Doc. 300.1.3

Feedback Report from

EEC Experts

Date: 05/06/2024

Higher Education Institution:
University of Nicosia / University of Patras

- **Town:** Nicosia / Patra

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

In Greek:

Παιδική και Εφηβική Προστασία (1,5 ακαδημαϊκό έτος / 90 ECTS, Μάστερ, Εξ Αποστάσεως, Διαπανεπιστημιακό Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών με το Πανεπιστήμιο Πατρών)

In English:

Child and Adolescent Protection (1.5 years / 90 ECTS, Master of Science, E-Learning, Joint Programme with the University of Patras)

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

- **Programme's status:** New

- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: Concentrations
In English: Concentrations

A. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Patricia Bijttebier	Professor (chair)	KU Leuven
Judit Agnes Balazs	Professor	Eotvos Lorand University, Budapest, Hungary
Panos Vostanis	Professor	University of Leicester
Stylianos Hatzipanagos	Professor	University of London Centre for Online and Distance Education
Zoe Magou	Student	University of Cyprus

B. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

The EEC based on the external evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) and the Higher Education Institution's response (Doc.300.1.2), must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Introduction

We are pleased to see a positive and detailed report on all the official steps taken to ensure the quality of the content of our programme, its design, approval, monitoring and review, as well as information on our communication strategies and public information in relation to it. We are pleased that the EEC states that "the University of Nicosia has established a quality assurance procedure and each programme is reviewed periodically according to the CYQAA guidelines".

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

It was consistently acknowledged that child (to include adolescent) protection is receiving overdue attention and gravity worldwide, indeed in Cyprus. This has important implications for policy, services and practice, hence for professional training. Professional roles vary in relation to child protection, which relies on clear guidelines, inter-agency communication and collaborative care. Consequently, the proposed programme could variably relate to different professional groups. For some groups, namely social workers and psychologists, this could build on existing knowledge and skills (although not universally), while for other groups this would be a relatively new opportunity. This highlights the importance of revisiting the programme objectives and target group, and adapting the curriculum accordingly (also see other sections for related findings and recommendations). As expressed by several participants (students, teachers, stakeholder), there would be added

We would like to thank EEC for their comments made in this section. As demonstrated during the visit, this proposed programme addresses a strong need for new knowledge and skills for professionals across disciplines in the field of child protection. Therefore, this MSc is aimed at a more general Interprofessional audience as it aims to develop Interprofessional education and practice in professionals working with children from different perspectives with the aim of ensuring child protection.

In line with the discussions with the EEC and their recommendations, we have taken a number of steps which are outlined in the next section. These address the areas identified by the EEC by restructuring the courses across the three semesters and by adding two new components to ensure that the educational and practice needs of all professionals admitted to this Masters are met.

It is clear that the HEI understands our concerns and shows effort to take our suggestions into account . The proposed curriculum is a clear improvement (courses are now in a more logical sequence and also the compulsory versus elective nature of courses makes more sense (e.g., the switch between CHAP-590 and CHAP-520 in that respect).

To start with, we think this will do, but we do hope that while implementing the program and revising course elements in the first few years it will run, the HEI will keep in mind some of our more detailed recommendations (e.g. capitalizing more on systemic perspectives).

value to training in an interprofessional context for future policy and impact in Cyprus.		

Regarding the curriculum, this should be adapted to either a more generic interprofessional or more specialist student group. The courses (topics) should be incremental and build on knowledge. The indicative curriculum reflects teaching strengths, which could be slightly adapted in terms of topics and order to fit with the above context, as follows:

Semester A (compulsory courses)

1. Concepts of child protection and safeguarding, legislation (in Cyprus and internationally), and implications for different professions, service and policy.

We appreciate the Committee's suggestion, which was discussed at length during their visit. In accordance with the EEC recommendation for the development of a curriculum with a build-up philosophy in terms of courses, we have taken the following action (please see Appendix I):

Semester A
1.   Law and Child Protection CHAP-560 **(EEC / point 1)**

The aim of this course is to familiarize students with the international, European and national legal environment concerning minors. International treaties, European conventions and directives that regulate juvenile issues and are binding on national law will be examined in relation to the juvenile victim, suspect and offender.

