Doc. 300.1.1/2

Date: 26.4.2021.

External Evaluation Report

(E-learning programme of study)

· **Higher Education Institution:**
European University of Cyprus

· **Town: Nicosia**

· **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School of Humanities, Social and Education Sciences

· **Department/ Sector: Education**

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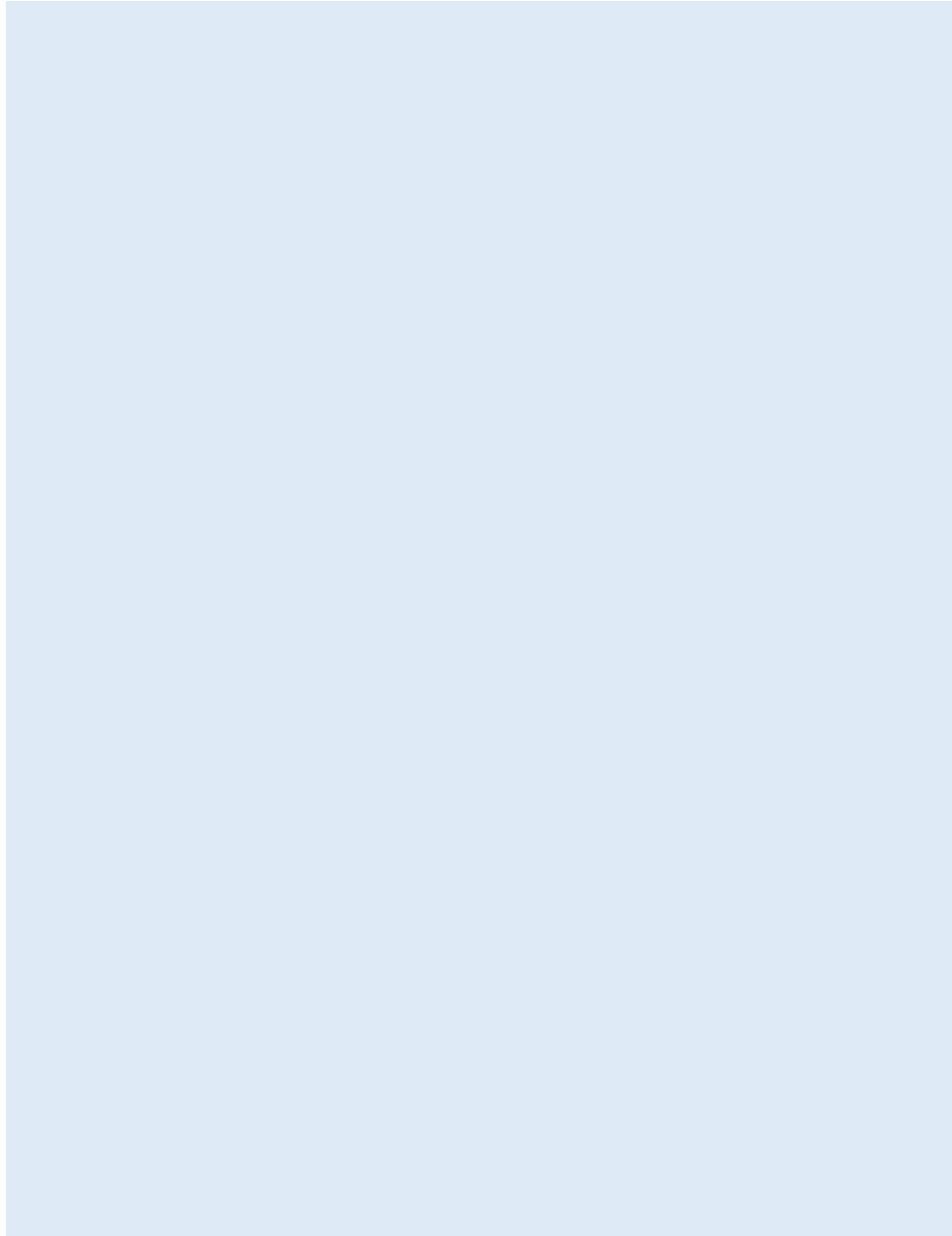
In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

 Education Sciences: MA in Special and Inclusive

Education (distance learning; 120 ECTS)

