ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ CYQAA

CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

eqar/// enga.

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 14 February 2025

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

- Higher Education Institution: **European University of Cyprus**
- **Town: Nicosia**
- School/Faculty (if applicable): Medicine
- **Department/ Sector: Cardiology**
- Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle) Heart Failure 18 months 90 ECTS In Greek:

Καρδιακή Ανεπάρκεια και Καρδιομυοπάθειες (18

Mήνες/ 90 ECTS, M.Sc)

In English:

Master in Heart Failure and Cardiomyopathies (18 months/90 ECTS, M.Sc)

- Language(s) of instruction: English
- Programme's status: New
- **Concentrations (if any):**

ΑΚΗ 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 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

In Greek: Concentrations In English: Concentrations

ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ

CYQAA CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

eqar/// enga.

A. Introduction

Name(s) of presenter(s)/participant(s): Prof. Loizos Symeou Prof. Marios Vryonides Prof. Elizabeth Johnson Dr. Theodore Lytras Dr. Violetta Raffay Prof. Filippos Triposkiadis Prof. Ioannis Patrikios Dr. Nikos Karpettas Dr. Konstantinos Lampropoulos Dr. Victoria Polydorou Dr. George Georgiou Dr. Andreas Synetos MD and PhD Students Ms. Eleni Markantoni Mr. Michaelis Georgiou Ms. Christina Kolatsi Mr. Constantinos Anastasiou Mr. Theodoros Tzitzimpourounis Dr. Petros Athangelou Dr. Popi Nicolaidou Kanari Prof. Denis Cokkinos Prof. Harisios Boudoulas Dr. Andreas Yallouris

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

Heart failure (HF) is the epidemic of the 21st century, and a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the growing elderly population. The increasingly complex treatment of HF patients calls for a new kind of physician, familiar with the mechanisms (hemodynamics, neurohormonal, molecular, geneticq), diagnosis and management (medical, device or surgical) of HF. This specialist must also be highly knowledgeable in cardiomyopathies, a leading cause of HF and sudden cardiac death in the young and similarly qualified in the management of patients with cardiogenic shock and end-stage heart failure. In addition, cancer patients who are at increased risk to develop HF due to chemotherapy and radiotherapy can be identified. Knowledge on echocardiography and magnetic resonance imaging is crucial. To address this largely still unmet educational need, the European University of Cyprus developed a novel postgraduate program in heart failure.

One day on site visit EUC



The site visit will take place according to the following indicative schedule

09:00 - 09:10

• A brief introduction of the members of the External Evaluation Committee

9:10 - 09:50

- A meeting with the <u>Rector/Head of the Institution</u> and/or the <u>Vice Rector of Academic Affairs</u>
 Short presentation of the Institution and discussion
- A meeting with the members of the Internal Evaluation Committee
 - QA Session

09:50 - 10:20

- meeting with the Head of the relevant department and the Coordinator(s) of the programme for a short presentation of the School's/Department's structure
 - Mission and strategic planning (including SWOT analysis)
 - Connecting with society
 - Development Processes Action Plan

10:35 - 11:45

- A meeting with the <u>Head of the relevant department</u> and the <u>Coordination Committee</u> of the programme.
 - Discussion regarding the content and the standards of the programme of study about: (EEC Report / Assessment Area 1 - Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9))
 - intended learning outcomes and ECTS
 - learning opportunities available to the students
 - qualification awarded
 - feedback processes for the improvement of the department
 - Discussion regarding the Information for the effective management of the programme of study (EEC Report / <u>Assessment Area 1</u> - Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9))
 - Discussion on the process of teaching and learning and the student-centred teaching methodology, the practical trainings and the student assessment (EEC Report/ Assessment
 - Area 2 Student centred learning, teaching and assessment -ESG 1.3)
 - Observation on the material and discussion on the methodology i.e. students' assessments and equipment used in teaching and learning i.e. software, hardware, materials, online platforms, teaching material, evaluation methods, projects, samples of written examinations/thesis.
 - Discussion on the Student admission, processes and criteria, progression, recognition and certification (EEC Report /<u>Assessment Area 4</u> - Student admission, progression, recognition



and certification ESG 1.4) / (EEC Report /<u>Assessment Area 6</u> - Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG))