The specific objectives of the course are:

a) to highlight the importance of the legal texts binding on national law concerning minors,

b) to provide knowledge and skills for the review and application of the legal provisions to be applied in each case

(c) to emphasise the need for close cooperation between

(part of it is covered in previous section)

With regard to the compulsory versus elective nature of the master's thesis, we are sensitive to the Cypriot context, as well as the specific position of the targeted student group and thus are satisfied with the reply and rationale given and agree with the choices made. This does not change the fact that having an obligatory master's thesis is state of the art in most research-intensive universities across Europe.

	juvenile social services and the legal and judicial sectors within the community for the welfare of the juvenile; and	
	(d) to raise awareness of the need to find legal provisions that are in the best interests of the minor, where appropriate.	
2. Vulnerability (risk) and protective (resilience) for child protection, highlighting complex mechanisms and opportunities for interventions. Important factors include parenting capacity, domestic and community violence, parental mental health and drug use, and socioeconomic adversity.	**2. Safeguarding Resilience in Children and Adolescents** CHAP-540 **(EEC / point 2)** The aim of this course is to develop students' existing knowledge through the understanding of the concept of psychological resilience, the importance of the family in the psychosocial development of the child, and the emphasis on synergies with other environments (school/community) in order to ensure the best interests of the child. The specific objectives of the course are: a) to highlight the importance of early experiences in the personality of the child and adolescent, b) to train in knowledge and skills to evaluate contexts that do not ensure the protection of the child, and c) to emphasize the need for synergy within community contexts to ensure the mental resilience of the child and adolescent within these	

	systems (school, community, etc.).
3. Assessment (formulation of needs and care plan) and decision-making. Legal, ethical and practice dilemmas should be considered from different professional perspectives and connected into collaborative care plans. Semester B (compulsory courses)	**3. Decision Making in Child Protection** CHAP-510 **(EEC / point 3)** The aim of the course is for students to gain an in-depth understanding of the decision-making processes that underpin the design and implementation of everyday professional practice in the social sciences. Particular emphasis is placed on the development of both critical thinking and process skills in relation to the complex needs of those served and their families. Theoretical and conceptual issues relating to decision-making processes in child protection will be explored, with particular emphasis on developing a logic for understanding the interrelated stages that influence decision making. The ultimate aim is to develop a systematic approach to understanding and evaluating the value of outcomes and the potential benefits of involving service users in decision making for more effective practice.
4. Introduction to social research methods to provide a brief overview of quantitative, qualitative	**Semester B** **4. Social Research Methods (EEC / point 4)** CHAP-530

and mixed research methods in social sciences and their relevance to child protection practice. Students will develop skills of critically evaluating the literature and opting for evidence-based interventions. It will also encourage some students to take up the elective research thesis.		
5. Responsive and preventive interventions in relation to child protection and different professional perspectives. Because of the wide range of approaches, the aim of this course should be an overview of interventions (theoretical frameworks, evidence-base, applications) that relate to the focus of the programme and the interprofessional student group.	**5. Challenges and Innovative Practices in Child Protection** CHAP-590 **(EEC / point 5)** The aim of this course is to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date review of the main issues in the field of child protection in terms of research, social policy and, by extension, the clinical interventions of professionals. The specific objectives of the course are: a) to identify and understand contemporary challenges in the field of child protection and discuss critical actions to address them in order to improve service delivery, b) to present research-based best practice and theoretical frameworks for intervention and treatment. Identify innovative and effective strategies for engaging in the	

development of effective assessment and intervention plans in the field of child abuse and neglect, and

c) to analyze the main directions and perspectives for the future and the role of the professional social worker in the prevention and treatment of this phenomenon.