· **Language(s) of instruction: Greek** and English

· **Programme's status:** Choose status

· **Concentrations (if any): not applicable**

In Greek: Concentrations
In English: Concentrations

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

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B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Brahm Norwich	Professor	University of Exeter, UK
Alexander Minnaert	Professor	University of Groningen, Netherlands
Michael Shevlin	Professor	Trinity College Dublin, Ireland
Marco Kalz	Professor	Heidelberg University of Education, Germany
Ismini Sakelli	Student	Open University of 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)

<u>**Sub-areas**</u>

       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
- o *is regularly monitoredin 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:*
    - o *key performance indicators*
    - o *profile of the student population*
    - o *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
    - o *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
    - o *learning resources and student support available*
    - o *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?*

<u>*Findings*</u>

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 quality assurance system underpinning the Masters in Special and Inclusive Education program is publicly available. There are codes of ethics, rules and regulations and an anti-plagiarism system, all designed to ensure that procedures are fair and transparent. There was a comment from a student that sharing the anti-plagiarism system with students in advance of submitting assignments would be helpful. The program coordinator and teaching staff interviewed demonstrated a clear awareness of the importance of quality assurance and were committed to ensuring that the highest standards were upheld.

The program of study is very comprehensive and explicit learning outcomes are clearly expressed. While teaching staff were aware of how the course learning outcomes aligned with the program learning outcomes, there did not appear to be a formal process involving this type of exercise.

The program, as designed, appeared to favour a categorical approach to content and learning outcomes which is somewhat at odds with international developments within inclusive education programs of study. The program coordinator and teaching staff were very aware of this interpretation and believed that they were constrained due to national accreditation regulations that appeared to endorse the categorical approach. However, the teaching staff were able to demonstrate that inclusive theory and practice informed and shaped the delivery and assessment of the program. The prominence of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in how the course was delivered was highlighted, though it was difficult to judge to what extent UDL underpinned all course delivery.

Students can choose whether to complete a Masters' thesis or undertake a number of elective courses including some focused on research methodology. The panel was not convinced that there was equivalence in the workload and student effort involved in completing a Masters thesis compared to completing the elective courses. In the current year approximately 20% of students undertook the Masters thesis option. The program coordinator and teaching team were aware of this disparity, however, they strongly argued that the Masters' thesis option suited those students who wished to pursue doctoral studies or a career in research, whereas the majority of students were more interested in acquiring relevant knowledge for their current employment. The School Practice component had been developed in response to the need for students to acquire relevant knowledge and skills within real life school environments that would enhance their chances of gaining employment in the area of special education. However, there was a lack of clarity around how consistency of student engagement and assessment within the School Practice component is guaranteed. The current pandemic has certainly constrained staff efforts to ensure consistency in approach and outcomes in the School Practice component.

There is a regular review of the program at institutional level that includes external stakeholders and at program level involving staff and students. A committee has been established to provide reasonable accommodations and ongoing support for students who have disabilities and/or special educational needs. Clear, accurate and up to date information is provided in a readily accessible format to all prospective students. The course coordinator was aware of the

accessibility requirements through her teaching and research. Regular student evaluations are conducted and shared with teaching staff and faculty leaders.

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

- The program is very comprehensive and offers students the opportunity to engage in depth with key domains within special and inclusive education.
- There was strong evidence of a collaborative approach among the course team though this tended to be informal in nature.
- The course coordinator and teaching staff demonstrated a strong commitment to engaging in research-led teaching and there was evidence of significant involvement of teaching staff in the University's Centre of Excellence in Research and Innovation (Social Sciences).
- There was evidence of outreach into the community through research and teaching initiatives. External academics are invited regularly to contribute to the courses and program.
- The program team is very aware of how participation in this course could enable students to gain employment within the field of special education and the development of the School Practice component is clear evidence of this awareness.
- Students were very positive about the level of engagement with the teaching staff and how students' needs were addressed.
- Employing a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach to curriculum content, delivery and assessment was evident within a number of courses.

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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.

There are a number of issues that need to be considered relating to course design, delivery and assessment:

- While teaching staff appeared to be aware of how course learning outcomes were aligned with program learning outcomes ,a formal process involving all staff in discussing how their individual course learning outcomes align with the overall program outcomes would be useful to ensure coherence across the program.
- The categorical nature of many learning outcomes should be reconsidered and reframed within the inclusive theory informing course design and delivery.
- A stronger focus on how Universal Design for Learning could be employed to inform all aspects of course design, delivery and assessment would enhance the focus on inclusion theory and practice.

