

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 3rd April, 2024

External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**

Cyprus University of Technology (CUT)

- **Town:** Limassol

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School of Health Sciences

- **Department/ Sector:** The Department of Rehabilitation Sciences

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

Μάστερ στη Δημόσια Υγεία (14 μήνες, 90 ECTS, Μάστερ)

In English:

Master in Public Health (MPH) (14 months, 90 ECTS, Master degree)

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

- **Programme's status:** Currently operating

- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations



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

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC: Professor Marie Hasselberg/ Chair, Associate Professor Signe Smith Jervelund, Professor Tea Lallukka & student representative Stephanos Hilides) visited the premises of the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT) on the 2nd of April, 2024, at 8:45-18.30.

The EEC members met administrative and teaching staff as well as students of the Master in Public Health Programme (MPH) and PhD in Environmental and Public Health programme in person, while one Faculty member joined the meeting online (Iosif Kafkalas, Health Economics and Policy). The committee was welcomed by the Dean, Professor Ekaterini Lambrinou and other members of the Faculty. First, the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs and Chairperson of the Internal Quality Assessment Committee of the University, Professor Nicolas Tsapatsoulis gave a presentation of an overview of Cyprus University of Technology with a special focus on the MPH and PhD programmes, and then Associate Professor Nicos Constantinou, the Head of Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, where the MPH programme belongs to, presented more details on the Department. Next, Associate Professor Costas Christophi, Faculty coordinator of the Public Health Master Program, presented the MPH Programme. After the Master programme presentation, Associate Professor Andrie Panayiotou, Faculty Coordinator of the Environmental and Public Health Doctoral Program, presented the PhD programme. In the afternoon, the EEC separately met with administrative staff only teaching staff only to discuss the courses, and finally with the students and graduates only, to hear their views and feedback on both programmes.

Each presentation was followed by a discussion session, where the EEC asked questions and was provided with answers.

The agenda of the day needed to be slightly modified during the day as some discussions took a longer time than initially anticipated. Also onsite visit to the premises was shortened due to time constraints and took place during two shorter breaks. Otherwise the visit took place as planned. Everything was well organised and we had the agenda and we received rich materials beforehand, which was very helpful. We also held an online meeting to go through the agenda and tasks prior to travelling to Cyprus. The meeting was organised by the Education Officer of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education.

Details of the day, findings, strengths and areas of improvement the committee noted are summarised in the following sections of this report.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Marie Hasselberg (Chair)	Professor in Public Health Epidemiology, Head of Department of Global Public Health	Karolinska Institutet, Sweden
Signe Smith Jervelund	Head of Studies of Public Health Science, Associate Professor - Promotion Programme	University of Copenhagen, Denmark
Tea Lallukka	Professor of Medical Sociology, vice-head of the Department of Public Health	University of Helsinki, Finland
Stephanos Hilides	Student Representative (year 6 medical student)	University of Cyprus, Cyprus

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.

The programme has a formal structure and is organised according to the rules and regulations for postgraduate studies at CUT. The design of the programme has been developed by faculty members at the Department of Rehabilitation. It has been discussed, modified, and approved by the Departmental Council prior to being approved by the Senate of the University. Information about the programme is publicly available and can be found on CUT's webpage and the Study portals for masters' programmes (www.masterportal.com).

The programme has previously been accredited by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education and the curriculum is validated by the European Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation. Furthermore, the goal is to sustain full curriculum validation of the programme by the Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER).

Each department has its own quality committee following the rules and regulations of the University committee for quality assurance. An internal postgraduate committee, consisting of four faculty members, is responsible for ensuring adherence to all quality assurance protocols. Additionally, ad hoc committee members participate in board meetings and can relay pertinent information to the internal quality assurance committee. Furthermore, the programme receives input from other departments of the School of Health Sciences as well as other departments at CUT.

The University has a Student Ombudsperson who is the link between students and teachers or administrative staff and guards against discrimination or master suppression techniques against students.

The Department Council comprises 30% student representatives; nevertheless, it is important to ensure that these representatives adequately represent all programs within the Department.