6. Trauma Therapy in Children and Adolescents and New Counselling Technologies CHAP-550 **(EEC / point 6)**

The main objectives of the course are:

a) to critically discuss the concepts of leadership/management and interdisciplinary collaboration in child protection,

b) to examine the role of the social worker as a leader in the context of the management of social protection agencies, specifically the management of child protection units,

c) to explore the theoretical background of leadership and interdisciplinary collaboration in child protection agencies by drawing on knowledge and examples from Europe and the USA, and

d) to highlight the importance of interdisciplinary

6. Improving systemic issues in child protection. This should highlight the importance and strategies for effective interprofessional and inter-agency communication and collaboration, developing local guidelines, and addressing multicultural needs.

	collaboration to ensure the best interests of the child.	
Semester C (electives)

(7 & 8) The programme could consider two elective modules that address child protection in two related contexts, as case studies. One has already been developed in relation to parents with drug use and addiction. The second option could relate to topics such as parenting difficulties, domestic violence and refugee (or unaccompanied) children. These topics and vulnerabilities may also overlap. It is, however, essential that elective courses relate to child protection rather than, for example, wider refugee needs.

(9) Research thesis: It would be desirable for a master's programme to build in a compulsory research thesis, although it is acknowledged that this may not be possible for the proposed programme. | **Elective courses (EEC / points 7, 8, and 9)**

· **Addictive behaviours in Youth- Diagnostic and Therapeutic Approaches**

· **Intercultural Communication**

Based on the EEC comments, this module will not only focus on the development of intercultural skills with refugee groups, but it will develop skills and practices related to diversity, racial discrimination, violence and gender identity. All these topics will be presented and analysed within a child protection framework combining knowledge and practice skills.

As we said in the relevant discussion during the visit, the EEC's recommendation is noted and we fully appreciate the academic value of the thesis element. Our programme however is in line with our national educational system and the DIPAE requirements regarding Thesis. It is also in line with the rules and regulations of the University of Nicosia and a practice followed by all universities in Cyprus which do offer Master programmes with the Thesis | |

	as optional. Having the Thesis as optional, the programme offers flexibility that responds to the needs of the market and the pedagogical needs of our students for broader professional development. It should be noted that a significant number of our distance learning students are mature, practicing and experienced professionals. The electives option provides a unique opportunity for students to gain knowledge in specific areas that are useful or required for their work. In addition, as the programme co-director from the University of Patras explained during the discussion at the evaluation, the existence of a thesis is no longer mandatory even in Greece. However, we recognize the value of the thesis and will encourage students who wish to pursue a doctorate to choose this option. They are also encouraged to undertake a research thesis as this will provide research outputs for all concerned in an under-researched area. Finally, it is important to say that all courses, such as our online MSc Social Work programme, include research assignments to familiarize students with research skills, but also to give them the opportunity to decide whether to undertake a research thesis.	

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

Introduction

As the EEC noted in its findings: "The nature of the programme is compatible with e-learning delivery… provides enhanced flexibility to address student needs and the structure of the programme and the application of generic principles of pedagogy of online learning have been taken into account in the design of the specifics of the programme. This has affected individual courses design, interaction and assessment. All related initiatives are supported by the Distance Learning Unit, and the thinking behind the pedagogy and implementation seems to be robust. Quality assurance mechanisms function well, maintaining standards and providing a consistent approach to the design of online and distance learning programmes at the University" (p. 15).

They also stated that "We were also given access to the VLE (the online environment of the Social Research Methods course), where there was evidence of a well designed and consistent structure, reflecting the structure of the course syllabus. There was good signposting between sections which could help distance learners to navigate through the course and complete readings and activities and interact with other students" (p. 16). Under "Strengths" they concluded that there was "…evidence of employing authentic assessments in the programme" and that "the sample exam paper we have reviewed offered good examples of this approach". There is also "an institutional AI policy" (p. 16).

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

As there is no practical training component included as part of the curriculum which would let students apply theoretical knowledge gained in the classroom to "real-world settings", we have the following suggestions for consideration:

· To include in the entry requirements to accept students to the master programme who have access to an organisation that undertakes or contributes to child protection work.