- The course coordinator could review the disparity between student workload in completing a Masters' thesis compared to electives and perhaps develop a minor research project as part of the elective in research methodology.
- The School Practice placement is a significant component of the Masters program and requires an ongoing commitment to ensure that consistency in student engagement and learning outcomes is assured.

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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

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

<u>Sub-areas</u>

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

    2.2 Practical training

    2.3 Student assessment

    2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

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

<u>Standards</u>

· *The e-learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.*

· *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*

· *A specific plan is developed to safeguard and assess the interaction:*

  o *among students*

  o *between students and teaching staff*

  o *between students and study guides/material of study*

· *Training, guidance and support are provided to the students focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*

· *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*

· *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of e-learning 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 e-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

<u>Standards</u>

· *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

<u>Standards</u>

· *A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on e-learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.*

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

<u>Findings</u>

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The process of learning and teaching is highly flexible, but also structured, student-friendly and guided by staff members. Students are strongly facilitated to have an engaged role in the learning process, e.g. by writing blogs, embarking in optional activities, compulsory peer learning and providing constructive feedback on papers. Weakly activities, announced in advance via Blackboard Collaborate, are situated within a community of learning, with ample room for a self-paced learning trajectory and tailored accommodation in line with students' needs. Courses are recorded and, hence, made available in Blackboard Collaborate, allowing students to "attend" a course activity if one cannot attend the regular meeting.

The two years program deliberately allows for a variety of courses (to choose from), ranging from Inclusion, disability, society and technology over methodology to school practice. The latter was, however, only recently added to the program. The Masters in "Educational Sciences: Special and Inclusive Education" is taught in Greek. The program will also be offered in English, to internationalise the program and to attract more students outside of Cyprus and Greece.

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

- Staff members keep track of their students' progress and do their utmost to prevent drop-out. Hence, the drop out ratio is low, and if any drop out happens, this occurs most frequently during the first semester of the two year program.
- The engagement and availability of the academic and administrative staff in support of students' learning progress is highly recognised and appreciated by the students.
- Student guidance and student assessment (including study guides, materials, student advisor activities, assessment format, assessment criteria and rubrics) is fully aligned with distance learning and is well organized and transparent for students. Students estimated the program as quite manageable and experienced the workload as, sometimes challenging, but appropriate.
- The recently launched, compulsory school practice of 24 ECTS (in and out of Cyprus, e.g. in Greece) seems to add value to linking theory to practice, and vice versa.
- The institution follows a specific distance learning methodology and offers a rich mix of synchronous and asynchronous activities. A combination of independent and collaborative learning activities fosters a student-centered approach.

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

There are some issues that need to be considered relating to student-centred learning, teaching and assessment:

- A stronger alignment between the program's objectives/intended learning outcomes and the courses provided is an opportunity to be considered. This is about the balance between elective and compulsory courses, especially addressing the research-oriented objectives, the practical training and the onset of the program in English. There is scope for more clarity to make the alignment scalable and to have a tighter organisation to safeguard the objectives and intended learning outcomes.
- Although the overall assessment per regular course is a university regulated policy, the 50% for the final examination and the 50% for assignments and the on-going evaluation might not do justice to the diversity of students enrolled in this program, e.g. students who are more eager to write in a self-paced way instead of clear-cut exams under time constraints. This program on inclusion might advocate a more flexible and tailored approach to honour students' strengths even better.
- The program might like to consider the use of moderation in the assessment of assignments. This could be considered to be a quality assurance matter.

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
2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	Compliant

3. Teaching staff *(ESG 1.5)*

<u>Sub-areas</u>

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

- *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.*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the teaching staff focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*

- *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

- *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

- *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.

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Teaching staff recruitment and development

The EUC has ensured that staff for this MA program have the qualifications and competence to teach it. Their CVs show that they have the capabilities to teach a program with the objectives set out in the course study guides. There was clear evidence from documentation and meeting notes that the promotion of teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, research activity and the development of their teaching skills. The MA program also benefits from visiting teaching staff who contribute to the program.

