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Doc. 300.1.1

Date: July 6, 2021

External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**

  Frederick University

- **Town:** Nicosia and Limassol

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School of Education

- **Department/ Sector:** Department/Sector

- **Programme of study- Name** (3 Semesters, 90 ECTS)

  In Greek:

  Εκπαίδευση για την Αειφόρο Ανάπτυξη και

  Κοινωνική Αλλαγή

  In English:

  Masters of Science in Education for Sustainable

  Development and Social Change

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

- **Programme's status:** Choose status

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

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A. Introduction
This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The External Evaluation Committee (henceforth EEC) examined the documentation of the International Masters of Science on Education for Sustainable Development and Social Change (MSc-ESD) (1,5 Years, 90 ECTS) offered by Frederick University – both for the conventional version and for the distance learning version of the programme. Academic members of the EEC had a first online meeting with Dr Lefkios Neofytou, the CYQAA officer over Zoom on Tuesday June 15 of 2021 to discuss the online accreditation process. An online Zoom meeting with University representatives, including the Rector, the Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs and the President of the Council) took place on Wednesday June 30th of 2021. During this meeting, the academic management team, as well as the Chair of the School of Education and of the Distance Learning Committee presented, explained and elaborated on the university's overall vision, international standing, education and research strategy, the curriculum and support structures as well as other issues in further detail. Meetings were also arranged with academic and administrative staff, specifically connected to the MSc programme to understand their involvement in the design, execution and evaluation of the programme. The EEC also had a conversation with 8 students/alumni of the programme and its predecessor to reflect on the quality of the programme and its relevance for the world of work. The EEC also had the opportunity to virtually visit the premises of the College resources, class infrastructure, computer centre, library, online and recreational facilities. During the evaluation process and the writing of the report the EEC also had several exchanges via email about the assessment.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Arjen Wals (Chair)	Professor	Wageningen University, The Netherlands
Jennie Winter	Associate Professor	Plymouth Marjon University, United Kingdom
Matthias Barth	Professor	Leuphana University, Germany
Constantinos Zacharia	Student Member	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*

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maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)

- o *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
- o *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
- o *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
- o *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- o *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- o *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*
- o *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- o *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*
- o *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:*
    - o *selection criteria*
    - o *intended learning outcomes*
    - o *qualification awarded*
    - o *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
    - o *pass rates*
    - o *learning opportunities available to the students*
    - o *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.*

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.

Fredericks University, based on the background materials provided, an exploration of its web-environment, a virtual tour of the campus and the conversations we had with various key people in the university (see the consultation agenda) appears to provide a healthy environment for education and research that meets and exceeds international standards. The MSc-programme reviewed is nested in the overall Quality Assurance Policy framework of Fredericks University which the committee found to be transparent, comprehensive, responsive and inclusive. Several quality control mechanisms have been built into the program at the level of the program as a whole, including by means of the program self-evaluation (to check coherence, continued relevance and the extent to which the program as a whole can be followed within the study load allocated by a reasonable effort on the part of the students), and at the course level with course end evaluations, frequent evaluation of the course web-site, alignment between what is taught and the latest research in the course area, and more standard evaluations of students' achievements/failure rates etc. From the conversations with staff and QA-representatives, we sensed there is a conscious effort to create an on-going improvement mindset among staff. Students are represented in the conversations about the quality assurance protocols.

The public information with regards to the content and nature of the program, as well as it's admission criteria and expected employment spheres upon graduation is clear. Course descriptions with detailed information on course purpose and objectives, (intended) learning outcomes, course content and teaching methodology as well as a bibliography and details on assessment procedures are readily available.

The information management system of the university seems to be up to international standards. Involvement of staff and students in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities is secured through the Internal Quality Committee which consists of two teaching staff members and one student of the program.

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

The program is unique as there are not many ESD programs internationally at the Masters level. The program is historically grounded in its predecessor which has over the years enabled a critical mass of staff engaged in ESD from various disciplinary backgrounds to come together. The courses reflect the current state of the art in the field of ESD. The staff impressed the committee in terms of its knowledge, commitment and inter- and transdisciplinary way of thinking. The connecting of the social sciences, arts, humanities and natural sciences seems to work well in this program as was confirmed by the students and alumni the committee spoke with. The focus on systemic change, empowerment and the SDGs, using a students centred approach seems highly appropriate for a MSc of this kind. The expertise of staff as reflected in their CV's, acquisition of projects and their publications is impressive.

