Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 17 - MAR - 2025

External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**

  European University of Cyprus, Frankfurt Branch
- **Town:** Frankfurt, Germany
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School of Medicine
- **Department/ Sector:** Medicine
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

  In Greek:

  Ιατρικές Επιστήμες

  In English:

  PhD Medical Sciences
- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** planned
- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

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

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The European University Cyprus (EUC) is a private nonprofit university in Nicosia, Cyprus. It has 7 schools and 13 departments and is part of several international collaborations and networks (e.g. sunrise alliance, microsoft startup centre). It achieves respectable positions in international ranking (e.g. Times Higher Education), and has, notably, recently renewed its five-star ranking in the QS top universities. It should be congratulated on recently achieving a place in the THE's top 101 for University Impact. The school of medicine has opened a branch in Frankfurt (Germany) in 2022. This is the focus of this evaluation.

This current visit was to evaluate EUC on an institutional and departmental level, as well as the 6-year MD, currently active, and the PhD programme, scheduled to begin this Autumn. About 80% of the medical school's students at the Frankfurt Branch come from Germany; the rest are international students from all over the world. There is a great emphasis on student wellbeing, reflected in several areas such as academic tutoring, mental health support and career advising.

The onsite visit took place on 12-MAR-2025 and 13-MAR-205. The first day was held at EUC campus and included meetings with the institutional bodies (Vice Rector of academic affairs, Dean, Chair, coordinators, campus director etc.), members of the teaching staff and students. There was a separate meeting dealing with the PhD program (in the planning, suggested to start Autumn 2025). This was followed by a tour of the premises including wet lab and skills training facilities. The second day was a tour of site visits in Frankfurt hospitals (Elisabethen, Red Cross). The committee was provided with material before the visit (self-report, application form) in a timely manner. It was supported by further printed material at the onsite visit (budget information). Other material was provided during the previous site visit in Nicosia (logbooks, exams, MD thesis).

This report draws upon information from the material provided as well as from the onsite visit. The EEC is convinced that the well elaborated PhD programme from Nicosia will be transferable to the Frankfurt branch as well. However, as some things may only be adequately judged in hindsight, some of the categories will currently not be able to exceed a "partially compliant" judgement.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	*Position*	*University*
Professor Nicki Cohen	Dean of Medical Education	King's College London
Prof. Anne Herrmann-Werner	Professor of Medical Education	University of Tübingen, Germany
Professor J.-Matthias Löhr	Professor of Gastroenterology	Karolinska Institutet, Sweden
Michalis Andreou	Medical Student Representative	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)

Sub-areas

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

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
  - *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.*
  - *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*
    - *is developed with input from industry leaders and other stakeholders (i.e. industry leaders, professional bodies/associations, social partners, NGO's, governmental agencies) to align with professional standards.*
    - *integrates employer surveys to adapt to evolving workplace demands.*
    - *regularly utilizes alumni feedback for long-term effectiveness assessment.*
    - *is published and implemented by all 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*
- *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.*
- *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
- *benefits from external expertise*
- *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
- *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
- *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
- *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
- *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*
    - collaborates with industry experts for curriculum development.
    - conducts joint reviews with external academic specialists to maintain academic rigor.
    - performs periodic assessments with external stakeholders to ensure continuous alignment with market needs.
    - establishes collaboration with international educational institutions or/& other relevant international bodies for a global perspective.
    - conducts regular feedback sessions with local community leaders for societal relevance.

1.3 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
  - *selection criteria*
  - *intended learning outcomes*
  - *qualification awarded*
  - *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
  - *pass rates*
  - *learning opportunities available to the students*
  - *graduate employment information*

  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.
  - Industry-specific & societal information is regularly updated with expert inputs.
  - Alumni testimonials are included for a realistic portrayal of program outcomes.