There are clear learning outcomes for all courses which are aligned with the overall objectives of the programme. The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) seems to be applied in an appropriate and consistent manner. The department employs a dynamic programme development process that takes into account student feedback, ensuring their suggestions are incorporated. Furthermore, students have the opportunity to earn income through teaching assistantships. A student progress platform with separate interfaces for administrators, teachers and students is accessible for each student.

Strengths

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

The overall structure of the program is clear and well structured. The faculty has a multidisciplinary background with strong research records which ensure up-to-date research-related education for the students. One of the goals in the university's strategic plan for the years 2023-2030 is to offer courses in pedagogical training, however, only mandatory for the newly recruited staff.

Regarding curriculum development, students influence the process through a mandatory questionnaire for each course and by providing input to the programme coordinator, who in turn communicates any suggestions to the postgraduate committee.

Two online surveys and group discussions have been conducted with the aim to get a better understanding of the interest for the programme. Overall, undergraduate students expressed interest in the programme.

An alumni follow-up shows that the graduates from the MPH are able to compete for positions in the public or private sector in Cyprus or abroad as well as being successful in getting national or international PhD positions. The Alumni continue to be active and engaged in their public health community.

The department awaits approval from the parliament for establishing a research unit, as it is legally mandated. This unit is anticipated to benefit both the PhD and MPH degree programmes and foster collaboration within the health sciences school.

Finally, the programme has a very small number of drop-outs, which is a clear strength.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

A SWOT analysis has been performed by the faculty regarding the sustainability and feasibility of the programme. Weaknesses primarily revolve around resource constraints, and a lack of community awareness about many of the programmes. Threats include difficulties in attracting faculty and experts, as well as potential regulatory and accreditation changes. There is a small number of candidates for the MPH programme as potential students may be more easily attracted to the MPH programmes offered by the private universities in Cyprus. There is little evidence of the academic advisor's effect on undergraduate students but the effect seems to increase as the level of studies increases.

We acknowledge that the implementation of a new health system in Cyprus requires professional training in public health. Even though the department already has collaboration with the health sector, it appears to be based on individual contacts rather than institutional agreements. The EEC proposes closer collaboration with the health sector, which could attract more students and at the same give them real-life experiences. This was also emphasised by the students.

The department offers an inclusive work and study environment for the students with opportunities for lab internship and teaching assistantships. However, the international students emphasized the need to have all information and communication from the university in English as well, as many emails are only in Greek.

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	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

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

Sub-areas

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

2.3 Practical training

2.4 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.

Access to course descriptions, material, etc. are available on a student portal (Moodle). The teaching is research-based, drawing upon both the teachers' own research and relevant research contributions from other scholars. In addition to the teachers' commitment to acquainting students with theories to be understood and evaluated within real-world contexts (exemplified in courses like health promotion), they underscore their emphasis on incorporating insights and examples from current research, where applicable.

The MPH courses are conducted during the afternoon, starting usually from 4pm; this allows working students to maintain their jobs or slightly modify their schedules to fit the MPH. There are two specialization pathways for this MPH: Epidemiology and Biostatistics or Environmental health. The programme has been able to attract foreign students. However, the goal is to increase the number of applications outside Cyprus as well.

Since the number of applications and the uptake of students is relatively small, the teachers know all the students well and are able to adapt their teaching according to individual student's needs, enabling flexible learning paths. A compulsory, anonymous assessment of courses has been implemented, facilitating enhancements in course quality, but feedback of how the teachers improve the courses based on the students' feedback are not provided to the students. Given that teachers maintain close oversight of student progress, it seems like they possess the flexibility to adapt their teaching methodologies based on ongoing feedback from students, which is also supported by the students' statements.