In terms of quality assurance: there are multiple feedback and evaluation loops in the program (see figure below) both in the academic program internal evaluation and the department internal evaluation. Committees involved include students and graduates as well as representatives from the world of work. The program design appears to be flexible and responsive to changing needs in society with regards to both pedagogical approach and with regards to sustainable development and social change. The program meets the EQFs.

Students seem to find employment in different spheres, some going on to do PhD-research, some establishing their own sustainability-oriented school or NGO, some working in the policy arena and some as teachers and/or school leaders. The program anticipates that in the future more schools and organisations will need to reorient to sustainable development and rethink their teaching and learning, as such it seems well positioned to attract more students internationally as well, especially from the Mediterranean region.

The general information about the program seems clear and accessible.

The committee is impressed by the very low percentage of drop-outs which suggests students and staff are committed to the program and that the program is achievable by those admitted.

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 quality assurance scheme is very comprehensive but might also invite bureaucracy and lead to obligatory routines. The program will need to find a good balance between reflexivity and constructive dialogue between stakeholders in the program, and accountability.

While the shift to systemic change, social change, inclusivity and empowerment makes the program unique, there is a risk that the ecological-environmental aspect might be lost a bit. The committee recommends keeping a good balance.

The study load seems acceptable but the committee found the ambitions in terms of learning outcomes and reading load a bit high and possibly at the risk of more activity-oriented pedagogies. Some courses seemed to have too many learning outcomes, more than could realistically be achieved in 10 credits, in others the suggested assessments were too diluted which suggests over assessment, or were not authentic reflections of the learning outcomes. The committee recommends revisiting, reducing and prioritizing the learning outcomes in those courses and to make sure that the once selected and agreed upon can be assessed adequately (see also, section 3).

The research-orientation of the program is a strength as long as 'research' can also be design-oriented and activity-based, so as to avoid a conventional gap between research and practice.

The international profiling and marketing of the course will be critical. This can become a unique international 'place-based' ESD Masters that will bring talented international students together who can benefit from the expertise of staff, the special local/regional environment, the conducive learning environment Frederiks University

provides, and the 'living ESD examples' that exist on Cyprus. The MSc ESD for Social Change can be profiled as a Living Lab for ESD for Social Change in a Mediterranean context.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
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
>
> **2.2 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.*

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 Master of Science in Education for Sustainable Development and Social Change programme is a 90 ECTS three semester program, offered both online and face to face with two cohorts (n=25) online and 1 cohort (n=15) on campus. It aims for developing students' critical understanding of Sustainable Development (SD) issues, developing competences and pedagogical skills required for practicing critical reflection, action-oriented transformative pedagogy and helping learners promote active and responsible citizenship for addressing SD issues. The program is open to students with a good undergraduate degree from a variety of programs which results in a diverse cohort of learners. Graduates find various employment opportunities in the public and private sector as well as with NGOs.

Students in the program go through six compulsory courses (70 ECTS in total) and in addition choose two elective courses out of a list of five potential offerings. Courses run for 13 weeks through the semester and are clearly described in the course descriptions.

The program has adopted and applied the Quality Assurance Policy of the University as its inter-quality system and is committed to a continuous improvement and reflection on teaching and learning procedures. Regular evaluations by students and faculty and regular reports (Program Self Evaluation, Faculty Activity Report, Faculty Appraisal Report and the Department Self Evaluation Report) are firmly established.

Expected learning outcomes, course goals and content including key readings as well as assessment measures are clearly described in the course descriptions. Each course is complemented with a final exam counting at least 50% towards the final grade and in most cases complemented by more formative assessment procedures.

The modules adopted the University's general vision of student-centric teaching and learning environments and focus on student`s competence development throughout the program. All modules offer a variety of teaching and learning formats with an emphasis on interactive, dialog-oriented and problem-solution oriented collaborative work. Course descriptions as well as oral communication both with staff and students made it clear that there is a strong focus on a good mix of delivery modes and forms of student engagement. For example in module "501: Sustainable Development Issues, Principles and Goals" which is a rather general introduction which often happens to be carried out in a rather conservative "transmissive" style lectures are alternated with workshop activities and learning is clearly pointed towards students competence development with a constructive alignment of intended learning outcomes. Alumni clearly pointed out how the student-centric teaching and learning environments and the interaction with staff while working in small groups encourages students to take an active role in shaping and altering the learning process to individual needs.

