Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 01/08/2021

External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  University of Nicosia

- **Town:** Nicosia

- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School of Life and Health Sciences

- **Department/ Sector:** Life Sciences

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

  In Greek:

  Διατροφή και Διαιτολογία

  In English:

   Nutrition and Dietetics, Doctor of Philosophy

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

- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

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REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

An online visit was performed on the 5th of July 2021. Prior to the visit, the External Evaluation Committee, as its composition is described below, had received documentation about the PhD program of studies, syllabus and staff and videos on the facilities of the University of Nicosia in general. The session was chaired by Professor Konstantinos Gerasimidis. There were presentations by various members of the academic staff, PhD students, management and administrative staff. Each presentation was followed by a Q&A session. The evaluation lasted approximately 8 hours; The PhD program was discussed during the second half of the virtual visit.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Konstantinos Gerasimidis	Professor of Clinical Nutrition	University of Glasgow, UK
Audrey Tierney	Senior Lecturer & Dietitian	University of Limerick, Ireland
Jutta Dierkes	Professor of Clinical Nutrition	University of Bergen, Norway

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.***

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1. Study programme and study programme's design and development
(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-areas

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

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
  - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
  - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
  - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
  - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
  - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
  - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
  - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
  - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
  - *benefits from external expertise*
  - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
  - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
  - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
  - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*

- o *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- o *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- o *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- o *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- o *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- o *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
  - o *key performance indicators*
  - o *profile of the student population*
  - o *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
  - o *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
  - o *learning resources and student support available*
  - o *career paths of graduates*

- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

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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?*

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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 in Dietetics/Nutrition aims to provide students with the most advanced knowledge of Dietetics/Nutrition; the most advanced and specialized skills and techniques, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice in the broad area of Dietetics/Nutrition; competences related to substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity.

In the design and development of the programme: the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, (ii) the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, (iii) Standards and Guidelines for On-line programmes, (iv) the national laws for quality assurance and accreditation, (v) the National Qualifications Framework, (vi) the European Qualifications Framework, (vii) the Tuning Methodology and (viii) the "Dublin Descriptors", were amongst the points of reference for the process of developing the programmes.

With the PSU and ePSU adequate supports to staff and students are provided.

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

Pedagogical supports and internal and external regulatory quality assurance mechanisms are sufficient.

The admission criteria were clearly outlined for potential candidates. The admission criteria for exceptional cases are appropriate and increases the diversity of the candidates.

Students are afforded adequate supports throughout their PhD studies – counselling, writing etc. Infrastructure supports are adequate for completion of research

Supervisory team standards assure the PhD student is afforded fair and adequate supervision

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.

Are PhD number targets achieved each year ie 6-10 entrants per year?

Ideally funding would be made available to the candidates to support their candidature.

Could elective subjects be undertaken relevant to the studies/research of interest – more in-depth modules on qualitative methods, undertaking systematic reviews etc? Do students coming from

the MSc Dietetics need to complete the module on Nutrition and Dietetics? Is there a need for this?

Do the students keep or complete a portfolio throughout their PhD studies to highlight learnings or evidence of completing the learning outcomes etc? Might be worth considering.

Could they be more involved in teaching or demonstrating on the relevant under or postgraduate courses to enhance skills?

Has this programme gone through a periodic review? If so were findings implemented?

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

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

> **Sub-areas**
> **2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
> **2.2 Practical training**
> **2.3 Student assessment**

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

Standards

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

2.2 Practical training

Standards

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

2.3 Student assessment

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

- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*
- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

Findings

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

There is a well-structured program of PhD studies which encompasses research in basic and research translational science and clinical research. There is good infrastructure to enable high calibre research and staff to student ratio is good. Students are assessed periodically during their studies and there is a monitoring and progress review process. Students appear to enjoy a variety of pedagogical methods to master skills in research methodology. Students have the opportunity to present their work in national and international meetings. There are student support services for a range of student learning activities. The procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning were not clear but the EEC was reassured that procedures were indeed in place for this. There is a need for an independent tutor to support student on pastoral care matters.