- selection/admission criteria
- students' key performance indicators
- profile of the students' population
- students' satisfaction on learning resources and support available
- students' progression, success and drop-out rates
- career paths of graduates / graduate employment information

11:45 - 12:45

- A meeting with <u>members of the teaching staff **ONLY**</u> on each course for all the years of study (QA session).
 - Self-Presentation-(i.e. academic qualifications, publications, research interests, research activity, compliance with Staff ESG or any other duties in the institution and teaching obligations in other programmes).
 - Discussion on the structure and content of each course and its implementation (i.e., methodologies, selected bibliography, students' workload, compliance with Teaching ESG).
 - Discussion on the learning outcomes, the content and the assessment of each course and their compliance with the level of the programme according to the EQF.
 - Discussion of prescribed and recommended reading for each module.
 - Discussion on assessment criteria, samples of final exams or other teaching material and resources.

(EEC Report /Assessment Area 2 - Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)) / (EEC Report /Assessment Area 3 – Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5))

13:45 - 14:25

• A meeting with students and graduates **ONLY** (5 – 15 participants).

(EEC Report /<u>Assessment Area 4</u> - Student admission, progression, recognition and certification ESG 1.4)/ (EEC Report /<u>Assessment Area 5</u> - Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6))/ (EEC Report /<u>Assessment Area 6</u> - Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG))

14:25 - 14:55

• A meeting with members of the <u>administrative staff **ONLY**</u> (QA session)

(EEC Report /<u>Assessment Area 4</u> - Student admission, progression, recognition and certification ESG 1.4)/ (EEC Report /<u>Assessment Area 5</u> - Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)) / (EEC Report /<u>Assessment Area 6</u> - Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG))

15:55 - 17:25

• A visit to the premises of the institution (i.e. library, computer labs, teaching rooms, research facilities) and discussion of the main issues with IT Manager, Course Leader, Lab managers and



Director of Academic Quality and Compliance.

ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION eqar/// enga.

Documentation provided:

ppp presentations.1	D dorakoshiari Feb 13, 2025
07.14.327.120_20 🚢	D dorakoshiari Dec 9, 2024
₽₽₣ 07.14.327.120_AN ♣\$	D dorakoshiari Dec 9, 2024
₽₽F 07.14.327.120_Co ♣	D dorakoshiari Dec 9, 2024
₽₽F 07.14.327.120_Re ♣	D dorakoshiari Dec 9, 2024

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position University	
Theodora Benedek	Cardiologist	Tirgu Mures
Mariann Pavone Gyöngyösi	Cardiologist	Vienna
Maria Phiniotou	Student	University of Cyprus
Pieter Doevendans	Cardiologist	UMC Utrecht
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University



C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.
- At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:

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

Findings

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

<u>Strengths</u>

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

<u>Standards</u>

- Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:
 - $\circ~$ is a part of the strategic management of the program.
 - focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study program.
 - o 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. Antiplagiarism policies are in place.
 - o guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff
 - supports the involvement of external stakeholders. It is developed with input from professional bodies/associations, social partners, NGO's, to align with professional standards.

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

<u>Standards</u>

- The programme of study:
 - is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes
 - Aligns course learning outcomes with student assessments using rubrics to ensure objectives are met.
 - Connects each course's aims and objectives with the programme's overall aims and objectives through mapping, aligning with the institutional strategy.
 - o is designed by involving students and other stakeholders
 - o 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)
- $\circ~$ 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
- o defines the expected student workload in ECTS
- o includes well-structured placement opportunities
- o 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
- o is reviewed 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 learning opportunities available to the students
 - o graduate employment information

In addition, the program has established mechanisms of transparency & communication to ensure that

- Professional bodies validate program descriptions and outcomes.
- Community leaders actively participate in ensuring that the program's public information is relevant and resonates with the local and societal context.
- External auditors review public information for accuracy & consistency vis-à-vis the actual implementation of the program.
- o Industry-specific & societal information is regularly updated with expert inputs.
- o Alumni testimonials are included for a realistic portrayal of program outcomes.

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

eqar//// enga.

