

The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws” of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report

(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Open University of Cyprus
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Faculty of Economics and Management
- **Department/ Sector:** Healthcare Management
- **Programme of study- Healthcare Management (18 months, 90 ECTS, MSc ELearning (Duration, ECTS, Cycle))**

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Healthcare Management MSc

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

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations



ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



A. Introduction

The external evaluation committee met with the various stakeholders from the Open University of Cyprus (OUC) on 4th of September at their campus to evaluate Healthcare Management (18 months, 90 ECTS, MSc E-learning).

Prior to the site visit, the university provided a collection of documents on the programme, faculty, and university. These documents were mainly provided in Greek which was challenging for the committee as a mix of Greek and non-Greek speakers.

Despite this barrier, the committee endeavoured to use the site visit to clarify and learn what was necessary to assess the programme being reviewed.

The panel spent a day at the main office building of the university. During this time, they had the opportunity to meet with several internal stakeholders who were involved in the delivery of this programme.

The stakeholders included the Rector of the university, Faculty head, Programme leads and professional service staff that included administrators as well as those from the IT department and library.

The panel was impressed with the enthusiasm of the staff in terms of sharing material and knowledge about the programme. In addition to those who were physically present on the day of the visit, there were several academics and a student who joined online.

Given the fact that the programme is an online programme, visiting physical facilities beyond the meeting space was not deemed necessary. Moreover, the panel had the opportunity to see the virtual platforms through presentations and online interaction with remote participants.

The review was organised in a systematic manner to ensure that it covered the various areas that needed to be peer-reviewed by the panel.

The panel was satisfied with both the materials they received as well as the opportunity to have authentic conversations with staff and students during the site visit.

Overall, we believe that this programme is of good quality and that it offers students an opportunity to gain valuable knowledge on healthcare management.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Professor Nora Ann Colton	Professor of Leadership and Management for Healthcare	University College London, UK
Associate Professor Stefano Neri	Associate Professor, Economic Sociology	University of Milan, Italy
Associate Professor Iris Wallenburg	Associate Professor, Health Policy and Management	Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Professor Iordanis Kavathatzopoulos	Professor of Human-Computer Interaction	Uppsala University Sweden
Pavlos Petrou	Student Representative	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*
- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
 - (a) sub-areas*
 - (b) standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
 - (c) some questions that EEC may find useful.*
- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*
- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

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.

Strengths

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

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 EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*
- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*
- **The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.**

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-areas

- 1.1 Policy for quality assurance
- 1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review
- 1.3 Public information
- 1.4 Information management

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
 - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
 - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
 - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
 - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
 - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
 - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
 - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
 - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
 - *benefits from external expertise*
 - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
 - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
 - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
 - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*

- *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
 - *selection criteria*
 - *intended learning outcomes*
 - *qualification awarded*
 - *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
 - *pass rates*
 - *learning opportunities available to the students*
 - *graduate employment information*

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
 - *key performance indicators*
 - *profile of the student population*
 - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
 - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
 - *learning resources and student support available*
 - *career paths of graduates*

- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*
- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*
- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*
- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*

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.

We found the documentation around policy and governance to be very clear. We were assured that they have policies around misconduct, fraud and quality assurance processes.

The programme has been designed in a systematic manner with input from relevant experts. The programme is in alignment with similar programmes that have the same title.

Through presentations and conversations with all the relevant senior leaders including the Rector, Head of Faculty and the Programme coordinators and staff, we believe the programme has been designed with intended learning outcomes that align with the ECTS credits.

Students as well as teaching staff articulated that in addition to the content delivered online, there were other opportunities to advance learning of the subject matter including work placements available to those who wanted to take them especially those who came from non-health backgrounds.

We were given a history of the programme which started in 2006 with initially high enrolment levels that have subsequently settled over the past few years to a steady state.

In terms of the feedback loop for improving the programme, they receive student feedback as well as monitor student engagement through Moodle during the programme and track retention.

The teaching on the programme given the learning modality is a mix of synchronous and asynchronous learning with an emphasis on asynchronous learning. Students were encouraged to attend virtual live events, but they were not compulsory, and students could watch recordings of these sessions in their own time.

