate given rapid progress in the field coupled with new recruitment.**

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<sup>1</sup> It is highlighted, at this point, that the External Evaluation Committee is expected to justify its findings and its suggestions on the basis of the Document num.: 300.1. The External Evaluation Committee is not expected to submit a suggestion for the approval or the rejection of the program of study under evaluation. This decision falls under the competencies of the Council of the Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation of higher education.

2. **One issue to address at CING is the implementation of a mid term report, at the end of the autumn semester that includes the student's research work (project literature review and definition of aims).**
3. **The current MSc programs are evidently successful. However, the CING might consider converting the MSc in Biomedical Research to a Master of Research (MRes). This would fully distinguish it from other programs and offer a unique experience further enhancing the reputation of the Institute in Cyprus and beyond.**
4. **The one year MSc format is standard at present. However, the CING might consider introducing a two year program allowing a more in depth research experience for the students.**
5. **The CING is clearly a high performing, internationally competitive centre of excellence. To further enhance its status, CING might consider further exploiting their regional focus through broader partnerships with Middle Eastern countries. This could be achieved by utilizing existing links and by concentrating intensive efforts to show presence in this regional market.**
6. **The teaching is exemplary. However, a visiting professor scheme could be developed further in the future in order to expand current collaborations and the supervision of projects. Furthermore, such a scheme involving regional Institutions will further enhance the status of the CING and its ties with partners in the region.**

## **Quality Standards and Indicators**

### **External Evaluation of a Program of Study**

Institution: Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics

Program of Study: Masters in Biomedical Research

Duration of the Program of Study: 12 months

Evaluation Date:03/03/2017

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 2016”.

The document describes the quality standards and indicators, which will be applied for the external evaluation of programs of study of institutions of higher education, by the External Evaluation Committee.

**DIRECTIONS:** Note what is applicable for each quality standard/indicator.

1. Applicable to a minimum degree
2. Applicable to a non satisfactory degree
3. Applicable to a satisfactory degree
4. Applicable to a very satisfactory degree
5. It applies and it constitutes a good practice

**It is pointed out that, in the case of standards and indicators that cannot be applied due to the status of the institution and/or of the program of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted and a detailed explanation should be provided on the institution’s corresponding policy regarding the specific quality standard or indicator.**

### Members of the External Evaluation Committee

| NAME              | TITLE                    | UNIVERSITY / INSTITUTION                              |
|-------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Sandip Patel      | Professor                | University College London                             |
| Milan Macek       | Professor                | Charles University Prague                             |
| Ioannis Ragoussis | Head of Genomce Sciences | McGill University and Genome Quebec Innovation Centre |
| Stavria Spyrou    | Student                  | University of Cyprus                                  |
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**Date and Time of the On-Site Visit: 03/03/2017.**

**Duration of the On-Site Visit: 9:30am-7pm**

| 1. EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING WORK – AVAILABLE RESOURCES |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1   | Organization of teaching work   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1.1.1   | The student admission requirements to the program of study, are based on specific regulations which are adhered to in a consistent manner.  |   |   |   |   | X |
| 1.1.2   | The number of students in each class allows for constructive teaching and communication, and it compares positively to the current international standards and/or practices.  |   |   |   |   | X |
| 1.1.3   | The organization of the educational process safeguards the quality implementation of the program's purpose and objectives and the achievement of the learning outcomes. Particularly, the following are taken into consideration: |   |   |   |   | X |
| 1.1.3.1   | The implementation of a specific academic calendar and its timely publication.  |   |   |   |   | X |
| 1.1.3.2   | The disclosure of the program's curricula to the students, and their implementation by the teaching personnel   |   |   |   |   | X |
| 1.1.3.3   | The course web-pages, updated with the relevant supplementary material  |   |   |   | X |   |
| 1.1.3.4   | The procedures for the fulfillment of undergraduate and postgraduate assignments / practical training   |   |   |   |   | X |
| 1.1.3.5   | The procedures for the conduct and the format of the examinations and for student assessment  |   |   |   |   | X |
| 1.1.3.6   | The effective provision of information to the students and the enhancement of their participation in the procedures for the improvement of the educational process.   |   |   |   |   | X |
| 1.1.4   | Adequate and modern learning resources, are available to the students, including the following:   |   |   |   |   | X |
| 1.1.4.1   | facilities  |   |   |   |   | X |
| 1.1.4.2   | library   |   |   |   |   | X |
| 1.1.4.3   | infrastructure  |   |   |   |   | X |
| 1.1.4.4   | student welfare   |   |   |   |   | X |
| 1.1.4.5   | academic mentoring  |   |   |   |   | X |