· To include a case discussion course or case discussion activities across all courses that provides a platform for students to apply theoretical knowledge learned in the classroom to "real-life scenarios" and can be highly beneficial, as:

  o it would provide students with opportunities to develop essential skills that are crucial for working with children, adolescents, and families.

  o During discussion students with diverse backgrounds can develop sensitive decision-making skills.

  o Students could discuss ethical dilemmas and get guidelines

We would like to thank the EEC members for their suggestions. Having listened carefully to what was discussed at the meeting (and the opposing views of the EEC members), and having read the final recommendation, we have taken the following actions:

To address the additional needs of students who may not have the academic background (i.e. social work/psychology), we have prepared an intensive preparatory course at the beginning of the first semester, where students with no previous experiential and academic background will be introduced and exposed to real life case scenarios that will be discussed and analysed to familiarise them with basic concepts and skills (see Appendix II).

This practice has already been successfully applied in the MSc in Social Work where students have benefited. Following the same formula, students will be introduced to concepts related to child protection, groups of youth (unaccompanied minors, victims or parental violence, delinquent minors, looked after children etc), interdisciplinary practice and skills needed to understand symptoms of child neglect. Regarding the lack of practicum, we would like to reassure the EEC that, due to the nature of the courses, case discussion activities are and will be an important part of all courses. This practice that has been used successfully on our MSc in Social Work, where students have found it to be a successful and beneficial way of learning. In addition, where students applying for the Master have neither academic nor practice experience in the subject area of the Master, we will advise them on the

The EEC is positive about the preparatory course planned for students without disciplinary background in psychology, education or social sciences.
As to the practical part, the inclusion of discussions of case studies in several courses is for sure a plus, but in addition to that, we still think it is important to expect that students have at least access to practical experiences in child care services. This should be a prerequisite rather than just a recommendation.

relevant to their practice. ○ o It would provide students opportunities to learn from each other's perspectives, and develop skills for interdisciplinary collaboration, such as social work, psychology, psychiatry, education, healthcare, and law.	importance of gaining some experience in childcare services. Based on the EEC's recommendation the programme will provide this opportunity as both parts/universities have an extensive network of services that they can visit on a voluntary basis and gain practical knowledge and experience.		

The university should consider directing a bigger number of students towards the uptake of thesis, as they can benefit from the significant research experience of the members of the programme team and enhance the research teaching nexus. The inclusion of a compulsory course on social research methods helps students to develop valuable professional skills.	As it was explained in detail above (p. 7), students are encouraged to consider the option of a Master's thesis as an important option, especially if they plan to pursue further research studies or work in research institutions.	This issue was commented on above.

We recommend that the programme team articulates how the institution policy on the use of AI is applied to the context of this particular programme, both from a disciplinary and pedagogical point of view. This is crucial in designing assessment and establishing a framework for the use of generative AI tools in the programme by the students. Our specific recommendations on the use of AI to inform assessment design are: · Design assessments that require students to apply knowledge in unique contexts, like case studies and project-based tasks. · Reflective assessment components, where students have to express their reflections, experiences, and personal insights related to the topic. o Real-time assessments such as live presentations and discussions, where students have to respond spontaneously to questions. · Continuous/periodic assessment: the current assessment strategy puts a significant focus on end of term exams. Another approach would be to design assessments throughout a course to monitor student understanding and progression.	We appreciate the Committee's suggestion, which was discussed during their visit when we presented UNIC's established AI policy. As far as our assessment methods are concerned, all our mid-term and final exams and assignments are based on the link between practice and theory, using real-life case studies where we aim to reduce the use of AI to the minimum. In addition, the use of other learning methods such as case study analysis, analysis of films or scientific articles are methods that minimize the risk of excessive use of AI. Finally, we would like to reassure the Committee that the weekly activities, far from being ''dry'' demonstrations of theory, are a quality mix of reflective skills and experiential knowledge.	The EEC thinks that the current guidance and related practice to choose 'AI-proof' assessment formats is a good one but cannot really be considered as a fully developed and fit for purpose 'policy' on the use of AI for learning teaching and assessment. . While the use of real-life case studies and diverse learning methods like film and scientific article analysis is commendable, the current approach seems to overlook the potential of AI to provide personalised learning experiences, and offer innovative assessment methods. We would like to encourage the department to keep reflecting on this issue and develop a more elaborate approach towards AI, reflecting similar initiatives in the higher education sector. .