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*
  - *profile of the student population*
  - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
  - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
  - *learning resources and student support available*
  - *career paths of graduates*
  - *industry trend analysis.*
  - *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*
  - *data exchanges with professional networks*
  - *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 PhD program in Medical Sciences was outlined and presented by the program director. The Frankfurt Branch intends to start the PhD program autumn 2025. From current faculty, areas of research are suggested to be neuroscience and cell biology/oncology. The general organisation of the PhD program follows the scheme for EUC in Nicosia. There is a formal core curriculum with transferable elements including research ethics etc. Attendance at cross-disciplinary lectures is mandatory. These lecture series already started at the Frankfurt Branch. Likewise, it is suggested that future PhD students will be offered teaching responsibilities to create an income. The three year program can be stretched to up to 8 years max, e.g. when done part time in parallel with professional activities, e.g. working as a physician.

Strengths

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

Identical to the PhD program in Nicosia, the delineation of 10 competencies, incorporating WFME and ASME standards, provide a rigorous framework, highlighting practical, cognitive and transferable skills development.

The overall approach of creating a single programme is wise and allows for rigorous quality assurance to be employed, while the areas of research, relatively narrow initially, may broaden as student numbers and faculty expertise expands.

The involvement of PhD students in delivering (remunerated) education to medical students provides educational training to research students, to benefit their future academic careers. The concept of this ambitious development, early in the foundation of the Frankfurt Branch (started 2 ½ prior), provides a clear incentive for research professors to join EUC and is seemingly pivotal in recruitment negotiations. To concentrate on cell biology / oncology and neuroscience is a strength because of its alignment to the MD curriculum. Further areas to be added should follow the expertise of recruited faculty.

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.

Evaluation of the potential strengths of developing an exit degree would be beneficial. Suggested degrees could be a licensiate ("Lic."), MSc, MRes. This is of particular importance since the EUC intends to recruit young(er) faculty interested in research, of which, inevitably, some will be recruited further on to other universities elsewhere with the PhD students not having the possibility to follow.

The appointment of a mentor separate from the internal supervisory panel is recommended. While the facilities in house are established, we commend the department for developing a separate research laboratory, and ringfencing it for those purposes. Core facilities might be used jointly. Wet lab PhD students should be started once it is foreseeable that a sufficiently large critical mass (PhD students, post docs, research associates etc.) is populating the wet lab. With the main supervisor being on faculty of EUC (Frankfurt Branch), a second supervisor is suggested to come from an outside institution, ideally also providing (lab) facilities where the PhD student potentially could work.

The size of the initial PhD student cohorts is critical. Too small, and the research community and sharing of ideas will be stunted. Too large and supervision may become a problem. The initial cohort should be sufficient to build a critical mass and support a learning environment, but managed within the capacity of existing senior staff. In addition to the above mentioned areas of expertise of existing faculty, given the clinical environment, the EEC suggests as subjects for PhD studies epidemiology, public health - i.e. research that can be easily conducted outside a wet lab, alongside potentially Dr. med students and/or clinical research students associated more with clinical faculty.

The research environment can also be bolstered by growing research-active staff of other categories: research associates and postdocs, for example; alongside a Dr. med scheme. We would suggest that investment in these areas; research mentorship; careful growth of external supervisors; attention to clinical research opportunities; and drylab projects in additional to wetlab, as outlined in proposals, would effectively mitigate any potential weaknesses in the plans of thr institution; and would strongly support this approach.

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

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

Sub-areas

2.2 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology
2.3 Practical training
2.4 Student assessment

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

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*
- *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

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

- *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 isexplicitly 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)?*

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 future PhD program, as presented and discussed, offers formal and informal teaching and trained supervisors ready for practical research / academic support as needed.

Strengths

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

For the wet lab projects, resources to cover consumables exist. The laboratories are well equipped. Several clinical instructors have already identified potential PhD candidates at the two teaching hospitals visited. The developed programme working at the EUC Cyprus branch is working well and plans to align closely in Cyprus (as the MD programme has) are well-founded.

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.