The assessment was an area that was less clear. Although there was a clear weighting of assessments in terms of participation 20%, two written assignments 30% and a final exam 50% that was consistent across all modules, the length of assessments in terms of word count, the overall programme assessment diet, the variety within these assessments for testing learning outcomes was not clear as well as moderation of the assessment and any associated marking rubric did not appear in the documentation nor in conversations with academic staff.

There was mention of the use of case studies, but it was not clear how they were used to assess learning outcomes.

The eLearning resources appeared to be best practices in the sector with Moodle as the learning platform coupled with Blackberry Collaborate as the online live event platform. Both are used extensively across higher education institutions.

Although there were developed learning materials, action-based learning and experiential learning were not well covered. Students noted that there were few opportunities to collaborate on group assignments.

The student admission process appears to be adequate. The admission criteria focused on three areas – a bachelor’s degree, good English and good computer skills. There was a discussion about the definition of these various requirements. It was noted that the bachelor’s degree could be from any discipline, good English did not appear to be clearly defined and students were not required to take a specific language exam. Computer skills also appeared not to be assessed as part of the admission process.

Given the programme is online, a clear on-boarding and induction process is needed.

It was also noted that there was no thesis requirement or “capstone” final semester experience that ensured learning had taken place across the programme. The teaching and learning approach is very modular with also the possibility of students who are not fully enrolled in the programme to be able to join for a module.

There was data presented in terms of nationality, gender, and background of students on the programme. The vast number of students on the programme are in employment and continue with their employment. It was noted that doctors and nurses used the programme for advancement in their current organisation.

It was noted that there were going to be changes in the number of credits needed for the programme. The committee has however valued the running master programme.

Strengths

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

The programme has been offered over several years and has a clear and systematic delivery that is clear to learners in terms of what is expected.

The programme entry criteria are very inclusive and attract several health professionals looking to upskill and progress in their profession.

The academic staff including part-time staff are qualified and selected through a rigorous selection process.

The online platforms and resources are best practices. We were particularly impressed with the support staff for the IT area and service.

The administrative staff are very good and provide excellent overall organisation and management of the programme.

The leadership of the university appear to be very supportive of the department and programme.

The programme has hundreds of graduates across Cyprus and Greece working in healthcare.

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.

There appears to be little external input into the programme in terms of collaborations with other similar programmes, an external advisory committee and healthcare innovations and cutting-edge topics for learners. Input is provided informally through instructors and interactions at the management level. The panel felt that an industry advisory committee of health professionals coupled with partners from other institutions (including healthcare organizations and the ministry of health) could help make the programme timelier and more relevant to the current healthcare management setting.

There are many part-time staff working on the programme and it was not clear from engaging with a sample of this staff that they, despite being very engaged with their field and students, understood best practices in learning and teaching.

Although it was noted that training was offered to academics, we strongly encourage a focus on assessment design as well as ensuring learning through active learning techniques and pedagogy for adult learners.

The area of assessment was a major concern for the panel as questions about workload as it related to credit hours and learning outcomes were not clear. It was noted that there was a lack of understanding of the importance of rubrics for marking that were designed for the level of masters, no consistency between assignments on the length of written assignments, and a lack of understanding of how to map assessments to learning outcomes. It was also not clear of the length of time that academics were given to mark assessments when students received the feedback and if there was any moderation process for assessment design and final marks. Here more rigour is required.

We recommend that the department work with others in getting good assessment governance, practices, and principles in place and that all academics are trained accordingly.

The programme sits in a very grounded area of management so it will be important for the programme to understand what is distinctive about it as well as ensure that the learning is cutting edge for a master's degree programme.

There was also concern raised as to the lack of a final project or experience given that the thesis is not mandatory. The programme learning outcomes as a whole did not come through given the modular format, so the programme risks just being a collection of modules in healthcare management rather than a coherent programme. This requires further attention.

Although the academics who teach on the programme are experts, there was little evidence of research-informed teaching. Students noted that they were encouraged on their own to go beyond the programme content and textbooks, but this discovery and reading beyond the course content needs to be developed along with how real-world application comes into the classroom experience.