· More collaborative assignments (peer and group based), where students need to engage with peers to solve problems. o Design authentic assessments meaningful to students and with a clear link to the world of employment.		

We would also like to provide some recommendations on building student communities, which is a significant component aiming to assist student engagement and support peer and group learning. Some initiatives that can support building student communities are: · Regular online meetings can be casual hangouts, study sessions, or discussions on course-related topics. · Discussion Forums (which the team already uses) and use of social media platforms like Slack or Discord (subject to university policies on the use of social media), where students can interact outside of class time. · Creation of online study groups, where students can collaborate on assignments, review materials, and prepare for exams together. · Peer mentoring where older/ more experienced students can mentor newer students. This can help with academic and emotional support. o Creation of peer/ group projects that require collaboration among students to encourage communication and teamwork. · Creation of virtual clubs or interest groups based on	We would like to thank EEC for their useful and innovative suggestions. In order to build a more active and vibrant learning community we will be organising an induction week where all these suggestions will be presented and students will be supported to make the most of them. Furthermore, as was explained during the meeting, some of these (and other similar) recommendations are already in place and being implemented by our School for our other e-learning programmes currently being taught.	This is a good approach, and the programme team should think on how to transfer good practice from other e-learning programmes currently being taught to the specifics of this programme.

personal and academic interests, or cultural backgrounds. · Organize on-campus induction and networking events, providing opportunities for students to meet up in person.		

3. Teaching staff *(ESG 1.5)*

Introduction

In terms of the faculty, we thank the EEC for identifying and pointing out that "Staff recruitment as well as staff development are strongly and directly related to strategic academic development" (p. 20). They also noted that "Teaching staff is very dedicated and highly skilled, covering a variety of specialized disciplines" and that "Several faculty members closely collaborate with world-leading academics in various Greek, European and US universities" (p. 21).

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

		OK
As discussed during the visit, there are plans to purchase additional teaching staff time if student numbers exceed current capacity. However, it will be important to hire teaching staff in sufficient numbers and with adequate expertise in their topic.

· Teaching staff across both universities would benefit from joint training in interprofessional education and learning approaches, with consistency in their delivery.

· For new topics of the revised curriculum, there may be a requirement either for input from other teaching or existing staff and a need to consider the topics in relation to the new programme.

It is important to note that topics should be related to child and adolescent protection. For this reason, they will need to be contextualized and translated rather than taught in the same way as in previous programmes. | We would first like to note that in general Distance Learning programmes offered by Open Universities rely mainly on adjunct faculty. As a joint programme, our programme uses full-time faculty from both institutions and is therefore very well supported by full-time faculty. As we also explained at the meeting, both universities will consider recruiting new teaching staff as and when required. Whenever there is a need to develop new courses or to supervise students who might consider a Master's thesis as an option, the recruitment of new faculty with the appropriate expertise will be considered as and when the need arises. Both faculty members of UNIC and the University of Patras participate in the Faculty Professional Development Seminar on Teaching and Learning Theory and Practice, which is a mandatory 12-week training covering aspects such as course development, interactive and collaborative tools in online learning, measurement of learning outcomes using authentic assessment, assignments, quizzes, tests and rubrics in online and face-to-face courses, etc. Moreover, the Faculty Training and Development Unit (FTDU) and e-Learning Pedagogical Support Unit (ePSU) offer different types of training (i.e., pedagogical, research, technical, training and development on current higher education topics) which can be attended by all faculty members, both synchronously and asynchronously (more information can be found in the "Pedagogical E-learning Model"). | |

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

Introduction

The EEC found that "predefined regulations regarding student progression, recognition and certification are in place", and highlighted a number of positive findings about student admissions, processes, criteria, progression and recognition (pp. 23, 24).