|   |  |          |          |          |          |          |
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| 1.1.5   | A policy for regular and effective communication, between the teaching personnel and the students, is applied.   |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 1.1.6   | The teaching personnel, for each course, provide timely and effective feedback to the students.  |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 1.1.7   | Statutory mechanisms, for the support of students and the communication with the teaching personnel, are effective.  |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 1.1.8   | Control mechanisms for student performance are effective.  |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 1.1.9   | Support mechanisms for students with problematic academic performance are effective.   |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 1.1.10  | Academic mentoring processes are transparent and effective for undergraduate and postgraduate programs and are taken into consideration for the calculation of academic work load. |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 1.1.11  | The program of study applies an effective policy for the prevention and detection of plagiarism.   |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 1.1.12  | The program of study provides satisfactory mechanisms for complaint management and for dispute resolution.   |          |          |          |          | X        |
| <p><b>The organization of the teaching work was overall excellent and the committee was impressed. The modest number of student in the classroom allows for direct direction with the lecturer and encourages effective participation.</b></p> <p><b>There are currently 8 students that have gone through the program, the majority of which are Cypriots. The maximum number is 15, which is appropriate</b></p> <p><b>The course's webpage contains all necessary supplementary materials.</b></p> |  |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>1.2</b>  | <b>Teaching</b>  | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
| 1.2.1   | The methodology utilized in each course is suitable for achieving the course's purpose and objectives and those of the individual modules.   |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 1.2.2   | The methodology of each course is suitable for adults.   |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 1.2.3   | Continuous-formative assessment and feedback are provided to the students regularly.   |          |          |          | X        |          |
| 1.2.4   | The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance, are clear, adequate, and known to the   |          |          |          |          | X        |

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|   | students.  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 1.2.5   | Educational activities which encourage students' active participation in the learning process, are implemented.  |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 1.2.6   | Teaching incorporates the use of modern educational technologies that are consistent with international standards, including a platform for the electronic support of learning.              |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 1.2.7   | Teaching materials (books, manuals, journals, databases, and teaching notes) meet the requirements set by the methodology of the program's individual courses, and are updated regularly.    |          |          |          |          | X        |
| <p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p><b>Again, the quality of teaching was overall excellent and impressive. The lecturers' expertise is complementary and synergistic, consistent with mission of the Institute. We would like to highlight the impressive number of educational activities that encourage student participation in the learning process.</b></p> <p><b>The program coordinator is clearly a committed individual and impressed the committee.</b></p> <p><b>One issue that can be addressed is the implementation of a mid term report, at the end of the autumn semester that includes the student's research work (project literature review and definition of aims).</b></p> |  |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>1.3</b>  | <b>Teaching Personnel</b>  | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
| 1.3.1   | The number of full-time academic personnel, occupied exclusively at the institution, and their fields of expertise, adequately support the program of study.                                 |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 1.3.2   | The members of teaching personnel for each course have the relevant formal and fundamental qualifications for teaching the course, as described by the legislation, including the following: |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 1.3.2.1   | Subject specialization, preferably with a doctorate, in the discipline.  |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 1.3.2.2   | Publications within the discipline.  |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 1.3.3   | The specializations of Visiting Professors adequately support the program of study.  |          |          |          | X        |          |