In addition to the point of needing to focus externally on best practices in the healthcare sector, there was also a lack of co-production with students and a formalised role outside of student evaluations as to how students contribute to the teaching and learning on the programme. We strongly suggest that there be a student-staff committee that meets each semester with a feedback process.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Partially compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Partially compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

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

Sub-areas

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

2.2 Practical training

2.3 Student assessment

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*

- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*
- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

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 process of teaching and learning supports students' individual development. It includes interactive activities and meetings, in which students can discuss with the academics and among themselves. Synchronous and asynchronous activities and lectures are both present.

The process of teaching and learning considers different modes of delivery and a variety of pedagogical methods, by using modern technologies. In this way, it facilitates the achievement of planned learning. Teaching methods, tools and materials used in teaching are modern, and effective, supporting the use of modern educational technologies. They are regularly updated with the support of the technology unit. The diversity of students and their needs are adequately considered, enabling flexible learning pathways. These are also considered in the formal procedures. Students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning seem to rely on informal procedures, while formal procedures are in place for complaints about examinations.

As far as we can understand, practical and theoretical studies look interconnected, although practical training seems to be only partially deepened and enhanced. Practical training supervision and regulation is highly informal.

Assessments are presented in a clear manner. The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance, while a formal procedure for student appeals is in place. However, as noted in the previous section, the alignment with learning outcomes and workload needs consistency and moderation. Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods. By and large, assessments seem to allow students to demonstrate learning, but it is unclear how they align with learning outcomes which are dependent on individual instructors. There is no compulsory master's thesis for this programme where elective modules can be taken to complete the degree. Student involvement in research exists and it can be expressed especially in written assignments.

Strengths

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

Flexibility in teaching and learning methods, thanks to the use of modern technologies, is large. Methods are periodically revised and updated.

Extended material to students and effective support for individual learning is provided. Autonomous learning is adequately supported by the organisation and by the Programme.

Student support in developing digital competencies is provided by the eLearning unit and by student tutors.

Adequate consideration of the individual needs of the student in learning is given. In this respect, the role of the tutor looks very important.

There are mandatory educational programmes for the faculty and education personnel about UN SDGs and a way of their implementation into the student courses. Students can attend or have access to more than the two mandatory elective courses if they would like to do so.

Regulations for assessment are transparent, well-structured, and complete. They consider mitigating circumstances with a lot of details. The procedure for complaints about examinations is clear, transparent, and fair, providing students the opportunity to discuss their results.

UEC specializes in distance education and has long experience in doing that offering a great variety of programs and courses.

Student-centered pedagogy is at the focus by adopting interaction activities in modules.

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.

Social learning can be stimulated and improved. First, the possibility of interactions and exchanges between the academic and the students, and among students, should be enhanced including planned meetings as stated in the programme regulations. Secondly, synchronous lectures could be combined with more asynchronous project work and peer-reviewing, which will strengthen dialogue and cooperation between students. Practical learning is an area to be developed and enhanced. Practical learning must emerge more clearly from the programme and can be promoted by formal procedures. Moreover, formal mechanisms to organise and regulate practical training supervision, reporting and feedback can be implemented. A formal procedure for students' complaints for teaching could be introduced, to ensure transparency and fairness to the process. A higher student involvement in research may be promoted. The relevance of research activities in the written assignments could emerge more clearly within the modules and the program organisation. We strongly support the master thesis being compulsory, or: the development of an alternative project in which students can consolidate their learning across the programme. It should be noted that a thesis is international best practice at this level. Finally, ECTS points allocation could be explained further and also formally regulated.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i></p>
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2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Partially compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Partially compliant

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

- 3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development**
- 3.2 Teaching staff number and status**
- 3.3 Synergies of teaching and research**

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*

- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*
- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

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 faculty relies on both permanent ('faculty members') and temporary staff ('adjunct members') that are usually employed by other (foreign) universities. Adjunct members are in the majority. The Healthcare Management MSc. employs three academic staff ('permanent staff'). The faculty has a transparent and clear process of recruiting teaching staff in place; every three year it hires a new group of temporary staff to which also sitting temporary instructors can apply. The faculty uses a transparent scoring system to measure applicants' competencies. The faculty receives many more applicants than the number of teaching positions they can offer, which enables them to select on academic and teaching quality.