We have limited capacity to authentically evaluate the PhD program currently since it is not yet active. Some of the suggestions given for the main campus in Nicosia are applicable to the Frankfurt Branch: A School retreat with all PhD students to network and socialise (as well as the more academic colloquium) is suggested to create a common community of practice.

The doctoral students would profit not only from the cross-disciplinary lectures but a more structured leadership training making them fit for future jobs in industry, academia etc. One platform, especially meant for industry and business but also with a Medical branch would be AIESEC, a student organisation for future leaders. To create a common identity, PhD students from both programs/sites (Frankfurt Branch and Nicosia) should meet face-to-face at least annually.

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	partially compliant
2.2	Practical training	partially compliant
2.3	Student assessment	compliant

3. **Teaching staff** *(ESG 1.5)*

Sub-areas

3.1 **Teaching staff recruitment and development**
3.2 Teaching staff number and status
3.3 **Synergies of teaching and research**

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

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

- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

The general scheme of the PhD program was presented in writing and discussed during the site visit and is identical to EUC Nicosia. There is a list for the faculty involved in teaching PhD students. Several of the existing faculty are not only capable but ready to receive PhD students (or already actually have some).

Strengths

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

Potential supervisors will be trained and need to have a diploma to serve as a supervisor to a PhD candidate for EUC. The existing faculty is academically experienced with sufficient publications and the ability to solicit extramural grant money (including from the EU). With the experience stemming from Nicosia, the start of a PhD program in general at the Frankfurt Branch seems feasible and desirable from a strategic point of view.

The EEC also commends the expectation that PhD students will actively integrate teaching opportunities in order to build up holistic academic competencies.

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 clinical faculty from the teaching hospitals should be recruited with a clear perspective for ongoing and future research. Several individuals raised an eagerness to engage in PhD studies.

As an alternative to the preclinical areas of cell biology / oncology and neuroscience, the first cohort of PhD students could also come from the clinically oriented areas and/or epidemiology/public health.

The program should be allowed for a slow start and controlled growth. The EEC suggests close collaboration with the head of the PhD program in Nicosia, Dr. Iva Tzetanova, who impressed with her leadership and foresight.

Albeit not a graduate school with one overarching subject, a list of faculty should be compiled - also to indicate to future PhD students the available topics and potential supervisors.
The school should ensure that the committee that surrounds and supports the programme lead is sufficiently knowledgeable in everyday practice to prevent a “single point of failure”.

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	partially compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	partially compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	compliant

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification *(ESG 1.4)*

Sub-areas

4.1 **Student admission, processes and criteria**
4.2 **Student progression**
4.3 **Student recognition**
4.4 **Student certification**

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
    - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*

- *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

4.4 Student certification

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

The PhD program, in structure being identical to that at the Cyprus branch, has three mandatory progression points:

1. approval of the PhD study plan
2. approval to the PhD defence, on a pass fail scheme
3. the PhD defence - where a pass with minor or major corrections is also possible.

Strengths

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

Being the same general layout, the EEC recognises that during the time of the PhD program, the doctoral students will be prepared for different trajectories after completion of the PhD (e.g. academia, research, industry, other).
The potential supervisors are capable and eager to start with PhD students.

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

While the EUC Frankfurt Branch copied the general layout of the PhD program, all recognise the need for careful planning of operation detail for delivery.

A slow start with few PhDs is recommended - similar to how EUC started the MD program at the Frankfurt Branch.

We are clear that there is a need for the Frankfurt branch to be able to provide PhD programmes; as a prerequisite for the recruitment of research-interested young(er) faculty. Ideally, such faculty would bring in extramural research financing. This, in turn, could provide a basis for further competitive professorial recruitments to the faculty.

The EEC would welcome a re-evaluation in five years to fully appreciate the successes of the programme.

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	partially compliant
4.3	Student recognition	partially compliant
4.4	Student certification	cannot be evaluated

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.

The general set-up, along the lines of the Nicosia operations, was presented in writing.