Strengths

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

- Students are reviewed periodically during their PhD studies
- There are services available to support students with different abilities and learning needs
- There is range of innovative teaching methods such research seminars, training on biostatistics, hands-on practical sessions and the environment and resources are available to ensure good quality research
- Students have the opportunity to get involved in the various layers of academic research; these span from laboratory based studies to participation to clinical trials
- There is a formal progress review

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.

- When possible, the student learning would benefit from more post-doctoral researchers to support PhD research learning activities
- There is a need for independent academic mentors/tutors that students should be able to refer in confidence to discuss matters about their learning experiences and research supervision
- A policy on procedures on student complaint is required, if this is not already available.
- The students would benefit if they had the opportunity to experience research outside their host country. The institution may want to consider student mobility awards

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	Not applicable
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.

There is a good number of members of academic staff to support the research students. The academic staff holds appropriate to the discipline academic degrees, and research degrees at PhD level. Only few members of the team have a solid research track record; others are less research active and/or their outputs are of low-modest calibre. The estimated number ratio between students to academic is good, ensuring a high-quality PhD programme is provided to students. There are opportunities for interdisciplinary interaction with other Departments and Units within the University and the existence of a Medical School is considered an advantage to foster high calibre clinical research. There is a lack of specialist technical staff particularly with the run of practical sessions and student support during laboratory dissertations.

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

Major strengths of the teaching staff include

- Discipline appropriate academic qualifications, professional registration and ongoing engagement to research
- Good staff to student ratio ensuring optimal conditions for academic learning and teaching are in place
- Research activities cover a broad range of disciplines spanning from Public Health Nutrition to Clinical Nutrition and Nutritional Sciences

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.

- If possible, the department would benefit from additional technical support staff in laboratory
- It was unclear whether there are post-doctoral researchers to help with research teaching activities
- The department may want to leverage existing opportunities to engage more with visiting professors from other Universities across Europe and elsewhere
- There is need for high calibre research and research outputs; this in turn will foster high PhD training.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

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

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Sub-areas

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

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4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

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

4.2 Student progression

Standards

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

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
  - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
  - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

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4.4 Student certification

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

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

Rules for student admission seem to be appropriate and follow in general internationally accepted rules. Students are admitted only in fall. The University has a process for general quality assurance. PhD students have access to the welfare mechanisms and counselling tools established at the University of Nicosia. Evaluation of thesis is done by a committee involving at least one external reviewer.

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

The programme is in an early phase and it is difficult to oversee particular strengths without having access to lists of topics and supervisors, as well as publications.

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.

It would have been useful to have a list of current PhD topics and supervisors, and first indicators of publication and graduating history. The University should consider to admit students during the whole academic year, not only in fall.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	compliant
4.2	Student progression	compliant
4.3	Student recognition	compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

5. **Learning resources and student support** *(ESG 1.6)*

Sub-areas

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources
5.2 Physical resources
5.3 Human support resources
5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*
- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

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

The University of Nicosia appears to have an excellent environment to support a research programme of studies. There is a good number of classrooms for large size plenary presentations but also purpose-built rooms for smaller group teaching. There is a library with a broad collection of academic literature and students have access to e-journals and other resources. From the resources shared with the EEC there are cluster rooms and free internet access for registered students. It appears to exist adequate equipment and specialist laboratory space for practical training in energy balance studies, body composition, food preparation and science, biomedical and biological sciences. However, the EEC has not seen photos or videos of such facilities and how accessible these are to students. The equipment detailed in the programme documentation aligns with the needs for academic research in nutritional sciences and dietetics. All these ensure students are provided with the support they require to achieve their research study objectives. The number of students admitted to the PhD programme is good. There are human support resources available and there is a student advising and support facility where students can refer to receive a broad range of services. These span from support for students with disabilities to teaching and learning support for the slow learner. It is customary in academic institutions student to have the opportunity to refer to members of staff as a first line contract for matters around learning and pastoral care. The staff ensured that this was indeed the case but the EEC would like to see some formal policy about tutors impended in the programme's information documentation. Research students were positive of the environment and support they have been receiving. It might be good for the academic staff to collect formal feedback on these aspects on regular intervals and use this to improve the study curriculum, resources and facilities.