Emphasis is put on the training of distance learning and online skills development, through courses, seminars and on-the-job learning and assistance. eLearning Units seek to keep up to date with new developments (e.g. use of AI tools like ChatGPT). There are two units responsible for pedagogical development and support and for E-learning issues.

The number of teaching staff (both faculty and adjunct members) is adequate. The number of students in classes is 30 maximum, usually lower, which encourages group discussion and individual attention. Both faculty and adjunct staff are well qualified in subject matter scholarship (they have outstanding academic CVs) and teaching. However, strong reliance on temporary, part-

time staff hampers continuous improvement and the development of historical organizational knowledge.

Strengths

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

- High-qualified and well-established connections with partners in and outside Cyprus.
- Members of the teaching staff have foreign academic experience and all hold PhDs and many supervise PhD students. This close connection with other academic partners is encouraged and preserved through faculty's policy to attract visiting, academically well-qualified scholars and renew the process of attracting and assessing temporary teaching staff every three years.
- Attracting temporary (usually visiting) staff enables learning from other (foreign) educational programmes, as instructors bring in new expertise.
- Students appreciate the personal interaction with their instructors.
- Tailored activities to encourage and support the use of online tools.
- Mandatory pedagogical courses for teachers and optional webinars on specific issues.
- Support procedures for using ICT technologies in course design.

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.

Quality procedures for teaching staff are mainly focused on the selection and hiring of temporary staff, there are no clear quality procedures nor quality criteria in place to keep track of teachers' work and to encourage quality of teaching improvement on an individual level. The committee suggests developing quality procedures like an annual summative evaluation to keep track on performances (including outcomes of student evaluations) to enhance learning and encourage continuous quality improvement. We suggest putting more focus on the mutual adaptation of pedagogical goals and processes, and the features, i.e. advantages and weaknesses, of the E-learning technology adopted in each course. The number of permanent staff is very low compared to temporary staff, which seems to hamper investment in new and relevant topics that are important to the healthcare field (e.g. medical technology, data-driven healthcare, global health, climate change related to healthcare) as well as institutionalised (historical) organizational knowledge on programme development and online teaching and learning. We suggest developing institutional policies to increase the number of permanent staff to encourage continuous quality



development and improvement and to encourage the development of new modules on the topics that are crucially important for the healthcare field. This will also strengthen the faculty's competitive position. Support for the development of teaching skills is mainly focused on the use of online tools, more focus should be put on didactic professional development and monitoring.



Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

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

Sub-areas

- 4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria
- 4.2 Student progression
- 4.3 Student recognition
- 4.4 Student certification

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
 - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
 - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Are the admission requirements for the study programme appropriate? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?*
- *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*
- *Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?*

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 faculty has clearly defined and transparent procedures for student admission. Access policies and admission procedures are consistently implemented and safeguarded by experienced and dedicated support staff. Student progress is monitored by both the instructors of individual modules and support staff. Certification is well-organized and clearly documented and in accordance with (inter)national regulations.

Students can compose their own training programs and time schedules, which enables them to improve work-life balance while strengthening their academic careers.

The master's is open to any student with a bachelor's degree, which renders the master inclusive and allows for wide interaction among students with diverse backgrounds. The current program does not have any specific programs or other onboarding procedures in place to facilitate a common starting level concerning personal competences, knowledge and skills.

Strengths

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

- Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.
- Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.
- Student progress is well-monitored at the individual level.
- Students can follow their own training schedule by following modules. This strengthens their possibilities to achieve a work-life balance while improving their career opportunities.
- Dedicated and highly qualified support staff that supports students in their admission and subscription process.