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| 1.3.4  | Special Teaching Personnel and Special Scientists have the necessary qualifications, adequate work experience and specialization to teach a limited number of courses in the program of study.   |  |  |  |  | X |
| 1.3.5  | In every program of study the Special Teaching Personnel does not exceed 30% of the Teaching Research Personnel.   |  |  |  |  | X |
| 1.3.6  | The teaching personnel of each private institution of tertiary education, to a percentage of at least 70%, has recognized academic qualification, by one level higher than that of the program of study in which he/she teaches.         |  |  |  |  | X |
| 1.3.7  | In the program of study, the ratio of the number of courses taught by full-time personnel, occupied exclusively at the institution, to the number of courses taught by part-time personnel, ensures the quality of the program of study. |  |  |  |  | X |
| 1.3.8  | The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching personnel is adequate for the support and safeguarding of the program's quality.   |  |  |  |  | X |
| 1.3.9  | The academic personnel's teaching load does not limit the conduct of research, writing, and contribution to the society.   |  |  |  |  | X |
| 1.3.10 | Future redundancies / retirements, expected recruitment and promotions of academic personnel safeguard the unimpeded implementation of the program of study within a five-year span.   |  |  |  |  | X |
| 1.3.11 | The program's Coordinator has the qualifications and experience to efficiently coordinate the program of study.  |  |  |  |  | X |

**The teaching personnel are highly qualified with complementary expertise that cover a wide spectrum of disciplines, which assures an extraordinarily stimulating environment. The Institute should be commended for this.**

**We would like to highlight specifically the most favourable staff:student ratio of over 1:1, which provides more than adequate supervision and mentoring.**

**The Institute should be encouraged to expand their visiting professor program to strengthen their regional and international context.**

| <b>2. PROGRAM OF STUDY AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS</b>  |   |          |          |          |          |          |
|---|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>2.1</b>  | <b>Purpose and Objectives and learning outcomes of the Program of Study</b>   | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
| 2.1.1   | The purpose and objectives of the program of study are formulated in terms of expected learning outcomes and are consistent with the mission and the strategy of the institution.   |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 2.1.2   | The purpose and objectives of the program and the learning outcomes are utilized as a guide for the design of the program of study.   |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 2.1.3   | The higher education qualification and the program of study, conform to the provisions of their corresponding Professional and Vocational Bodies for the purpose of registration to these bodies.   |          |          |          | X        |          |
| 2.1.4   | The program's content, the methods of assessment, the teaching materials and the equipment, lead to the achievement of the program's purpose and objectives and ensure the expected learning outcomes.  |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 2.1.5   | The expected learning outcomes of the program are known to the students and to the members of the academic and teaching personnel.  |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 2.1.6   | The learning process is properly designed to achieve the expected learning outcomes.  |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 2.1.7   | The higher education qualification awarded to the students, corresponds to the purpose and objectives and the learning outcomes of the program.   |          |          |          | X        |          |
| <p><b>The Purpose and Objectives and learning outcomes of the Program of Study were particularly clear. The introduction of a more research-based program is novel, yet complementary to the existing programs. Although, currently, the course is labeled as a MSc, the committee would recommend a relabeling to "MRes" in the future, to highlight the fact that is more research intensive than other MSc programs.</b></p> |   |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>2.2</b>  | <b>Structure and Content of the Program of Study</b>  | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
| 2.2.1   | The course curricula clearly define the expected learning outcomes, the content, the teaching and learning approaches and the method of assessing student performance.  |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 2.2.2   | The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is applied and there is true correspondence between credits and workload per course and per semester for the student either he / she studies in a specific program or he/she is registered and studies simultaneously in additional programs of studies according to the |          |          |          |          | X        |

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|  | European practice in higher education institutions.  |   |          |          |          |          |
| 2.2.3  | The program of study is structured in a consistent manner and in sequence, so that concepts operating as preconditions precede the teaching of other, more complex and cognitively more demanding, concepts.                         |   |          |          |          | X        |
| 2.2.4  | The higher education qualification awarded, the learning outcomes and the content of the program are consistent.   |   |          |          |          | X        |
| 2.2.5  | The program, in addition to the courses focusing on the specific discipline, includes an adequate number of general education courses.   |   |          |          |          | X        |
| 2.2.6  | The content of courses and modules, and the corresponding educational activities are suitable for achieving the desired learning outcomes with regards to the knowledge, skills, and abilities which should be acquired by students. |   |          |          |          | X        |
| 2.2.7  | The number and the content of the program's courses are sufficient for the achievement of learning outcomes.   |   |          |          | X        |          |
| 2.2.8  | The content of the program's courses reflects the latest achievements / developments in science, arts, research and technology.  |   |          |          |          | X        |
| 2.2.9  | Flexible options / adaptable to the personal needs or to the needs of students with special needs, are provided.   |   |          |          |          | X        |
| <p><b>The committee was satisfied with the structure and the content of course, the embedding of research from the outset was a particular highlight.</b></p> <p><b>We would recommend a further reduction of the formally taught part to include skill development courses, directly relevant to the individual research projects in the future.</b></p> <p><b>The accredited points are consistent with the ECTSs including the summer period.</b></p> <p><b>All students will study and carry their research projects within the Institution.</b></p> |  |   |          |          |          |          |
| <b>2.3</b>   | <b>Quality Assurance of the Program of Study</b>   | <b>1</b>                                    | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
| 2.3.1  | The arrangements regarding the program's quality assurance define clear competencies and procedures.   |   |          |          |          | X        |
| 2.3.2  | Participation in the processes of the system of quality assurance of the program, is ensured for   |   |          |          |          | X        |
|  | 2.3.2.1  | the members of the academic personnel       |          |          |          | X        |
|  | 2.3.2.2  | the members of the administrative personnel |          |          |          | X        |