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
In case the admission criteria for the programme allow access to applicants with a wide range of academic backgrounds, to be able to satisfy the requirements of the curriculum, we suggest that the admission criteria explicitly state that, in addition to having a bachelor's degree, applicants need to be already engaged in this area of activity or be employed in, or at least have access to an organisation that undertakes or contributes to child protection work in order to apply theoretical knowledge to practical contexts.	We would like to express our satisfaction with the EEC's comments and assure you that all of the Committee's recommendations will be implemented. Discussions with the EEC members helped us to introduce tools (induction days, voluntary practice, closure weekend) that will make our Master even stronger. This will always be the case and it is already in our entry criteria that practical experience is considered an advantage. Students will be encouraged to undertake voluntary practice as part of their professional development, so guidance will be provided on this matter. This will be included in our response to the students' application and will also be communicated at the Induction Day.	This was commented on above.

In case the admission criteria are kept very broad (direct access for graduates from a broad range of bachelor programmes), there may be an uneven starting knowledge and skill level for some courses. A suggestion could be to offer special courses (e.g., a preparatory programme) for students who did not complete specific prerequisite courses, i.e. related to child development, psychology, sociology, or other relevant subjects, which courses would have ensured that students have acquired foundational knowledge before entering the programme. Another possible way is to specify the required previous knowledge for each course and offer (but not oblige) a set of courses or course materials that students can optionally take in order to be well prepared to start the bachelor programme. Any in-between possibilities can be considered too.	Following the EEC's recommendation, we have added a preparatory course (please see Appendix I) in the first semester, which will give students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the basic concepts of child protection. Furthermore, exposure to real life scenarios will allow them to learn how to deal with a variety of child protection cases. Finally, the Master will conclude with the provision of a residential weekend where students will demonstrate the skills and knowledge acquired during this programme through the analysis of case studies. This method will also have a reflective role.	This was commented on above.

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

Introduction

The EEC noted positively that "the online learning materials on the VLE are adequate and provide good opportunities for learning." (p. 28) and that "A student-centred approach is in place and promotes active self-learning. The Distance Learning Unit provides students with necessary support and guidance on access and induction to e-learning tools. Students and graduates with whom we spoke during the visit were very positive about the support they received during their studies." (p. 29).

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
· More online activities to connect online students with each other (also see our recommendations about building a student community). · Replace the PPTs with narrated PPTs that provide better context for students who have missed a particular section.	We thank the EEC members for their comments and recommendations. As mentioned above, we have already considered taking action and it is expected that a student community will be built. In most courses, the PPTs always include a short narrative of about what the course is about that week.	Fine. Regarding PPTs, their pedagogical value as autonomous learning tools is limited. This is the reason that we suggested the use of narrated PPTs or PPTs to be used in combination with recordings of the session in which they were used.

7. Eligibility (Joint programme) *(ALL ESG)*

Introduction

In this section, the EEC highlighted the following strengths: "There is already a wider strategic collaboration between the Universities of Nicosia and Patras, with precedents of high quality joint teaching programmes", adding that "In relation to the proposed programme, both Universities and respective departments bring unique teaching and research expertise in topics related to child protection" (p. 32).

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

As discussed in the section on curriculum objectives and design, a new programme on the interface of different fields requires integration and coherence that is more than the sum of two good parts. To this effect, and in order to get better added value out of the 'joint' programme for students from both countries (and indeed internationally), there needs to be better integration to take advantage of the two teaching staff groups' strengths and skills in the overarching field of child protection, as well as with each other. This could be achieved through enhanced collaboration and joint training on interprofessional education. In addition, mobility of staff and students between the two institutions would help with the added value objective.	In response to this EEC recommendation, we have decided to organise annual one-day online seminars on child protection issues for students and the public, with presentations, in-depth discussion and reflection on all relevant contexts. This will promote the Master's contribution to the local community, but also encourage students to present their own work. It is expected that this initiative will build on shared values, explore differences in the approach and bring students closer together. On the issue of mobility and cooperation raised by the EEC, the two universities have Erasmus mobility agreements for both staff and students and, as with other programmes, these agreements will be fully exploited.	Fine, advertise these as online symposia etc. rather than one day online seminars.