Teaching methods, tools and material are state of the art and show innovative approaches, especially in the elective courses such as "507: Education for Sustainable Development Through Literature and Drama" or "509: Sustainable development through visual arts". With making stronger links between the online and offline pürogram and a more active stive for synergies the potential of blended learning could develop that even further.

Emphasis is given to research-oriented approaches and bringing in practical aspects and perspectives through engagement with practitioners. This has been dealt with in transdisciplinary settings in which learner and teacher act together as collaborators of key stakeholders which empowers students and supports mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship.

Although rather research focused with no mandatory practical training parts there is a strong connection between practical and theoretical studies. Alumni and staff alike emphasized the importance of transdisciplinary collaborations and pointed out how this is achieved through the staff's strong connection with key practitioners.

To the best of the committee's knowledge, student assessment follows standards of being consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures. The mix of assessment procedures speak to the overall intention to deliver competence oriented teaching and learning opportunities and to serve the need of a diverse group of learners and allows students to demonstrate the achievement of intended learning outcomes. Criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking are described in detail and in advance in the course descriptions.

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

Group work in small groups of students with a clear research orientation and a transdisciplinary approach is a clear asset of the program which benefits from the expertise and the network of the staff involved. It is further supported by a variety of delivery modes and forms of student engagement that encourage students to self directed collaborative learning.

The elective courses offer a good selection of interesting choices for students to develop their own unique trajectories. The inter- and transdisciplinary focus, mixing and connecting art-based approaches, social and natural sciences, as well as attention to values and ethics, as well as it's social change focus make for a unique program that is timely in today's shifting higher education landscape.

The students available in the interview appreciated the friendly and proactive support and guidance provided by the faculty members.

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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 overall very impressed by the general quality and execution of the program the following aspects might be considered for further development to make the program even stronger:

First the intended learning outcomes throughout the curriculum could be even stronger linked to assessment procedures in terms of a constructive alignment, assuring to best support competence development and offer students a "feed-forward" system for individual competence development without overdoing it with too many pieces of assessment.

Second, further innovation in teaching and learning formats might want to consider options of blended learning, design-based and applied formats. Within the student-centred approach can also be critiqued (see section 3) as it might neglect issues that require a decentering of the individual and the inclusion of peers and mentors.

Third, there may be some overlap in courses focusing on empowerment, social change and ESD competences, although this may depend on the way the courses are taught. A clarification and careful design of focus throughout the curriculum is encouraged. Here the topic of citizen science might also need more attention.

Finally, some of the reading load seems high for students. A focus on fewer but critically engaged with key readings and a list of additional readings might give the students more guidance and support here.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
2	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	compliant
2.2	Practical training	compliant
2.3	Student assessment	compliant

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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.*

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 staff and student contributions around teaching at the University are a testament to the high quality of work that is undertaken to ensure quality. Staff are employed by merit of teaching and research accomplishments and both activities are embedded in annual review and promotional criteria. All staff connected with the program are relevantly qualified in terms of both academic level (almost exclusively Assistant/ Associate Professor and Professorial level) and discipline (education and ESD). Many members of the team also hold external positions which is common practice in Cyprus and these often complement their academic roles.

Support for teaching is a developing service. There are linked centres of support for campus based and distance learning. The former is not well established and there is no mandatory teaching development CPD for campus-based teaching.

Teaching performance is subject to the University's quality assurance processes which are populated by students, staff, administration, and various voice instruments. Where support needs are identified, staff are provided with line manager/ mentor/ other support.

There are 12 teaching staff on the program teaching circa 15 students which is an enviable staff student ratio. Although specific data on visiting staff was not included, the consensus is that these staff provide the mainstay of the educational offer including thesis supervision. All staff were full time and teaching workloads were disseminated equally amongst the Associate / Assistant Professors.