1.4 Information management

Standards

- Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed using specific indicators and data i.e:
 - *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
 - o industry trend analysis.
 - o feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders
 - o data exchanges with professional networks
 - o employer insights concerning career readiness
- 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?
- How and to what extent are external stakeholders involved in the quality assurance process of the program?
- How is external stakeholder feedback gathered, analyzed and implemented,?
- In what ways do external stakeholders assist in making program information publicly available?
- How do external stakeholders contribute to evaluating graduate success in the labor market and obtaining feedback on employment 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 Master of Heart failure and Cardiomyopathies is an 18-month full-time program that requires a minimum of 90 ECTS. The number of planned class size of 30 students may seem low. However, this is in accordance with the anticipated need of the healthcare system. This is a new programme that is well aligned with the strategic priorities of the European Society of Cardiology, to develop experts in heart failure management. The institution should consider additional programs or new programs in the future, if there will be a need for growth. The anticipated mix between Cypriot and international students is unclear today. The study program is in English, which makes it easy for international students to participate.

In general, the program is very well structured, its objectives and learning outcomes are very clearly defined and pertinent, clearly communicated and well-justified. The objectives of the programme are in accordance with the overall strategy of university.

The expected learning outcomes of the program will be available to the students from the beginning through the course syllabi, the website and the electronic platform.

Overall, the program is meant to provide to students a relevant set of both practical and theoretical knowledge, which can help them in their process of further career development. The programme may increase their chances of employability in dedicated heart failure facilities (hospitals, outpatient clinics, research, dedicated heart failure departments or units).

Students with a variety of backgrounds will be admitted to the program. The fact that the student group will be quite heterogenous, from nurses or biochemistries to medical doctors represents a challenge to manage, as the level of medical knowledge is different in these student categories.

It became clear during the EEC meeting discussions that the programme does not aim to provide a specific accreditation for specific interventions for which a pre-requisite specialization is necessary, and the content of the courses will be aligned to the common needs of the students from different categories (MD, nurses, researchers). However, after the final achievement of the learning objectives the students receive the MSc degree accreditation, with a proof of their understanding the pathophysiology, diagnostic and treatment modalities of heart failure and cardiomyopathies.

The structure and content include nine (6) compulsory core courses (10 ECTS each, total 60 ECTS) plus 3 optional (10 ECTS each, total 30 ECTS). The students will be able to choose between optional courses and thesis dissertation, reaching a total of 90 ECTS. This is a flexible programme that will accommodate different students' needs due to their distinct background and training as well as career planning. Moreover, the program of study reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe that is, 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.

All lecturers are already cooperating in different projects and the entire group of teaching staff is extremely well qualified for the programme, demonstrating also a high level of complementarity (heart failure experts, interventional cardiologists, researchers, etc). The course contents are coherent and coordinated as well.

The admission criteria are clearly defined and adequate for the needs of the programme.

The small size of the class may ensure a personalized teaching per student.

The learning program does not include research activities. However, the students will be stimulated to join the faculty research activities.



Quality assurance mechanisms are well-aligned with international standards, including policies for the development and the management of the program.

<u>Strengths</u>

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

-The proposed programme is very well designed and nationally competitive

-The programme has a clear orientation towards a strategic field which is considered a priority in healthcare

-Care has been taken to integrate the programme with the community, with external stakeholders playing a significant part in planning the programme

-The European University has excellent facilities and infrastructure that will be used in the programme (very modern and well-equipped Simulation Centre, Microsoft Centre, etc)

-The information related to the program of study is publicly available. The expected learning outcomes are clearly outlined and relevant, being well detailed in relation to each course.

-The small size of the class will contribute to the interactions between academic staff and students.

-The knowledge acquired will enhance the students' employability.

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 students are not very much aware on the career path from graduating to PhD. It is not clear for the students and for the administrative staff whether graduates of the medical school may enter a PhD programme even in the absence of a MSc degree. This information should be better disseminated in the academic community and made public. Otherwise, there may be a risk that some students withdraw from a MSc program when they realize that they can enter a PhD program directly after medical school.

-There is some contradictory information regarding the content of some courses. For instance, devicebased therapy for valvular heart diseases appears once in the course dedicated to chronic heart failure and in another place in the course of advanced heart failure. Keeping this in the chronic heart failure chapter would be more accurate, in line with the current definition of these two entities (chronic and advanced heart failure)

-Some students may need additional courses or support, given their different background.