C. Conclusions and final remarks

Introduction

As a final conclusion for the programme, we appreciate that the EEC "is very positive about the overall way in which the University of Nicosia, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Department of Social Sciences are run (e.g., state of the art quality assurance procedures, staff development plans, support services)". The Committee members emphasize that this joint degree "has a lot of potential and meets a clear need", adding that "the proposed programme is a promising and timely initiative" (p. 34).

We have carefully considered the EEC's recommendations and have taken the relevant actions outlined below to enhance the quality of our programme.

The EEC must provide final conclusions and remarks, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

Conclusions and final remarks **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

However, the EEC also feels that some further clarifications are needed and some decisions need to be made, especially with respect to the target group of prospective students. The first decision relates to the disciplinary profile of eligible candidates for enrollment in the programme. The current admission criteria for the programme are open for applicants with a wide range of backgrounds, which has a rationale, however, some of them may miss significant basic knowledge and raise questions to be able to satisfy the requirements of the curriculum. To handle this issue, we suggest explicitly stating the inclusion criteria next to having a bachelor's degree that applicants need to be already engaged in this area of activity or be employed in, or have access to an organisation that undertakes or contributes to child protection work. Furthermore, to include introductory or additional courses for students who did not complete specific prerequisite courses, to ensure that these students have sufficient foundational knowledge. An alternative is to admit candidate students with the necessary background knowledge from relevant disciplines.

Professional experience is considered an added advantage, but those without relevant experience are advised to contact services or organisations to gain practical knowledge. Students will be given a number of services to visit and learn how childcare services are run. However, this will be on a voluntary basis as the students are mature enough to undertake such a task on their own.

We have outlined above how we will provide theoretical knowledge for those who do not have "sufficient foundational knowledge": (Introduction / Foundation course; Case studies across modules; weekend with real case studies and reflective practice).

As indicated during the visit and in the report, overall , the EEC is positive about the way in which the University, the School, and the Department are run, and believes that the proposed programme has a lot of potential. During the visit and throughout this rebuttal, it has been clear that the department is open to feedback, understands the recommendations made and is willing to take them into account, responding with really good actions that can be taken. However, we cannot hide some disappointment about the strength of the commitments made. Several recommendations of the EEC have been responded with expressions of intention to 'encourage the students to do so…' or referring to the fact that current practices already have the potential to be compliant with the recommendations (but not necessarily guarantee compliance). We do think that a stronger approach will be needed here (there are really good ideas but more need to be done to ensure they are implemented, develop articulated action plans and monitor their implementation) in the prospect of a re-evaluation within the next years.
In summary, our evaluation is positive and we wish the department the best of luck with the new programme, but we would like to stress the fact that it will be important to implement most of the actions that in the

		institution's response come across as simply intentions.

| A limitation of the programme is that there is no practical training component included in the curriculum, which would let students apply their theoretical knowledge in "real-world settings". Our above-described suggestion - i.e. include as an entry requirement to accept students to the master programme who have access to an organisation that undertakes or contributes to child protection work - would partly address this issue. Furthermore, including a case discussion course or activities across all courses can be highly beneficial | Professional experience is considered an added advantage, but those without relevant experience will be advised to contact childcare services to gain practical knowledge. Students will be given a number of services to visit and learn how childcare services work. However, this will be on a voluntary basis as students are mature enough to undertake such a task on their own.

In conclusion, we would like to reassure the EEC that course outlines will be an important part of most courses as a way of understanding theory in practice. | |

D. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Patricia Bijttebier	
Judit Agnes Balazs	
Panos Vostanis	
Stylianos Hatzipanagos	
Zoe Magou	

Date: