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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Doc. 300.1.1

Date: November 2020

External Evaluation Report (Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:** Frederick University
- **Town:** Nicosia and Limassol
- **School/Faculty:** School of Business and Law
- **Department/ Sector:** Business Administration

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

Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων (4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο (ΒΑ))

Κατευθύνσεις:
1. Λογιστική
2. Επιχειρηματικότητα και Διοίκηση
3. Ψηφιακό Μάρκετινγκ

  In English:

Business Administration (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor (BA))
Specialisations:
1. Accounting
2. Entrepreneurial Management
3. Digital Marketing

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

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

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

Introduction

The site visit at the Frederick University in Nicosia and Limassol took place, remotely, on the 13 November 2020.

During the site visit, the Committee met with the following:

The governing body of Frederick University:

- the Rector and Head of the Institution
- the President of the Council
- the Vice President of the Council
- the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs
- the Vice Rector of Research, Development and International Relations

The Internal Evaluation Committee:

- the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, Chair of the Internal Evaluation Committee (IQC)
- a School of Business and Law representative in the IQC
- a student representative in the IQC

School, Department and Programme Representatives:

- the Dean of the School of Business and Law
- the Chair of the Business Administration Department
- the Coordinator of the BA Business Administration

Members of the teaching staff (20+ individuals):

- Full-time faculty
- Adjunct faculty

Students and graduates:

- Five students
- One graduate

Administrative staff and support unit representatives:

- the Director of Administration and Finance
- the Director of Studies and Student Welfare Service
- the Director of Administration
- the Director of Operations and Infrastructure
- the Director of Research and Interconnection
- the Head Librarian

On top of documents provided ahead of the site visit, four presentations were conducted during the visit, and the committee got the opportunity to interview all the above mentioned participants.

In addition, the committee was provided a virtual tour of the Frederick University premises as well as two recorded online teaching sessions.

The documents that were provided and examined included the Application for Evaluation-Accreditation, incl. appendixes on courses and course descriptions, detailed bibliographical notes, infrastructure, indicative publications of academic staff, quality standards and indicators and samples of certificates. In addition, support materials were provided in the form of exam samples, internship placements, senior project guidelines and more.

The committee found that the documentation provided was rich on relevant information and very well-structured. In addition, all participants in the site visits were very well-prepared, very attentive and very open for learning and dialogue. The high commitment was very convincing and promising for the destiny of the proposed programme.

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A. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Kevin Orr	Professor (Chair)	University of St Andrews, UK
Pernille Eskerod	Professor (Member)	Webster Vienna Private University, Austria
Louis Brennan	Professor (Member)	University of Dublin, Ireland
Marilia Mateidou	Student (Member)	University of Cyprus, Cyprus
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

B. 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

The application as well as presentations and dialogues at the site visit provided us with a very clear understanding of the proposed study programme. The programme is clearly designed to provide students with both academic and practical knowledge and an intention to integrate

theoretical, general and practical knowledge in relevant areas for a business career. By offering three specializations, i.e. accounting, entrepreneurial management, and digital marketing, on top of core business administration modules the programme provides the students great opportunity to pursue a future as solid business professionals. It became clear at the site visit that the programme was developed with relevant input from an internal committee, faculty, professional bodies, industry contacts and current students - and that it is based on relevant experiences from current operation. All participants in the site visit showed dedication as well as high enthusiasm about the programme.

Strengths

- The programme goals and learning outcomes have been thoroughly described.

- Through engagement with relevant stakeholders, not least professional associations, the involved at Frederick University demonstrates a very good understanding of the market demand for their intended graduates and the newest trends within relevant fields.

- The programme has a very clear structure (common core courses, hereafter specialization, hereafter a senior project within the specialization) that provides students with solid skills within business administration as well as within specializations of high demand, i.e. accounting, entrepreneurial management, and digital marketing.

- The order of the core modules ensures academic progression throughout the programme.

- The programme provides the students opportunities to develop their theoretical and practical skills and knowledge within their chosen specialization.

- The programme includes solid courses on research methodology - and thereby prepare the students well for the senior project.

- The programme is supported by detailed and systematic quality assurance.

- Experienced practitioners are involved as teaching staff within the specializations.

- The workload of faculty members is kept in control (and thereby ensuring the students sufficient attention and time) by setting expectations for the number of teaching hours per week (max. 12 hours/week) as well as supervision of senior project (approx. 3-4 projects per semester).

Areas of improvement and recommendations
- We recommend that the university recruits more staff within entrepreneurial management and digital marketing.
- We recommend that the university aims to invite more visiting faculty and undertakes more cooperation with relevant universities abroad*.*
- We recommend that the university ensures that it is checked in the course evaluations whether the students feel that structure of the programme works well, i.e. if the requirement of student development matches the order of the courses (e.g. to ease the transformation from high school student to university student).

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
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

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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.*

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- *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 EEC met with the teaching staff of the School and found them to be highly committed to the delivery of a sound and effective learning process for their students. The process is supported by a thorough quality assurance system that operates at both the University and Department levels.

The objectives of the programme and the learning outcomes are very clearly articulated while the structure and elements of the programme are also clearly specified. There is in a place a strong process for the review and revision of programmes. There is a range of pedagogical approaches deployed by the teaching staff and a variety of delivery modalities as well. Assessment approaches are rigorous and varied and these help to ensure that learning objectives are being achieved. All teaching materials are made available to the students. The advent of the pandemic saw the teaching staff make a successful transition to a blended delivery model in a very short space of time with the support of a very agile support infrastructure. Library and Lab resources appear ample in terms of ensuring the programme learning objectives and module level objectives are met. The standing of the programmes are enhanced with their recognition by established reputable professional bodies. The committee met with a diverse group of students who expressed considerable satisfaction with their educational experience. Of particular note was the number of students who had elected to study at the University on the basis of word of mouth recommendations.

Strengths
A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.
1. The programme structure and content are very clearly laid out.
2. The programme design is consistent with best in class programme design
3. The teaching staff were very articulate and passionate around the design of the programme and were able to respond in a very commanding way to detailed questions around the programme design and content.
4. The department and programme have good links with industry and practice.
5. There appears to be excellent relationships between the faculty members and the supporting services staff.
6. There is great respect and appreciation on the part of students for the commitment and engagement of the faculty members.

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.

 1. Consideration should be given to the further development of internship opportunities for students.

2. More extra-curricular activities could be considered for students on the programme to promote a strong sense of community and esprit du corps among the students.

3. The possibility of attracting international visiting faculty to contribute to the programme should be explored.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
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?*

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> - *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 EEC met with all of the FT faculty members involved in the delivery of the proposed programme. The FT faculty members are all adequately qualified. All thirteen members of the FT academic staff, with the exception of one professional qualified member, hold PhD degrees from leading foreign academic institutions. They all seem to highly motivated and engaged and have very good English language proficiency. While eight FT faculty members from other departments of the University and five visiting faculty members contribute to the programme, PT faculty staff contribute in the functional areas of specialization such as Accounting and Digital Marketing.

The faculty members expressed satisfaction with the working environment at the University. They appear to be highly dedicated to their teaching and to their students. Faculty members engage in research and are supported by the University to participate in academic conferences. While all faculty members appear to be engaged in some research, the extent to which they are active in research is variable with some members publishing in leading international venues while others are less active in the production of research output.

The staff is categorized into the standard academic ranks with promotion based on the usual criteria of teaching, research and administrative performance. We noted some faculty at Associate Professor level undertaking important leadership roles. It is important for the institution to recognise and reward such leadership contributions through the promotions process.

Strengths

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

1. The faculty members appear to be highly committed and very dedicated to their teaching and to the students in both their teaching and advisory roles. The students that we met were very positive in terms of their appreciation of the University's faculty staff for their support and guidance and for the degree of access afforded them by the faculty members. The students highlighted that the faculty members were very approachable.

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2. There appears to be a very good level of morale among the faculty members and they appeared to work together very well as a genuine community.
3. The courses delivered by the faculty members are evaluated by the students and this feeds into the faculty annual reviews.
4. The faculty have responded with tremendous agility and dedication to the demands of the pandemic transforming the learning experience for students into a virtual setting in a few short days.
5. The faculty appear to be well supported by the University's service areas and were highly appreciate of the support that they received in effecting the overnight transformation to a virtual environment.
6. The infrastructure appears to support well the activity of the faculty particularly in relation to teaching where the provision of hybrid and flexible classrooms will support ongoing innovation in teaching.

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.

1. The University should more proactively seek to encourage a greater engagement in research on the part of all faculty members.
2. Consideration should be given to the delivery of research seminars by faculty members on a regular basis. Some activity can be useful in terms of the provision of feedback, the forging of research collaborations and the nurturing/strengthening of a research culture.
3. Incentives in the form of competitive funding might be considered as a way of jumpstarting research activity particularly for those faculty members whose research output is currently low.
4. High research performing faculty members should be encouraged to collaborate with low research performing faculty members. Funding of such collaborative research projects could be utilised to incentivise such collaborative working.
5. Since European COST Actions are a recognised way of forging international research links and collaborations with colleagues across Europe, the University should work with the Cyprus National COST coordinator and faculty members to maximise the involvement of faculty members in European COST Actions. Faculty members who have previously been involved in such Actions should be encouraged to continue to involve themselves.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
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*

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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.

Frederick University has clear and transparent criteria, regulations, and policies for student admission. Processes to monitor and act on information on student progression have been established. Awards are in line with the articulation of outcomes and levels which outline a progression across the programme of study. These are appropriate and informed by relevant international standards.

Strengths

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

- The University is transparent about admission procedures and about progress monitoring.
- There is good awareness of relevant international standards and benchmarks and ongoing work to ensure these are incorporated within new and existing programmes.

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 policies and procedures seem to be appropriate but the programme relies on a relatively small department. There are advantages to that small size in relation to teamwork and collegiality (we saw evidence of both these elements). On the other hand, the capacity of the faculty to support the programme and provide the specialist, research-led knowledge needs to be monitored and relevant support from the University may need to be forthcoming. The committee found the departmental staff to be fully engaged with the work and life of the students and the programmes. But appropriate investment in research would further buttress the capacity of the department.

There may be opportunities to form strategic partnerships with international universities. These could focus on research development, as well as exchange opportunities for students and staff.

The University and Department have relatively low recruitment of international students. This issue has been acknowledged by the faculty and managers we spoke to and there is an emergent strategy to develop a wider and more international mix of students, in ways which should benefit the student experience.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
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.

As we noted earlier, this was a remote 'visit'. However from the materials and virtual tour (movie download of the campuses) provided to us, the infrastructure standards are good. From our remote inspection of these physical resources (premises, classrooms, social areas, libraries, study facilities and so on) we see that the standards are adequate to support the programme.

We met a good number of students from different levels of study (including an alumnus) and backgrounds. The group included a student who was studying remotely from north America. They all spoke positively about their experience at the University. In particular they were appreciative of how the University responded supportively and swiftly when the pandemic arrived.

It is important that the learning, new pedagogical options and contingency planning are incorporated into the strategic and operational planning of the department, School, and University. We hear of great staff pride in how quickly the School had been able to shift to online modes, and the faculty also talked positively about their experience of this mode of delivery. We think there is a welcome commitment among staff to continue to consider how to support student-centred learning and design and deliver flexible modes of provision during times of lockdown or social distancing.

We met with a dedicated administrative staff who clearly contribute to the student experience and who support student life, beyond the Programme. Administrative systems appear to be well designed, with clear structures and roles.

It is important that the School recognizes the need to maintain capacity in the administration team if the programme is successful in recruiting more students.

The teaching and learning resources (including materials and reading resources) are provided to students and are appropriate.

In our conversations with the teaching team, we saw heard their strong commitment to adopting student-centred learning.

The standard of general infrastructure seems to be reasonable. The library and IT resources were seen by students to be very satisfactory.

There was pride among staff about how the University had supported students during the pandemic. This was also the feeling among the students we spoke to.

The experience of meeting these contingencies can now be incorporated into future planning. If remote learning becomes a more regular occurrence this may have implications for the patterns of demand on staff and the design of pedagogy.

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

We heard good examples from the students about the practical help they had received from the University during the pandemic, including help addressing welfare challenges.

IT infrastructure was revamped in light of the pandemic and was felt to work well for the students and staff.

There is a dedicated Welfare role which enables the School to provide advice and welfare support, in addition to support of the teaching staff. The students were aware of how to access this service and support whether on campus or remotely. This member of staff had an impressive knowledge of current and emergent welfare issues, with a strong commitment to student support, in conjunction with relevant public bodies and specialisms.

Our meetings gave us a strong sense of commitment among all staff to the student experience and progression.

The faculty and leadership demonstrate a commitment to learning and to continuous improvement.

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 ongoing uncertainty faced by all education institutions about 'face to face' teaching post-Covid19 means that the department, School and University should be satisfied that it has contingencies in place to ensure its students can continue to learn remotely at any times when this becomes necessary.

The School and Department needs to ensure that the adequacy of learning and teaching resources (i.e. academic materials and subscriptions, IT resources, staffing levels across the University) is maintained and refreshed. The move to online learning may mean that more investment is required in subscriptions to e-books and e-journals, and perhaps away from traditional provision of books and hard copies of resources.

We heard from staff about extra curricular opportunities and student associations and clubs at the University but the students we met (albeit a small sample) appeared not to have participated in these. We suggest that questions of participation, involvement and engagement in the broader student life on campus is an important element of the student experience.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
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*

> o *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		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Choose answer
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Choose answer
6.3	Supervision and committees	Choose answer

7. Additional for joint programmes *(ALL ESG)*

Sub-areas

> **7.1 Legal framework and cooperation agreement**
> **7.2 The joint programme**

7.1 Legal framework and cooperation agreement

Standards

- *The joint programme is offered in accordance with legal frameworks of the relevant national higher education systems.*
- *The terms and conditions of the joint programme are laid down in a cooperation agreement. The agreement in particular covers the following issues:*
  - *Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme*
  - *Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation, including funding, sharing of costs and income, resources for mobility of staff and students*
  - *Admission and selection procedures for students*
  - *Mobility of students and teaching staff*
  - *Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures*
  - *Handling of different semester periods, if existent*

7.2 The joint programme

Standards

- *The partner universities apply joint internal quality assurance processes.*
- *The joint programme is offered jointly, involving all cooperating universities in the design, delivery and further development of the programme.*
- *Aims and learning outcomes are clearly stated, including a joint syllabus, language policy, as well as an account of the intended added value of the programme.*
- *Study counselling and mobility plans are efficient and take into account the needs of different kinds of students.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Does the joint study programme conform to the requirements of a study programme offered at the specific level?*
- *Is there a system that assures the quality of joint provision and guarantees that the aims of the programme are met?*
- *Do the mechanisms for ensuring the quality of the joint study programme take into consideration the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)? Are they adopted by all the universities involved?*
- *Is the division of responsibilities in ensuring quality clearly defined among the partner universities?*
- *Is relevant information about the programme, e.g. admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures, well documented and published by taking into account the specific needs of students?*
- *What is the added value of the programme of study?*
- *Is there a sustainable funding strategy among the partner universities? Explain.*

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		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
7.1	Legal framework and cooperation agreement	Choose answer
7.2	The joint programme	Choose answer

C. 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 EEC had a positive remote visit and would like to thank the Agency and the University staff for their support and engagement throughout the process. The staff at the University produced helpful documentation for the evaluation and engaged constructively with EEC members during the meetings. There was commitment to continuous improvement and learning, appropriate to the spirit of the evaluation process. The preceding sections of this Report highlight the considerable strengths of the Programme and the wider Department and institution. They also identify areas for improvement which it is hoped will be useful in focussing further effort and sustaining improvements.

Strengths include:

1. The teaching staff were very articulate and passionate around the design of the programme and were able to respond in a very commanding way to detailed questions around the programme design and content.
2. The department and programme have good links with industry and practice.
3. There appears to be excellent relationships between the faculty members and the supporting services staff.
4. There is great respect and appreciation on the part of students for the commitment and engagement of the faculty members.
5. The faculty members appear to be highly committed and very dedicated to their teaching and to the students in both their teaching and advisory roles. The students highlighted that the faculty members were very approachable.
6. The dedicated Welfare role enables the School to provide advice and welfare support, in addition to support of the teaching staff..

Areas for improvement include:

1. Consideration should be given to the further development of internship opportunities for students.

2. More extra-curricular activities could be considered for students on the programme to promote a strong sense of community and esprit du corps among the students.

3. The possibility of attracting international visiting faculty to contribute to the programme should be explored.

4. More widely, the University should more proactively seek to encourage a greater engagement in research on the part of all faculty members. For example, consideration should be given to the delivery of research seminars by faculty members on a regular basis. Some activity can be useful

in terms of the provision of feedback, the forging of research collaborations and the nurturing/strengthening of a research culture.

5. Relatedly, High research performing faculty members should be encouraged to collaborate with low research performing faculty members. Funding of such collaborative research projects could be utilised to incentivise such collaborative working.

6. The University could work to maximise the involvement of faculty members in European COST Actions. Similarly, other ways to encourage continuing professional development opportunities should be pursued.

D. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Kevin Orr	
Pernille Eskerod	
Louis Brennan	
Marilia Mateidou	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 19 November 2020