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

	Non-compliant/
Sub-area	Partially Compliant/Compliant

ΔΙΠΑΕ ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ

CYQAA CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

eqar/// enga.

t 🔽 🖗

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



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

Sub-areas

- 2.1 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

<u>Standards</u>

- 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.
- Detailed schedules in course materials are included, explicitly stating the expected hours for lectures, self-study, and group projects, ensuring transparency in time allocation.
- A system is integrated where each learning activity is assigned a weight proportional to its importance and time requirement, aiding in balanced curriculum design.

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.
- The expected hours for different components of practical training, such as lab work, fieldwork, and internships are clearly documented in the training manuals



• A weighting system is applied to various practical training elements, reflecting their significance in the overall learning outcomes and student workload.

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.
 - The time allocation for each assessment task is explicitly stated in course outlines, ensuring students are aware of the expected workload.
 - A balanced assessment weighting strategy is implemented, considering the complexity and learning objectives of each task, to ensure fair evaluation of student performance.

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)?

<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.

Centred learning

The MSC program is built up from 18 months courses, involving several aspects of the acute and chronic heart failure, the diagnostic approaches, and the conservative and interventional treatment approaches. The academic library is financed by the University and provides full access of open-access articles, but also for printed books and scientific journals.

The detailed program contains several important parts for the successful teaching and learning activities, including multidisciplinary approaches. The Medical University set up the Digital Enhanced Learning Program (mainly during COVID pandemic), but the already well-established e-learning and on-line courses are available for the MSC students as well. The digital learning program is of utmost importance, because the MSC program applicants may have part-time jobs, or might have hospital duties (eg. medical doctors and nurses), impeding the personal presence in the courses.

Teaching

During the on-site personal visit at the University, the EEC had the opportunity to visit the different teaching departments of the Medical School, which are also accessible for the MSc students. There are several excellent equipped practical labs, eg. patient simulator rooms with automatic defibrillator (necessary to treat acute heart failure), operation rooms, echocardiography-simulator room, virtual hospital, which give a superior opportunity for the MSc students to learn and practice the clinical diagnostic procedures and treatment modalities for acute and chronic heart failure patients. The training rooms ensure the necessary theoretical and practical skills for the students, especially for the non-medical students to act correctly in



certain medical situations. The dry-labs and wet-labs are very-well equipped and serve as theoretical and basic research background not only for medical students of the University but also for the MSc students. The infrastructure of the practical clinical or pre-clinical work and research enables the active involvement of the MSc students into the clinical or basic research, evoking the interest to perform scientific activity.

Assessment

Student assessment guidelines are already accepted, and according to the program description is internet accessible. The program consists of 9 topics, and after each course, an examination, as well as theoretical assessment and participation of attendance will be performed, and voted, giving objective feedback for the students for their study progress and achievements of the learning outcomes.

<u>Strengths</u>

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

- Digital learning Program planned during the courses
- Comprehensive pre-clinical and clinical simulation rooms are available for the practical works.
- Availability to do basic and clinical research in case of interest
- No such Master degree program on heart failure and cardiomyopathies exists in Cyprus. In accordance with the stakeholders, this program is very well needed.

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 digital or e-learning programs should be defined more clearly and in more detail.
- The University promotes studying abroad and student exchange programs, but the necessary ECT can only be achieved during the MSC courses. Similar courses are not accepted, and their achievements expressed in learning programs are not accepted as a learning achievement in the MSC program.
- MSC per definition is Master of Science. The MSC course applicants may choose whether they
 write a dissertation or just participate in MSC courses in the 3rd Semester. However, in the latter
 case, it should at least be required to a) present a scientific proposal, or 2) a written or personal
 exam to prove the acquired knowledge, if they do not write a dissertation, to prove the scientific skill.
- The student assessment should be adjusted to the to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

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

Partially 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

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

<u>Standards</u>



- The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).
- Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.
- The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.
- Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.
- The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.

You may also consider the following questions:

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

<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 teaching staff appears to be well equipped to perform the duties at hand. The team has interacted mainly online preparing the HF master program. The presentations are well-aligned and the team covers all aspects of modern cardiology including thoracic surgery and interventional cardiology. This will be sufficient for the 18-month course proposed. The visiting staff/external experts that will be invited, are predominantly greek/cypriot. A consideration for an European University could be to invite a more international faculty. Also the program rests heavily on an emeritus Prof. in Cardiology with an outstanding track record, which forms a risk for the future of the program. Similarly, as the CV's of the rest of the faculty based on output is modest.