|   |  |  |          |          |          |          |          |   |
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|   | 2.3.2.3  | the students.  |          |          |          |          |          | X |
| 2.3.3   | The guide and / or the regulations for quality assurance, provide detailed information and data for the support and management of the program of study.  |  |          |          |          |          |          | X |
| 2.3.4   | The quality assurance process constitutes an academic process and it is not restricted by non-academic factors.  |  |          |          |          |          |          | X |
| <b>The evaluation committee appreciated the high Quality Assurance of the Program that involves members of academic, administrative, support and ensures broad student participation.</b> |  |  |          |          |          |          |          |   |
| <b>2.4</b>  | <b>Management of the Program of Study</b>  |  | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |   |
| 2.4.1   | Effective management of the program of study with regard to its design, its approval, its monitoring and its review, is in place.  |  |          |          |          |          |          | X |
| 2.4.2   | It is ensured that learning outcomes may be achieved within the specified timeframe.   |  |          |          |          |          |          | X |
| 2.4.3   | It is ensured that the program's management and development process is an academic process which operates without any non-academic interventions.  |  |          |          |          |          |          | X |
| 2.4.4   | The academic hierarchy of the institution, (Rector, Vice-Rectors, Deans, Chairs and Programs' Coordinators, academic personnel) have the sole responsibility for academic excellence and the development of the programs of study. |  |          |          |          |          |          | X |
| 2.4.5   | Information relating to the program of study are posted publicly and include:  |  |          |          |          |          |          | X |
|   | 2.4.5.1  | The provisions regarding unit credits                |          |          |          |          |          | X |
|   | 2.4.5.2  | The expected learning outcomes                       |          |          |          |          |          | X |
|   | 2.4.5.3  | The methodology                                      |          |          |          |          |          | X |
|   | 2.4.5.4  | Course descriptions                                  |          |          |          |          |          | X |
|   | 2.4.5.5  | The program's structure                              |          |          |          |          |          | X |
|   | 2.4.5.6  | The admission requirements                           |          |          |          |          |          | X |
|   | 2.4.5.7  | The format and the procedures for student assessment |          |          |          |          |          | X |
| 2.4.6   | The award of the higher education qualification is accompanied by the Diploma Supplement which is in line with the European and international standards.   |  |          |          |          |          |          |   |
| 2.4.7   | The effectiveness of the program's evaluation mechanism, by the students, is ensured.  |  |          |          |          |          |          | X |