Many of the team have been students or had tenure overseas and the research credentials of the team are impressive and cover a wide range of topics. All of the team publish prolifically, and this is a great strength. It was evident that the team published in areas that enriched taught content and indeed their own work featured in their curricula. The committee was unable to establish the extent to which teaching influenced research however staff talked enthusiastically about how teaching informed and challenged their disciplinary perspectives, so it is possible this fed directly into research practice. The committee was unable to ascertain the extent to which the allocation of

teaching hours was comparable to time spent on research; however, staff had equitable teaching workloads and did not talk about workload as impinging on their ability to undertake either.

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

The enthusiasm and motivation of the team to design innovative teaching and the commitment to their discipline and to their students was very evident. The team have collated a diverse, niche and valuable set of educational experiences which is of evident value to a broad range of professionals. The alumni of the course are extremely positive about the impact of the course on their personal and professional identities. They reported that participation had led to the fulfilment of careers and to academic development via research and PhDs. Alumni were very positive about the calibre of the teaching and pastoral care. The team described a range of visiting and networked contacts from government, industry, employers and NGOs that engage in knowledge transfer/other contributions to the programme and clearly articulated how this enriched teaching and learning. The team have a good grasp of research informed teaching and are engaged in research led, oriented, tutored and based interpretations of this approach. Research activity is communicated right through the course and alumni commented on this as a real strength of their experience. It is of note that students are welcomed as participants on staffs' funded research projects. The course descriptors and staff accounts of teaching methodologies described a range of teaching methods which are communicated via the classroom, Moodle and field experience and thoughtful suggestions have been made to students to create individual field experiences throughout the COVID restrictions.

The strong research-orientation of the programme benefits from the staff's close collaboration and connections with well established (international) networks as well as with organisations in the public and private sector.

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.

Scholarship in teaching and learning and ESD are both continually evolving fields subject to changes in the social, political, economic, and technological zeitgeist. Whilst the School team are well qualified, there is a lack of evidence of good standing activity in teaching and learning. It seems that teaching development is a recent addition to the University's academic support services but that within this emergent offer there is little mandatory training. This is remiss and could be usefully rectified. The School can have an important role in both communicating about ESD to the wider University audience and being in receipt of academic development in international contemporary HE. For example, teaching development could support staff to ensure that their courses are constructively aligned (see also section 2).

Although the committee did not specifically ask staff to reflect critically on this, the team appeared uncritical of their commitment to student centred learning. Whilst this approach is widely advocated there is critique from within the ESD field that this does not sit well with the tenets of ESD which are about less individualistic epistemologies. Linked to this is the observation that despite claiming connections with externalities staff did not talk about using the institutional business, operations, and estates to teach about and for sustainability. Interestingly the professional services interpretation of sustainability equated to inclusivity and did not comment on communicating sustainability using the campus environment. Using the campus in all its forms to teach about and for ESD can bring

meaning to the subject and potentially provide accessible field experiences which are socially inclusive and responsive to COVID (depending on restrictions).

In light of these observations the committee makes the following recommendations: (1) The institution to implement more mandatory teaching development offers/targets. (2) The institution to create badging or awards to recognise participation in teaching development activity. (3) The team to peer review the course descriptions using a constructive alignment framework. Ask the questions - are all learning outcomes achievable and how do they translate to assessment criteria and assessment formats. (4) Staff to consider running a TESTA audit to get an overview of assessment burden on students. (5) The team to critique the notion of student centred learning V sustainability – a good start to this would be to read Silova, Komatsu, and Rappleye (2021). (6) Staff to explore campus and organisational - based opportunities for teaching about and for ESD. (7) The committee recommends revisiting, reducing and prioritizing the learning outcomes in those courses and to make sure that the once selected and agreed upon can be assessed adequately.

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

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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*

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○ *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.*

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.

Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place. What "Good undergraduate degree" (more than Pass) means («Καλώς») and what grades, are needed for admission is not so clear. At the moment there is recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. This might need to be made more transparent in the future.

Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place. When students lag behind a tracking system will identify such a student and student-specific support can/will be provided. The scale of the program and the staff student ratio is such that this is possible. Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.

Appropriate recognition and alignment procedures are in place that recognize or adhere to the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and provide for cooperation with quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.

Students receive appropriate 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.

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

The committee finds that the procedures for student admission, progression, recognition and certification are overall quite clear and in accordance with international standards.