Strengths
A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.
- Excellent environment to support research as well as student advisory and support facilities
- There is a good number of classrooms for large size plenary presentations but also purpose-built rooms for smaller group teaching.
- There is a library with a broad collection of academic literature and students have access to e-journals.
- There are cluster rooms and free internet access.

- Adequate equipment and specialist laboratory space are in place for research in nutrition.
- The equipment detailed in the programme documentation aligns with the needs of a PhD programme in nutrition and dietetics.
- The number of students admitted to the programme is good so the EEC cannot foresee major issues with resource availability if numbers increase
- There are human support resources available and there is a student advising and support facility where students can refer to receive a broad range of advisory services and support.

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.

- It is customary students to have the opportunity to refer to members of staff as a first line contract for matters around learning and pastoral care. The staff ensured that this practice was in place but the EEC would recommend staff to formulate appropriate policies around tutoring and impend them in the programme's information documentation.
- It might be good for the academic staff to collect formal anonymous feedback, on regular intervals, and use this to review study curriculum, resources and facilities provision.

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

ΔΙΠΑΕ
CYQAA

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

ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
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6. Additional for doctoral programmes *(ALL ESG)*

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **6.1 Selection criteria and requirements**
> **6.2 Proposal and dissertation**
> **6.3 Supervision and committees**

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards

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

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

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

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
  - *regular meetings*

- 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?*
- *Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?*

Findings

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

The PhD programme in Nutritiion and Dietetics consists of 180 ECTS, thereof 30 ECTS compulsory courses and 150 ECTS project work. The compulsory courses are fitting well into a PhD in the area of Nutrition or Dietetics The programme has a duration of 3-8 years. Candidates holding a master degree in Nutrition and/or Dietetic or another relevant field in science are eligible. A further prerequisite is the willingness to act as a students' mentor. Candidates who do not hold a master degree may be eligible under specific conditions. PhD candidates have access to the Centre for Research and Counselling Services and other support institutions. Academic counselling is provided by the academic officer, the Head of Department and the Programme Coordinator.

The infrastructure seems to be satisfactory for pursuing a PhD, both with regard to laboratories, library, IT support and supervision. Supervision is organized through a three-member committee (appointed by the Departments Postgraduate Programme Committee) with one being the main supervisor. Roles of the supervisors are well described. The maximum number of candidates per supervisor is 5.

There are rules in place for monitoring progress, which seems to be appropriate, including the nomination of a review committee in case of severe problems. The process of submission of the thesis, requirements for submission and the defence of the thesis are described. The thesis is evaluated by an Examination committee, with one member from another institution and one internal member, and an independent chair. Rules for assessment and procedures for re-examination are described. Also rules for cases of scientific or ethic misconduct are in place.

Strengths

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

The PhD programme in Nutrition/Dietetics appears straight forward and reasoned. It will be interesting to read future PhD theses from the University of Nicosia.

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.

It would have been interesting to get PhD title and performance data of the first candidates.

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	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.

Advice and recommendations are listed above. All in all, the PhD programme is reasoned and straight forward. It could be an option to give more flexibility to the compulsory courses and allow to take them within the first two years instead of the first semester and broaden offerings depending on PhD course topic. Also start of scientific work throughout the year (not only in fall) would add flexibility to the programme. The students are adequately supported however financial constraints is a consideration and opportunities for externally funded studentships should be considered as the current practice is likely to create inequalities in education and career prospects (e.g the affluent will have the opportunity to study and those unable to afford not). Engagement of staff in international high calibre research is highly encouraged. Student mobility is something that the Unit may want to consider and there are indeed several schemes and awards available for this. Staff needs to engage in CPD and keep a record of this.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Professor Konstantinos Gerasimidis	
Audrey Tierney	
Jutta Dierkes	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 01/08/2021