|  |   |          |          |          |          |          |
|--|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|  |   |          |          |          |          |          |
| 2.4.8  | The recognition and transfer of credit units from previous studies is regulated by procedures and regulations which ensure that the majority of credit units is awarded by the institution which awards the higher education qualification. |          |          |          |          | X        |
| <p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p><b>The evaluation committee was impressed by both the program coordinator Prof. M. Cariolou and the manager Mr M. Voukis in their role as effective, professional and administrative managers of the program. We appreciated an example given whereby issues with a student were resolved in a constructive manner to the benefit of all.</b></p> <p><b>The 70 ECTSs assigned to the research project are justified considering the primary research focus of the course. The research project is carried during the entire course period, including the critical summer period and takes place entirely in research labs within the Institute.</b></p> <p><b>2.4.6 was unclear to the committee in terms of relevance for this course.</b></p> |   |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>2.5</b>   | <b>International Dimension of the Program of Study</b>  | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
| 2.5.1  | The program's collaborations with other institutions are compared positively with corresponding collaborations of other departments / programs of study in Europe and internationally.  |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 2.5.2  | The program attracts Visiting professors of recognized academic standing.   |          |          |          | X        |          |
| 2.5.3  | Students participate in exchange programs.  |          |          |          |          | X        |
| 2.5.4  | The academic profile of the program of study is compatible with corresponding programs of study in Cyprus and internationally.  |          |          |          |          | X        |
| <p><b>The Institute is internationally recognized and outstanding within its regional context. It has close ties with other Universities, Hospitals and Research Centres within the Middle East and beyond. This fact gives the Institute a competitive advantage compared to other European Institutes of its kind, making it an effective gateway to the Middle East.</b></p> <p><b>The MSc in Biomedical Research program compares positively with corresponding programs in Cyprus and abroad. Its unique blend of research and medical application would not be out of place in Universities of perceived higher rank. Nonetheless, the visiting professor program should be expanded.</b></p>  |   |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>2.6</b>   | <b>Connection with the labor market and the society</b>   | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
| 2.6.1  | The procedures applied, so that the program conforms to the   |          |          |          |          | X        |

|  |   |  |  |  |   |   |
|--|---|--|--|--|---|---|
|  | scientific and professional activities of the graduates, are adequate and effective.                |  |  |  |   |   |
| 2.6.2  | According to the feasibility study, indicators for the employability of graduates are satisfactory. |  |  |  | X |   |
| 2.6.3  | Benefits, for the society, deriving from the program are significant.                               |  |  |  |   | X |
| <p><b>The proven track record of the Institute in benefiting the local society in terms of public health is impressive and this program will ensure its continuous success. The program will generate high quality trained personnel in the field of biomedical sciences. Such personnel are expected to play a leading role in the introduction of new technologies and personalized medicine approaches in Cyprus in the future.</b></p> |   |  |  |  |   |   |

| 3. RESEARCH WORK AND SYNERGIES WITH TEACHING |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.1  | Research - Teaching Synergies   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3.1.1  | It is ensured that teaching and learning have been adequately enlightened by research.  |   |   |   |   | X |
| 3.1.2  | New research results are embodied in the content of the program of study.   |   |   |   |   | X |
| 3.1.3  | Adequate and sufficient facilities and equipment are provided to support the research component of the program of study, which are available and accessible to the personnel and the students.        |   |   |   |   | X |
| 3.1.4  | The results of the academic personnel's research activity are published in international journals with the peer-reviewing system, in international conferences, conference minutes, publications etc. |   |   |   |   | X |
| 3.1.5  | External, non-governmental, funding for the academic personnel's research activities, is compared positively to the funding of other institutions in Cyprus and abroad.                               |   |   |   |   | X |
| 3.1.6  | Internal funding, of the academic personnel's research activities, is compared positively to the funding of other institutions in Cyprus and abroad.  |   |   |   |   | X |
| 3.1.7  | The policy for, indirect or direct, internal funding of the academic personnel's research activity is satisfactory.   |   |   |   |   | X |
| 3.1.8  | The participation of students, academic, teaching and administrative personnel of the program in research activities and projects is satisfactory.  |   |   |   |   | X |

|   |   |          |          |          |          |          |   |
|---|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---|
| 3.1.9   | Student training in the research process is sufficient.   |          |          |          |          |          | X |
| <p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p><b>Research work and synergy with teaching is a particular strength of this program. The Institute is successful in securing international and national competitive funding for its research and support for its services. This secures excellent infrastructure and a research-intensive environment that stimulates the students.</b></p> <p><b>Student training in the research process is exemplary.</b></p> |   |          |          |          |          |          |   |
| <b>4. ADMINISTRATION SERVICES, STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT OF TEACHING WORK</b>   |   |          |          |          |          |          |   |
| <b>4.1</b>  | <b>Administrative Mechanisms</b>  | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |   |
| 4.1.1   | There is a Student Welfare Service that supports students with regards to academic and personal problems and difficulties.                        |          |          |          |          |          | X |
| 4.1.2   | Statutory administrative mechanisms for monitoring and supporting students are sufficient.  |          |          |          |          |          | X |
| 4.1.3   | The efficiency of these mechanisms is assessed on the basis of specific criteria.   |          |          |          |          |          | X |
| <p><b>The Institute is commended for implementing an excellent Student Welfare and Support structure that deals with any problems and difficulties.</b></p> <p><b>Examples of cases that needed to be resolved were presented and committee is satisfied with the demonstration of effective student support.</b></p>   |   |          |          |          |          |          |   |
| <b>4.2</b>  | <b>Infrastructure / Support</b>   | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |   |
| 4.2.1   | There are suitable books and reputable journals supporting the program.   |          |          |          |          |          | X |
| 4.2.2   | There is a supportive internal communication platform.  |          |          |          |          |          | X |
| 4.2.3   | The facilities are adequate in number and size.   |          |          |          |          |          | X |
| 4.2.4   | The equipment used in teaching and learning (laboratory and electronic equipment, consumables etc) are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate. |          |          |          |          |          | X |
| 4.2.5   | Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are adequate and accessible to students.                                      |          |          |          |          |          | X |
| 4.2.6   | Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals,  |          |          |          |          |          | X |

|  |  |          |          |          |          |          |
|--|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|  | databases) are updated regularly with the most recent publications.  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 4.2.7  | The teaching personnel are provided with training opportunities in teaching method, in adult education, and in new technologies on the basis of a structured learning framework. |          |          |          | x        |          |
| <p><b>The infrastructure provided for this course is excellent, it includes up to date teaching materials of all sorts (physical and virtual) easily accessible by the students.</b></p> <p><b>Training of teaching personnel was only occasionally described and should be further encouraged.</b></p>  |  |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>4.3</b>   | <b>Financial Resources</b>   | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
| 4.3.1  | The management and allocation of the financial resources of the program of study, allow for the development of the program and of the academic / teaching personnel.             |          |          |          |          | x        |
| 4.3.2  | The allocation of financial resources as regards to academic matters, is the responsibility of the relevant academic departments.  |          |          |          |          | x        |
| 4.3.3  | The remuneration of academic and other personnel is analogous to the remuneration of academic and other personnel of the respective institutions in Cyprus.                      |          |          |          |          |          |
| 4.3.4  | Student tuition and fees are consistent to the tuition and fees of other respective institutions.  |          |          |          |          | x        |
| <p><b>The management and allocation of the financial resources of the program of study provides a reasonable allowance to host lab for research consumables to offset the costs of the research. This allows for the successful development of the program and positively impacts on teaching personnel. The allocation of funds is under the responsibility of the relevant academic departments.</b></p> <p><b>The tuition fees represent good value for money given the outstanding research environment the students are exposed to. The committee cannot comment on staff remuneration as data were not provided.</b></p> |  |          |          |          |          |          |

**The following criterion applies additionally for distance learning programs of study. – Not applicable**

| 5.   | <b>DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS</b>   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5.1  | Feedback processes for teaching personnel with regards to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5.2  | The process and the conditions for the recruitment of academic / teaching personnel, ensure that candidates have the necessary skills and experience for long distance education. |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5.3  | Through established procedures, appropriate training, guidance and support, are provided to teaching personnel, to enable it to efficiently support the educational process.      |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5.4  | Student performance monitoring mechanisms are satisfactory.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5.5  | Adequate mentoring by the teaching personnel, is provided to students, through established procedures.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5.6  | The unimpeded long distance communication between the teaching personnel and the students, is ensured to a satisfactory degree.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5.7  | Assessment consistency, its equivalent application to all students, and the compliance with predefined procedures, are ensured.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5.8  | Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) comply with the requirements provided by the long distance education methodology and are updated regularly.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5.9  | The program of study has the appropriate and adequate infrastructure for the support of learning.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5.10 | The supporting infrastructures are easily accessible.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5.11 | Students are informed and trained with regards to the available educational infrastructure.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5.12 | The procedures for systematic control and improvement of the supportive services are regular and effective.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5.13 | Infrastructure for distance education is comparable to university infrastructure in the European Union and internationally.   |   |   |   |   |   |

|      |   |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 5.14 | Electronic library services are provided according to international practice in order to support the needs of the students and of the teaching personnel.               |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5.15 | The students and the teaching personnel have access to the necessary electronic sources of information, relevant to the program, the level, and the method of teaching. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5.16 | The percentage of teaching personnel who holds a doctorate, in a program of study which is offered long distance, is not less than 75%.                                 |  |  |  |  |  |

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

If the following apply, note “√” in the appropriate space next to each statement. In case the following statements do not apply, note what is applicable:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| The maximum number of students per class-section, should not exceed 30 students.  |  |
| The conduct of written examinations with the physical presence of the students, under the supervision of the institution or under the supervision of reliable agencies which operate in the countries of the students, is compulsory. |  |
| The number of long distance classes taught by the academic personnel does not exceed the number of courses taught by the teaching personnel in conventional programs of study.  |  |

**The following criterion applies additionally for doctoral programs of study. Not Applicable**

| <b>6.</b>             | <b>DOCTORAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY</b>  | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
|-----------------------|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 6.1                   | The provision of quality doctoral studies is ensured through Doctoral Studies Regulations.   |          |          |          |          |          |
| 6.2                   | The structure and the content of a doctoral program of study are satisfactory and they ensure the quality provision of doctoral studies.   |          |          |          |          |          |
| 6.3                   | The number of academic personnel, which is going to support the doctoral program of study, is adequate.  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 6.4                   | The doctoral studies' supervisors have the necessary academic qualifications and experience for the supervision of the specific dissertations.   |          |          |          |          |          |
| 6.5                   | The degree of accessibility of all interested parties to the Doctoral Studies Regulations is satisfactory.   |          |          |          |          |          |
| 6.6                   | The number of doctoral students, under the supervision of a member of the academic personnel, is apt for the continuous and effective feedback provided to the students and it complies with the European and international standards. |          |          |          |          |          |
| 6.7                   | The research interests of academic advisors and supervisors are satisfactory and they adequately cover the thematic areas of research conducted by the doctoral students of the program.   |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>Not applicable</b> |  |          |          |          |          |          |

**FINAL REMARKS – SUGGESTIONS**

**In sum, the teaching work is highly effective with clear evidence of organized teaching by skilled teaching personnel. The program has a clear purpose, learning outcomes and objectives embedded within a highly structured framework with excellent content. There is appropriate quality assurance and effective management resulting in a program that is well-connected with the labor market both nationally and internationally. There was clear evidence of synergies between research and teaching. The administrative mechanisms were excellent and underpinned by relevant infrastructure, support and financial resources.**

### Recommendations.

Although our overall assessment of the program excellent, the committee offers the following recommendations:

7. The research focus of the program is evident. However, the CING might consider replacing one of the elective taught courses, with a series of enhanced research-specific elements. For example, a series of workshops covering methodologies directly applicable to the research projects such as biostatistics and bioinformatics. The latter would seem appropriate given rapid progress in the field coupled with new recruitment.
8. The current MSc programs are evidently successful. However, the CING might consider converting the MSc in Biomedical Research to a Master of Research (MRes). This would fully distinguish it from other programs and offer a unique experience further enhancing the reputation of the Institute in Cyprus and beyond.
9. The one year MSc format is standard at present. However, the CING might consider introducing a two year program allowing a more in depth research experience for the students.
10. The CING is clearly a high performing, internationally competitive centre of excellence. To further enhance its status, CING might consider further exploiting their regional focus through broader partnerships with Middle Eastern countries. Towards this aim, financial investment that will allow students and staff to participate in regional conferences will lead to a more intensive presence, attraction of students and further collaborations.
11. The teaching is exemplary. However, a visiting professor scheme could be developed further in the future in order to expand current collaborations and the supervision of projects. Furthermore, such a scheme involving regional Institutions will further enhance the status of the CING and its ties with partners in the region.

**Names and Signatures of the Chair and the Members of the External Evaluation Committee:**

| <b>Name:</b>      | <b>Signature:</b> |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Ioannis Ragoussis |                   |
| Sandip Patel      |                   |
| Milan Macek       |                   |
| Satvria Spyrou    |                   |



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Date: 04/03/2017.

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