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 committee encourages to make the admission process more interactive and revealing and recommends that, when the influx of students comes from different universities (public/private) and from different countries, more reliance will need to be placed on admission tasks/projects, student portfolios and interviews, rather than just looking at diploma's and grades.

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)CONSTANINOS (WITH OTHERS)*

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

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- *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.*

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 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. Special financial support is provided to students with financial hardship so as to improve inclusiveness and to avoid elitism.

Students are informed about the services available to them. In addition to the more generic services, like IT-support, library services, etc., include a Counseling Service (supportive services for students with emotional issues), a Disabilities Support Program (learning disabilities or physical),a Student Accommodation Program (follow-up program at the end of each semester), Career Services (employment at the University), and various online services.

Students also have obligatory counselling meetings with their professors after each semester. The committee was impressed by the good communication with and the comprehensive data collection from students. The overall quality of the program seems to result in an impressively low percentage of drop-outs.

The committee did not get a good sense of international student mobility within or supported by the program. Given the overall length of the program student mobility might be difficult to be achieved but could be possible with a Master thesis in an international context.

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During the online visit it became clear that the COVID-19 pandemic had enabled the university to develop their DL/ digital support services in unprecedented ways which will likely enhance mobility as well as the use of ECTS system.

Strengths

The infrastructure provided to students by the university in terms of hardware (ICT facilities, library services) and orgware (student support services, provisions for student participation) are quite strong and meets international standards. It's focus on inclusivity is critical for an MSc on ESD and social change, one that seeks to become a 'vibrant cell of change'. 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 committee suggests clarifying expectations and to provide more explicit options for international student mobility. THis should include the option per se, preferable timing, and alignment with the Master thesis.

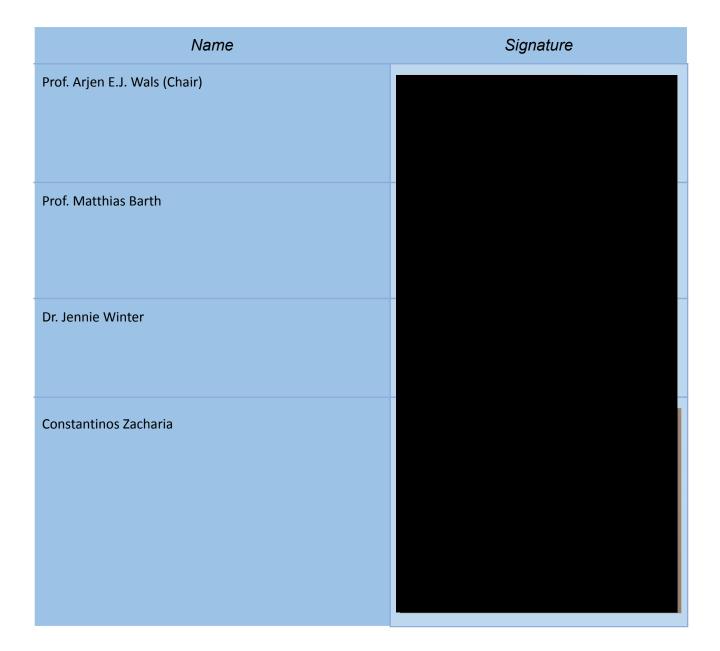## Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

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

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.

This is an innovative and timely MSC program that likely will gain traction in the coming years as nations and regions will need to find responses, including education ones, to emerging global sustainability crises. The program is supported by highly qualified staff and nested in a healthy university environment with excellent support structures. There are well established links to practitioners in the public and private sector which support meaningful project based learning opportunities and increase graduate employability options. Students are given space of input in the program and are involved in the extensive quality assurance mechanism that has been created. To attract international students the program will need to describe and market a specific (regional?) niche. It is encouraged to also consider the university, its campus and the local community as a learning space for the program, a kind of living lab for experimenting with teaching, learning and capacity building for ESD centring on emerging existential issues. The student-centred approach makes sense on a first glance but might need to be revisited from a more relational perspective on ESD-pedagogy which advocates a more ecological approach centring around emerging issues and collaborative forms of (social and transformative) learning. The committee finds that the program is compliant in all EQF indicator areas covered in this document.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Prof. Arjen E.J. Wals (Chair)	
Prof. Matthias Barth	
Dr. Jennie Winter	
Constantinos Zacharia	

Date: June 6th, 2021