From documentation and our meeting with staff we found out about their professional development activities, especially those relevant to running a distance learning program (based on meeting also with Distance learning [DL] unit staff). The use of Blackboard in delivering the program was also demonstrated to us, the DL model explained and procedures for inducting and supporting staff in using DL. Diverse models of DL, indicating innovative use of DL, are available for staff use which are very relevant to a DL MA like this one. Senior members of EUC indicated the importance of teaching in the working conditions of teaching staff. Students evaluate the teaching of their courses through closed and open ended means. Analyses of their feedback are communicated with tutors and the Dean reviews this feedback to identify areas for course teaching changes.

Teaching staff number and status

The 19 staff members and their allocation to course teaching, as shown in the original documentation indicates that this is adequate to support the program of study. Their status and full/part time status is appropriate to offer a quality program of study. There was no evidence of visiting staff exceeding the number of permanent staff.

Synergies of teaching and research
Staff collaborate in teaching and research and the university enables annually for outside collaborators to work with staff in EUC. The university enables staff to maintain a balance between teaching and research. Promotion is partly based on publications and research activities. There are professional development funds for conference attendance/presentations and sabbatical opportunities. CVs of the program staff show that their publications relate to the program courses.

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

- Distance learning platform, support, models and examples: the procedures for inducting and supporting staff in using diverse models of DL. This indicates some innovative use of DL, all of which is very relevant to a DL MA like this one
- Engagement and enthusiasm of staff for the program: we were impressed by engagement and enthusiasm shown by the program staff which was also reflected in the comments by the student we met.
- There was strong commitment from teaching staff to develop research informed teaching and acknowledgement of substantial institutional support designed to enable teaching staff to undertake research projects.

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.

This section called for no recommendations for improvement.

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)*

<u>Sub-areas</u>

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:*
  - o *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
  - o *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

4.4 Student certification

Standards

- · *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*

- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Are the admission requirements for the study programme appropriate? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?*
- *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*

- *Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?*

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Student admission, processes and criteria

The program has clear and pre-defined regulations about student admission. Access and admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently, from the evidence available to us.

Student progression
Clear, pre-defined procedures for student progression throughout the program are in place. Students with whom we spoke were satisfied with how the program and its procedures operated for them. Monitoring systems relevant to this aspect were found in the program documents. There were low drop-out rates and constant monitoring of their progress. Certain procedures are followed for students when there are academic concerns.

Student recognition
Clear pre-defined rules about recognition of students' prior HE qualifications and other learning relevant to the MA program are in place. The European University is in cooperation with other universities in Cyprus and Greece and its degrees are recognised in both countries. We have seen documentary evidence that there are appropriate recognition procedures for student recognition according to the Lisbon recognition Convention. There is also cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre.

Student certification

System for students to receive certification of their qualification gained from the program are in place, including 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.

- There is a well-structured and very informative website (as also identified in other sections of the report).
- Academic policies, admission processes and criteria are clearly communicated to students in advance
- Students had the guidance and support they needed during the admission process.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

This section called for no recommendations for improvement.

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)*

<u>**Sub-areas**</u>

        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

- *Weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*
- *The e-learning material and activities take advantage of the capabilities offered by the virtual and audio-visual environment and the following are applied:*
  - *Simulations in virtual environments*
  - *Problem solving scenarios*
  - *Interactive learning and formative assessment games*
  - *Interactive weekly activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities for reality reconstruction and further processing based on hypotheses*
  - *They have the ability to transfer students to real-life situations, make decisions, and study the consequences of their decisions*
  - *They help in building skills both in experiences and attitudes like in real life and also in experiencing - not just memorizing knowledge*
- *A pedagogical planning unit for e-learning, which is responsible for the support of the e-learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*

- *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 e-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?*

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.

Overall, the committee had a positive impression of the professional manner in which the institution operates and also how the study program is providing access to all kinds of resources. This includes teaching and learning resources, but also physical resources and support on the course level, the level of the study program but also at an institutional level. Processes are in place, to keep the quality of the resources and facilities at a high level. The study program and the institution provides furthermore a support network which helps students to succeed. Students report high satisfaction with the study program and also report improvement for access to the job market.