The teaching makes use of different modes of delivery, accommodating student-centred learning, theoretical and practical training seems to be interconnected, and practical training is provided in e.g. the statistical software SAS and in the dry and wet labs, where students work alongside with academic staff following the relevant protocols. The students seem to be encouraged to take an active role in the learning process and are invited to several seminars, outside normal classes, promoting a sense of responsibility and motivation for their own learning. The students conduct their thesis independently but are often offered to work within a larger research group. The students can choose a topic of their interest themselves and are supervised by an internal, but sometimes also in combination with external supervisors, if their expertise is needed such as for qualitative work. The thesis work can be done in collaboration with external public or private institutions, including NGOs.

The students report that the assessment criteria are transparent (e.g. it is clearly stated how many percentages each element makes up of the final assessment), fair and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures and are available in advance. Similarly, the introduction to the master thesis is clear and the students know what to expect. The teachers describe that the exams are composed so the students can demonstrate their ability to critically assess and synthesize the concepts and methods in the exams and not just memorize them. If there is more than one teacher in the course, the exam formulations are discussed among them but in cases with a single teacher, a similar practice with a colleague is not done systematically.

Generally, the students receive feedback from presentations and group work, but group/individual feedback from the written assignments/exams differs from course to course. However, the students expressed that they are always able to ask their teacher for feedback and they would provide it. Cyprus University of Technology has not yet published guidelines or regulations on the use of AI in exams.

Strengths

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

The small cohort of students seems to have a positive effect on the dynamic process of learning and giving face-to-face feedback to their teachers, about their issues, ideas, and suggestions. Academic faculty members appear to be friendly and easily accessible to the students, and both teachers and students expressed that the teachers are helpful in supporting the individual student's needs and overall learning. During the 1st semester, an Advisor Faculty member is assigned to each incoming student, which stands out from other similar programmes and is a clear advantage.

Students felt that the workload was demanding but manageable and fruitful, and that they received the support they needed, when needed. They praised their professors and mentioned that they are supportive and easy to talk to.

For the thesis, the academic faculty allows students to choose a topic outside of the faculty's areas of expertise by acquiring expert collaborators, while also trying to assist the students in terms of feasibility of the suggested topic (time and resources). Many of the masters' theses are transformed into an article format and published in international, peer-reviewed journals, which reflect a high quality of the programme as well as committed and supportive academic supervisors. This also provides the students with an advantage to continue and pursue their PhD, having already published a paper giving them experience in scientific writing.

Generally, the grades are based on different elements of academic performance, such as presentation, activity in the classroom, and written assignments, which reflect a holistic assessment of the students' knowledge, skills, and competences.

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.

While the strength of the programme is its strong focus on epidemiology & biostatistics and environmental health, primarily based on quantitative methods, the programme could benefit from adding a short introductory course on concepts and theories in public health in the 1st semester, as well as introducing/incorporating a broader range of research methodologies into the programme, most importantly qualitative research, including document analysis, etc. The students appeared to be genuinely interested in learning more about the qualitative methods in particular.

Students asked for more exposure to real-life public health work, therefore the institution could increase their external collaborators and the way students can benefit from them (by practical training, and thesis research).

Although most of the learning material can be considered largely up to date, and the materials are available online, promoting sustainability, some of the learning materials are rather old, especially some of the textbooks dating back to 1987, and need to be updated.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	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.

Recruitment is based on four ranks: lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor (tenure) and a full professor (tenured). Evaluation for promotion is mandatory for all lectures after 3 years and for assistant professors after 4 years. In promotion, teaching skills and experience were described to play a role, but apparently a minor one. It was explained that for promotion, the institute puts emphasis on research, grants, and publications.

Number of teachers is not very large but it reflects the size of the programme, with classes having on average 15 students. Another note is that the teachers are from specific fields which reflects the profile of the programme. They have expertise and a high level competence in epidemiology and biostatistics as well as environmental health. However, qualitative methods are only briefly

covered in the programme. External supervisors can be invited, if students conduct their thesis using qualitative method, or if they need expertise in other areas. As a further note, for some courses teaching assistants are available

In general, working conditions for the teachers and staff appeared to be good. Teachers have two classes per semester on average, equivalent to 6 hours of contact-teaching per week minimum. This was compared to private universities, where the workload was reported to be higher. They should ideally have approximately 50% of their time for research, 30% for teaching, and 20% for administrative tasks, however, in reality, teaching takes up a far larger amount as preparation, assignments and supervision of theses as well as academic advisor functions are not included in these estimates, which leaves less time for research. Especially when setting up a new programme, it was explained that it took a large amount of their time. We also got the impression that the teachers truly are there for their students, easily available, and as the number of students is quite small, teachers know all of their students personally, which likely helps in all interactions in teaching. They pointed out they have close collaboration with the students and that the master programme is successful in this respect, with students also having an academic advisor.