All staff members finished a PhD yet none is full active professor today which presents a limitation for recruiting applicants.

There is a policy to stimulate research through lowering the teaching activities in time. The visit was too short to get a complete picture of all research efforts ongoing by the faculty, yet the output in papers and grants in 2024 is modest, but relevant for the program.

There is no indication that the teaching hours foreseen are too demanding or would impair research activities.



Strengths

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

-The staff and university are very committed to the program

-The approach and strategy have been carefully evaluated

-There is a multidisciplinary team available

-Strong track record program leader

-State of the art training facilities

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.

-Future programme needs an active fulltime professor in the HF field.

-The faculty (Visting experts) could be chosen from all over Europe to support the international character of the course. With the current teachers and anticipated post grad students there is hardly a reason to provide the education in English.



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

Sub-a	irea	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	Partially 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

<u>Standards</u>

- 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

Ε ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ

CYQAA CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

eqar//// enga.

4.4 Student certification

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

Student admission and processes, and criteria

The student admission and enrollment process are clearly described. The School Secretariat Support and School Administrators, as well as the Office of the Registrar Support serve as the intermediate organization between the students and University Departments, Dean of the School, Senate and Rector's Office and prepare the necessary documents for the students.

The scientific and educational qualifications of the applicants are very different; from biotechnological and biochemistry students to medical doctors and nurses. This carries the risk of different knowledge levels on heart failure and cardiomyopathy, with a risk of missing understanding the clinical need of the advanced diagnosis and treatment. On the other side, the diversity of the student knowledge enables fruitful discussion between the molecular and clinical pathologies of the heart failure and cardiomyopathies.

Student progression

The tasks of the Student Advisors are described in details and embraces the entire patronage process of the students. Personal communication with the personal-accredited Advisor is well-organized and occurs mostly via email. Depending on the chosen topic, several students are assigned to one Advisor, and the students are very satisfied with the current organization. The healthy and the safety issues of the students are standard and correspond the EUC's regulations. One of the most important feed-back of the students is the online course evaluation after each course, delivering important information on the quality of the teaching, but also



about the self-assessment processes. The expectations of the learning outcomes are described in detail, and the individual achievements can be followed and controlled accordingly.

Student recognition and certification

One of the best benchmarks of the success of the Medical University, that >95% of the medical students receive a job immediately after finishing their medical study. Based on this fact, a similar success with comprehensive knowledge may be assumed due to the MSC course.

For the course participants with need of financial aid, the Student Advisor Team at the Student Advising Center provides all information on financial aid and Scholarships. An Academic Excellence Scholarships is designated for the best and the top ranked undergraduate students.

For students with low-grade point average, several supportive mechanisms have been elaborated and described.

Strengths

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

- The enrollment of the students is well-defined, involving the followings: recognized MD degree or a bachelor in health-related sciences or its equivalent; proof of English language proficiency; 2 Referees recommendations, and; personal interviews. This system ensures the selection of the best applicants.
- The different qualification of the applicants (biotechnology, biochemistry, nurse, medical doctors) in the same course enable comprehensive discussion on the cardiomyopathies between the students at different knowledges and scientific disciplines, amplifying and balancing the knowledge levels of the course participants.

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.

- During the EEC visit, the course presentation involved patient case reports. However, non-medical students without previous clinical practice will be unable to present cases. In such cases virtual patients may be reported, or specific additional explanations might be required, eg. basic molecular mechanisms on cardiomyopathies, required from the biochemistry student, or mechanisms of artificial valves for improvement of valve-disorder related heart insufficiency may be required from the biotechnology student.

ΔΙΠΑΕ ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ

CYQAA CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

eqar/// enga.

t 🔽 🖉

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

Sub-a	irea	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.
- Students receive support in research-led teaching through engagement in research projects, mentorship from research-active faculty, and access to resources that enhance their research skills and critical engagement with current studies.

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.