Strengths

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

Well-equipped wet labs with fully-funded consumables.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

A mentor separate from the supervisors with no connection to the Department of the PhD is suggested as a further resource to the doctoral student. One of the two main supervisors should be external to EUC. Advantage should be taken with the highly motivated and academically experienced (future) clinical faculty as supervisors for PhD. Exit degrees should be established and clearly communicated to the PhD students.

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

Additional for doctoral programmes *(ALL ESG)*

Sub-areas

5.5 **Selection criteria and requirements**
5.6 **Proposal and dissertation**
5.7 **Supervision and committees**

6.1 **Selection criteria and requirements**

Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
  - *the stages of completion*
  - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
  - *the examinations*
  - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
  - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

6.2 **Proposal and dissertation**

Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
  - *the chapters that are contained*
  - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
  - *the minimum word limit*
  - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

6.3 **Supervision and committees**

Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
  - *regular meetings*
  - *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
  - *support for writing research papers*
  - *participation in conferences*
- *The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?*
- *Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?*
- *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.

The general layout of the doctoral program including recruitment was presented to us in writing.

Strengths

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

Orderly process with three evaluations (one at the beginning - review of the research/study protocol, admission to the PhD defence and then the defence itself).
The requirement for PhD students to publish at least two peer-reviewed original (data) papers, one of which should be as first author.
The option to stretch the three-year program to up to eight years depending on the work situation and diverse personal circumstances is appreciated by the EEC.
We recognise that PhD students at the Cyprus branch benefit from support to attend conferences, and anticipate that this would be the same in Frankfurt.

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 per earlier, we feel that careful consideration of an exit award is sensible, e.g. “licensiate” after two years of studies.

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	compliant
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	compliant
6.3	Supervision and committees	partially 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.

The European University Cyprus is a relatively young university that is most certainly on an upward trajectory. The Medical School of EUC has developed and delivers a modern MD curriculum with a successful start 2013 and started a PhD program in 2021. EUC is currently going through an episode of rapid growth that is managed very well.

The same holds true for the Frankfurt Branch that started operations in 2022 with the MD program and is currently planning the PhD program to start autumn 2025.

Faculty and administrators at the Frankfurt Branch seemed extremely motivated. The EUC has identified research as a strategic area for future development and one of its unique selling points (a view shared by external stakeholders back home) - the reason why they started the PhD program in the first place.
This is even more true for the Frankfurt Branch where the possibility for research-intensive faculty to issue a PhD is a prerequisite for career growth, and, and hence likely appointment. That is to say that EUC needs this as a strategic element even for the recruitment of clinical teaching faculty.

The EEC welcomes this development and would like to make some suggestions: Like with the MD program, the start of the PhD program, while heavily profiting from the experiences made in Nicosia, should begin with a slow start, i.e. a few PhD students and a controlled growth. We recognise that several of the future clinical faculty have previous experience with PhD students and are eager to start likewise with EUC. Synergies can be seen with the Nicosia program.

In addition, the German academic system offers the academic degree of a “Dr. med.” - something desirable to German medical students, potentially at both the Cyprus and Frankfurt campuses, to support an academic trajectory in the German Academic Medicine system. Several of the new and soon-to-be recruited clinical faculty still are enlisted as faculty for one of the Medical Schools in the vicinity. They would have the formal right to offer a “Dr. med.” degree. The work for such a degree could be used for the MD thesis (part of EUC program) as well and both can serve as a stepstone for a future PhD with EUC ore elsewhere.

We would like to thank the EUC for their hospitality and the willingness to openly share and discuss all relevant issues. We strongly believe that the institution is doing a great job of securing optimal conditions for the medical faculty to thrive. We are fully supported of plans to develop this PhD programme, which is critical for the future resilience of the school.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	*Signature*
Professor Nicki Cohen	
Professor Anne Herrmann-Werner	
Professor J.-Matthias Löhr	
Michalis Andreou	

Date: 17-MAR-2025