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

- The institution provides a central unit for development and implementation of digital learning formats and has the facilities in place on which a distance-learning program can be implemented and further developed.
- The implemented approach provides a good balance between independent learning and group learning and the study program offers an appealing mix of interactive and accessible resources to complete their assignments. The central learning environment is well organised and provides a good usability to the students.
- Learners with special requirements are served by an external unit that redesigns the content and delivery.
- The library facilities have been improved during the pandemic which provides an important channel to scientific publications.
- Students report that the courses are demanding, but the workload is manageable. An important factor here is the timely and detailed feedback for students which also builds on a clear framework of learning objectives and success criteria.

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.

- As mentioned above, the current approach is well aligned in terms of balancing capacity and available services. The program is also planning an offer in English and the committee has discussed the challenges of scaling the current approach up to a parallel offer in a different language. The committee recommends to analyse the impact on the current capacity not only of the teaching staff but also secondary resources and services. Synergies between both tracks should be identified and used to connect learners from both tracks as much as possible.

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

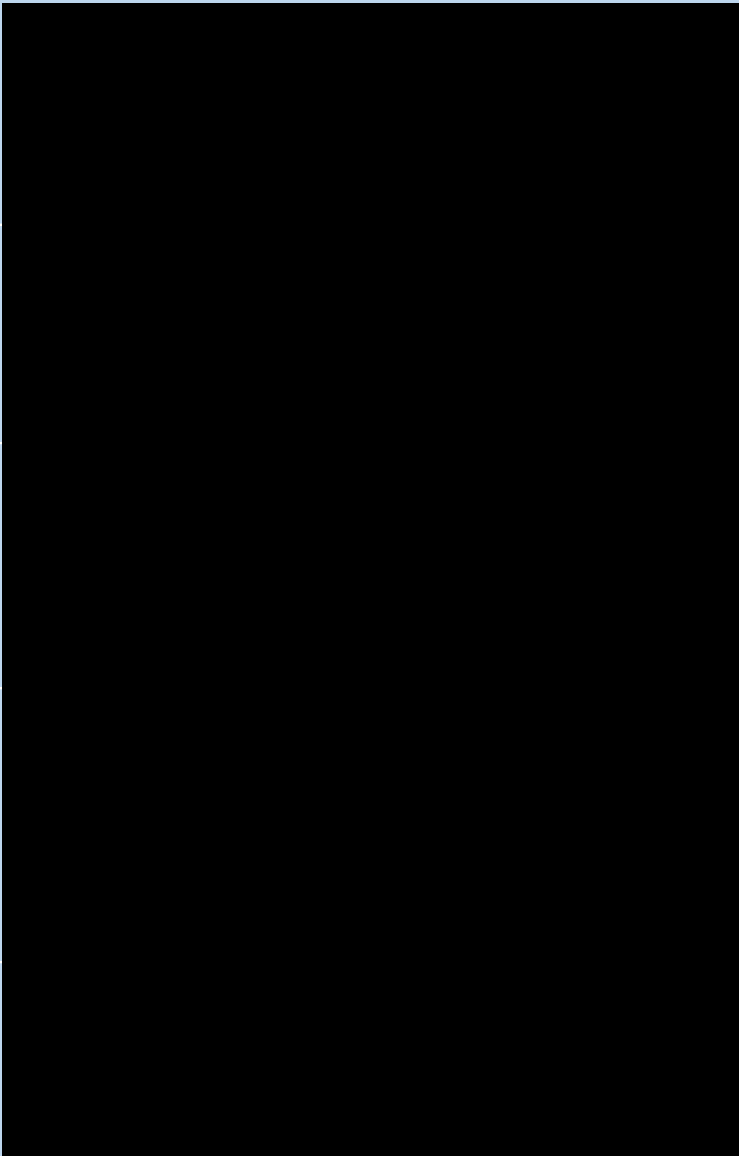| Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	*Compliant*
5.2	Physical resources	*Compliant*
5.3	Human support resources	*Compliant*
5.4	Student support	*Compliant*

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.

In conclusion, in all general areas we found the MA program compliant with the standards. Our recommendation is to accredit the MA program: Education Sciences: Special and Inclusive Education DL. Areas of improvement have been identified.

We would like to express our thanks to the Cyprus agency, to the management of the university, to the academic and administrative staff, as well as to the students.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	*Signature*

Brahm Norwich	
Michael Shevlin	
Marco Kalz	
Alexander Minnaert	
Ismini Sakelli	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 26.4.21