Learning resources in the School of Medicine at the European University Cyprus are fully sufficient for the purposes of the MSc program. Students are provided with a literature guide with content available at the library or at the library's database. Students have access to online resources and they are supported in terms of IT support for the use of these resources as well as provided with student IDs which grant them access to the Medical School's facilities. As lectures are held around the weekend, they accommodate the needs of students coming from diverse backgrounds in terms of employment. Even though the course is mainly addressed to physicians and expert cardiologists, all other students, either basic life sciences students or nurses, are supported enough to create a balance by being provided with access to patients and patient data. The teaching staff also make sure to accommodate the latter group of students by assigning them case reports on topics they are more familiar with, such as cases with a focus on pathologies at a molecular level for biology or chemistry students. Teaching methodologies are studentcentered regarding the integration of case report presentations and group work. There is also encouragement to use the facilities of the School of Medicine to further enhance their skills relevant to their interests. Echocardiography is the only clinical application integrated in the curriculum, but other techniques and procedures can be practiced by students in their own time. Students also have access to laboratories, clinical simulation labs and computer rooms. Another methodology that supports the diverse background of students and their different availabilities is the opportunity to attend lectures online and watch the video of the lecture again at their own time. Free courses on financial and digital literacy are provided to students of the university. The medical school provides support in terms of counselling, but also through mandatory student surveys that are reviewed by the teaching and administrative staff. Students can contact the teaching staff to discuss research interests, but research opportunities are not provided by the institution. Students are encouraged to get involved with research after their graduation from the MSc program. Students can have support for research grant applications.

Strengths

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

-A significant strength of the program design is the availability of physical resources to students and their ability to use them for their own professional and academic interests. Moreover, the integration of lectures by visiting professors who are well established in their field gives the students a major networking opportunity to advance their research and professional interests as well as the opportunity to hear about cutting-edge innovations in the field by these professionals.

-It is also a strength that students have access to all literature through the library databases. The equipment on which students can practice and work on is also innovative, as a wide variety of simulations is provided by the School of Medicine.

-The integration of group work and case-study presentations in the courses fosters a collaborative environment amongst professionals with the same interests.

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 diverse background of students, even though highly appreciated regarding trends for the need of trained non-physician healthcare personnel, has the drawback of creating misbalanced learning outcomes for students with the only provision towards its resolution being the different types of case-reports assigned to different students and the assurance that final examinations are the same for all.

-Recommendations for this aspect are for a student feedback methodology to be set in place throughout the semester to address areas of discrepancy that may arise followed by the appropriate support through guidance in terms of extra literature resources and opportunities to have open conversations with the teaching staff in terms of course requirements and the curriculum.

-Implement peer-to-peer teaching especially for practical aspects of the course so that students with no prior knowledge of clinical practices that are interested in exploring the field can be encouraged. Similarly, students that are not well versed in laboratory techniques can be guided by their peers with the potential of future interdisciplinary collaborations in the clinical, academic or research field.

-Provide insight in research opportunities throughout the programme

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	Partially compliant

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



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

<u>Standards</u>

- 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:
 - o the stages of completion
 - o the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme
 - o the examinations
 - o the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal
 - o 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:
 - o 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

<u>Standards</u>

- 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:
 - o regular meetings
 - o reports per semester and feedback from supervisors
 - o 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?
- Are the criteria reflected in 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.

N/A

<u>Strengths</u>

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

N/A

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. N/A

N/A

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	Not applicable
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Not applicable

	ΔΙΠΑΕ	ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ Τ	ΉΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
	CYQAA	CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE	AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION
			eqar/// enga.
			- Napiter to Higher Science
	.		Natappliashla
.3	Supervisio	on and committees	Not applicable

D. Conclusions and final remarks

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

The evaluation of the programme raised enthusiasm among the committee members There is an unmet need for a post grad programme in heart failure reaching out to Cyprus and also Greece. The programme proposed is clear and focussed addressing most relevant issues on modern cardiology. It has been clarified why and how participants will be selected from a mixed background. The faculty is well equipped and can definitely kick off this 18-month course. The evaluation of the programme and student requirements are clearly indicated. The facilities and student support programmes are impressive and very well documented. Not all the programmes seem relevant for a post graduate educational course. The staff and especially the external stake holders have (very) high expectations of the HF training course. In every section we listed recommendations to further enhance and strengthen the programme and make it competitive at the international level.



E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Mariann Pavone Gyöngyösi	
Theodora Benedek	
Pieter Doevendans	
Maria Phiniotou	

Date: 14 February 2025