The publications of the teachers are closely linked to the programme's courses. Some teaching materials listed in the application could be updated, but it was reported by a staff member that they do use new materials during the course. Teachers publish also in other areas than those related to their teaching which is part of their academic freedom and provides them with more expertise on wider areas of public health to use in their teaching in the future.

A new mandatory course for all newly recruited teachers, to develop their teaching skills, will be offered later this year and onwards. The course is not mandatory for existing teachers but they can take it if they want to. It might be considered for some teachers for example based on student feedback.

We acknowledge teachers' awareness about new technologies including for instance the ChatGPT usage. There are yet no university guidelines for AI/ML (machine learning) use in place. However, the teachers considered these new technologies more as an opportunity than a threat. They also presented their Learning Content Management System (Moodle), which comprises both Instructor and Student interfaces, with multiple functions including plagiarism detection, receiving feedback and communication.

Strengths

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

Motivated and enthusiastic staff is a clear strength. They are also strong experts on the key focus areas, in particular on biostatistics and epidemiology and also environmental health. They are readily available for their students all the time. Students' views and feedback are considered during the courses and if changes suggested are minor, they can be adopted quickly. As the programme is small, an advantage is that every staff member knows everyone and the work

community is tight. They also know all of their students which is likely to help in teaching and meeting the needs of the students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

To improve student-centred teaching, a mandatory course for all teachers, who do not have prior pedagogical experiences, not just the newly recruited ones, could be beneficial. To sustain the programme, it will be beneficial to attract more students, and in particular more students from other countries outside Cyprus. It might be helpful to clearly specify how this programme is different from other Master programmes in Public Health, and consider more efficient means to promote and market the programme, and think about its branding. Such efforts should be supported by the university. The pandemic made public health more visible worldwide but other areas could also be used to brand the programme, for example the climate changes.

The students come from heterogeneous educational backgrounds with different knowledge on the key focus areas. This is challenging for the teachers as some students already have a lot of previous experience from their prior studies while others have less experience. The programme provides additional support for these students. To ease the teachers' workload, a solution could be to add certain admission requirements regarding students' previous skills and competence within quantitative methods or provide a crash course for students with no or limited previous skills and competence in this area.

As we have suggested incorporating a short introductory course on concepts and theories in public health as well as introducing/incorporating a broader range of research methodologies into the programme, most importantly qualitative research, a recruitment of a new faculty staff member holding these competences would be advised.

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	Partially 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.

Student admission process was clear and the students stated that they were contacted very rapidly after submitting their applications (in a matter of days or a couple of weeks). Students described that they received clear guidelines and appeared happy with everything, including recognition of their prior studies. It might be partly on a case by case basis. Students are assessed and scored on each area when they apply. They are also given qualitative feedback and justification, if they are rejected.

A student progress platform with separate interfaces for administrators, teachers and students is accessible for each student.

Strengths

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

The admission process is clear and efficient, with clear criteria and scoring system that is transparent and fair and easy to justify for the applicants. Both accepted and rejected applicants are provided with feedback, which is considered a strength.

The EEC also found it a strength that the university provides scholarships for those coming from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

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 finds no particular areas of improvement. Current admission process works really well and could serve as an inspiration for other programmes in the area.

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	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.

Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources, including programme-specific programmes, e.g. SAS licences, are provided to students and support the achievement of the objectives in the study programme.