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 programme lacks specific admission requirements and an onboarding procedure, which may result in a group of students with a wide variety in backgrounds, skills and competencies. This can cause early dropout.
- Dropout rates are indeed high in the early phase, yet based on the information provided the committee cannot conclude whether this relates to the open admission requirements/ lack of onboarding procedures. We recommend the board to further investigate, monitor drop out, and facilitate new students in acquiring the competences and skills to start the master program.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Partially compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

5.2 Physical resources

5.3 Human support resources

5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*
- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

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 and learning resources (teaching, materials, aids and equipment) are adequate and readily accessible, considering the programme is online structured and provided. All resources are fit for purpose. Student-centred learning is considered when allocating, planning and providing the learning and the support resources. These are tight but look in accordance with actual needs and requirements. The programme is organised and managed in a way that ensures an effective use of limited resources.

Physical resources are adequate to support the study programme. Services provided to students are effective and students are informed about their availability. Student feedback expresses a high level of satisfaction with learning, administrative support, and other kinds of support they need. Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, which includes a majority of part-time (workers) and a high number of mature students. It seems that the faculty has an adequate fee policy, with discounts and exemptions.

Strengths

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

- The programme is well-structured and organised to provide effective and good-quality university e-learning to the current number and profiles of students.
- Teaching and learning resources are significant, and their accessibility is well-ensured. The IT infrastructure looks adequate and well-functioning, being able to support teachers and students in their needs. The IT infrastructure team is competent and very willing to update their skills through training. The online library resources are adequate and easily accessible.
- Students are adequately supported by tutors for educational matters and counselling services. These are adequate to current needs.
- The administrative staff is competent and able to provide effective management of the programme.

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.

- Staff (teaching and administrative) and also financial resources are tight. In case of changing circumstances, for example in case of an increase in the numbers of students, they seriously risk being inadequate.
- An increase in the number of permanent teachers could not only prevent from the risks coming from changing circumstances but would also help ensure the consistence and the continuity of the programme. It would be very useful also to strengthen the monitoring and supervision of all teaching activities.

- After the pandemic, student counselling is becoming more and more important. It could be more emphasised within the support services, while more resources to it could be necessary soon.
- Laboratory facilities can be strengthened, and also pre-recorded material can be enhanced.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

- 6.1 Selection criteria and requirements**
- 6.2 Proposal and dissertation**
- 6.3 Supervision and committees**

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
 - *the stages of completion*
 - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
 - *the examinations*
 - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
 - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
 - *the chapters that are contained*
 - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
 - *the minimum word limit*
 - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
 - *regular meetings*

- reports per semester and feedback from supervisors
- support for writing research papers
- participation in conferences
- The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.

You may also consider the following questions:

- How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?
- Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?
- Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?

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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Choose answer
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Choose answer
6.3	Supervision and committees	Choose answer

D. Conclusions and final remarks

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 panel appreciated the opportunity to review this programme. Overall, we believe that the programme has several merits and serves a specific audience in Cyprus and Greece through a clear design and content-driven e-learning programme mode of delivery focused on healthcare management. The design with core modules and elective modules including an optional thesis project allows it to be tailored to the needs of working students. Although the programme takes students from a wide-ranging background, they appear to have an acceptable progression rate and student satisfaction with the programme.

We found the online resources as well as the administrative support to represent best practices in the HE sector.

We did identify several areas that the programme that can be improved with assessment being of high priority. We have noted these areas of improvement throughout the related sections of the document with suggestions of improvements. We suggest that assessment governance be followed up as part of a review of how learning outcomes are being evidenced across the programme.

We also believe that more external input along with co-production with students could enhance the offering and student experience.

We also encourage the programme coordinators to ensure that the eLearning technology aligns with the pedagogical ambitions of the programme.

There is also an opportunity to have more research led teaching. Again, we want to emphasise that we believe a compulsory master's thesis which is in line with best practice would be appropriate given the nature of this programme.

Overall, we are satisfied that the programme continues to be relevant and believe that by making some improvements, the university and faculty can improve the student experience on this programme.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Professor Nora Ann Colton	
Associate Professor Stefano Neri	
Associate Professor Iris Wallenburg	
Professor Iordanis Kavathatzopoulos	
Pavlos Petrou	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 5 September 2023