Physical resources, including library and study facilities, IT infrastructure, appeared to adequately support the study programme. Most are available online. Likewise, human support resources were adequate to support the study programme, e.g. student counselling and academic advisors were available. Similarly, language courses in written English and Greek are offered to the students. Students with special needs can apply for services relevant to them so they are able to attend the programme. The students expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the support from the library, including introduction to various resources such as reference systems. Students can apply for research funding to publish their work from the thesis.

Generally, the university provides a broad range of supportive services to the students, and the students are informed about the services available to them. While the programme always makes sure that information is available in English to the students, international students not speaking Greek mentioned that online information at the university level is not always available in English and they need to use a translator. Additionally, emails regarding some potentially important events or information from the university are sometimes only written in Greek, which may imply that some students miss important information.

Strengths

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

The wide range of student support seems to cover the needs of the students. Library services are wide-ranging and easy to access, which is important for the MPH programme. The diverse student community with different educational backgrounds and origin creates a strong and enriching learning environment.

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.

While the programme always makes sure that information is available in English to the students, international students not speaking Greek have a difficult time accessing the online information at the university level and emails from the university level, which are normally only in Greek. The university should make sure to provide all information in both Greek and in English to make information accessible to all students.

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	NA
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	NA
6.3	Supervision and committees	NA

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 Master of Public Health at CUT has been founded on preexisting similar programs on epidemiology and environmental health, and the overall structure of the program is clear and well structured. While the programme excels in its emphasis on epidemiology, biostatistics, and environmental health, predominantly utilising quantitative methods, enhancing the MPH curriculum could involve a brief introductory course on fundamental concepts and theories in public health during the first semester. Expanding the range of research methodologies, particularly qualitative research, would further enrich the program, ensuring a coverage of core public health elements. This provides the students with a more comprehensive take on both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The quality assurance and management of the programme seem to be appropriate. The faculty has a multidisciplinary background with strong research records which ensures up-to-date research-based education for the students. This is a clear strength as public health is multidisciplinary by nature. The teachers are dedicated, approachable, friendly, and readily accessible to students with diverse academic backgrounds. Their commitment to accommodating individual learning needs contributes significantly to enhancing the learning outcomes of each student. The mandatory evaluation of courses and the close relationship between teachers and students support the curriculum developments. While a new mandatory course in pedagogical training will be in place for newly recruited staff in the fall 2024, this could be expanded to include all teachers, who have limited pedagogical experiences, to improve student-centred teaching.

We acknowledge that the implementation of a new health system in Cyprus requires professional training in public health. Even though the department already has collaboration with the health sector, it seems to be based on individual contacts rather than institutional agreements. We propose closer collaboration with the health sector, which could attract more students and at the same give them real-life experiences.

The department awaits approval from the parliament for establishing a research unit, which is anticipated to benefit both the PhD and MPH degree programmes and foster collaboration within the health sciences school. To bolster the programme's branding, given the importance of public health education for Cyprus as a nation, a strategic initiative could entail establishing a Department of Public Health. This endeavour not only has the potential to attract a broader student population, including international students, thereby sustaining and promoting the programme, but also holds significance for other reasons, including promoting research to effectively address the nation's public health challenges, advancing evidence-based policymaking and interventions, and signalling a proactive stance toward emerging health threats and challenges, including those stemming from climate change.



The wide range of student support seems to cover the needs of the students. Library services are wide-ranging and easily accessible, which is important for the MPH programme. While the programme always makes sure that information is available in English to the students, information and emails from the university regarding some potentially important information are sometimes only written in Greek. This may imply that some students miss important information. The university should ensure that important information is always available in English to the students.

An alumni follow-up reveals that the graduates of the MPH programme are able to compete for positions in the public or private sector in Cyprus or abroad as well as being successful in getting national or international PhD positions. The Alumni remain active and engaged in their public health community, which underscores the success of the programme in order to foster dedicated and committed public health professionals.



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Professor Marie Hasselberg (Chair)	
Assoc.Prof. Signe Smith Jervelund (Member)	
Professor Tea Lallukka (Member)	
Mr. Stephanos Hilides (Student Member)	

Date: 3rd April, 2024