

Doc. 300.3.1/1

External Evaluation Report

(Programmatic within the framework of Departmental Evaluation)

Date: Date.

- **Higher Education Institution:** Frederick University
- **Town:** Limassol, Nicosia
- **School/Faculty:** School of Health Sciences
- **Department:** Department of Life and Health Sciences
- **Programme 1:** 4-year Bachelor (BSc) PE & Sports Science, 240 ECTS; Greek and English
- **Programme 2:** Exercise Science, Sport & Rehabilitation, 3 years 180 ECTS, Doctorate (PhD); Greek and English

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

The evaluation committee was well received at the institution. All relevant staff (academic and administrative) were available. Likewise, interaction with students and stakeholders was secured.

The evaluation committee was provided access to teaching facilities, laboratories, practical sport facilities, libraries and student facilities.

The evaluation committee obtained responses to all raised questions.

The evaluation committee would like to thank all involved parties for tremendous work and preparations prior to the site visit.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Nikolai B Nordsborg	Professor, HoD	University of Copenhagen
Ralf Brand	Professor	University of Potsdam
Lee Ingle	Professor	University of Hull
Magda Anthousi	Student representative	Cyprus University of Technology
Antonis Tsolakis	Professional body representative	NA

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

Findings

Findings for policy for quality assurance

The established procedures highlighted in the university's self-report and observed firsthand during the site visit by the evaluation committee, illustrate a robust and comprehensive approach to quality assurance for this B.Sc. program. These practices effectively incorporate feedback from a diverse group of stakeholders, including students, faculty, and practitioners (e.g. a gym owner and a school teacher). The procedures seem flexible enough to adapt to potential future challenges.

Findings for design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

The utilization of key performance indicators for continuous monitoring and regular program reviews substantiates the university's commitment to maintaining high educational standards in this B.Sc. program. The members of the groups interviewed demonstrated their dedication to upholding high academic standards and delivering significant value to its students and the broader community.

Findings for public information

The evaluation committee found that the university has well-established cooperations with local sports organizations, which significantly enhance the public information efforts related to its programs. Alumni play a pivotal role, effectively communicating the value and outcomes of the programs to prospective students and employers alike. Members of the department and students also actively engage the public through regularly organized and conducted events, which further amplify its outreach and community integration. Additionally, the general administration of the university seems to provide commendable support to the department, ensuring that public information can be managed efficiently and effectively.

Findings for information management

The evaluation committee observed that within the B.Sc. program, the university's processes and tools are utilized effectively. Moodle serves as the central platform for managing course content and assessments, ensuring that educational goals are met. Faculty and staff seem to be consistently engaged with the university's protocols, receiving regular updates that maintain a well-informed and cohesive academic environment.

Strengths

- The university's administration operates with high efficiency, providing a structured and supportive organizational environment that underpins the success of this academic program.

- Assessment mapping within the program is securely implemented, aligning with the university's standards to guarantee that learning outcomes are accurately evaluated.
- Faculty and staff seem to be highly attentive to developments in the public, showing a proactive approach to adapt and improve the educational experience for their students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The evaluation committee finds no areas requiring important improvement or recommendations, as the program effectively meets assessed criteria.

Considerations related to the phd program

The comprehensive Quality Assurance Policy ensures high standards. New program design follows a structured process, including the formation of a program committee. Senate approval and thorough review guarantee quality. Public information is well-managed. Overall, the described phd program demonstrates a positive approach to quality assurance, program design, and information dissemination.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>		
		B.Sc.	Ph.D.	NA
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant	Compliant	NA
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant	Compliant	NA
1.3	Public information	Compliant	Compliant	NA
1.4	Information management	Compliant	Compliant	NA

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

Findings

Findings for process of teaching and learning and student-centered teaching methodology

Positive aspects were noted in the policy for quality assurance of the programme of study. The teaching and learning processes are notably student-centered, supporting individual and social development, and promoting autonomy while providing necessary guidance. Flexible teaching methods and modern educational tools are used, catering to diverse student needs and supporting different learning paths. Transparency in scheduling and the weighting of learning activities facilitate a balanced curriculum. Additionally, the institution maintains open channels for student feedback on the teaching and learning process, ensuring that any concerns are addressed promptly and effectively.

Findings for practical training

Adequate connections between practical and theoretical studies, ensuring comprehensive educational outcomes were observed. The organization and content of practical training aligned with the planned learning outcomes. Stakeholder needs were taken into account. Transparency and structured learning experiences were apparent. Overall learning outcomes were clear and student workload was managed effectively. A cohesive and practical learning environment existed.

Findings for student assesment

The assessment processes apparently ensure fairness and transparency. Assessments are carried in alignment with predefined procedures and criteria. This structure supports the learner's development by allowing them to demonstrate achievement of intended outcomes, supplemented by constructive feedback and advice. A formal appeals procedure and consideration of mitigating circumstances further underscore the institution's commitment to fairness.

Strengths

It was clear that the program has been running for a number of years and the impression of efficiency in all aspects was good. Current and former students all provided positive feedback.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Multiple examiners should be involved where feasible, enhancing the impartiality of assessments. It should be considered to include external examiners at least on a few occasions during the program.

Considerations related to the phd program

Student-centered learning, teaching, and assessment are highlighted. The process of teaching and learning is facilitated through an online platform, Moodle, which allows academic staff to organize courses, provide educational material, and communicate with students. The research focused approach helps train students in topic specific methodology and knowledge. The described comprehensive approach ensures training of phd students that fosters academic integrity.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>		
		BSc	Ph.D.	NA
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant	Compliant	NA
2.2	Practical training	Compliant	Compliant	NA
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant	Compliant	NA

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

Findings

Findings for teaching staff recruitment and development

The institution ensures the competence of its teaching staff. It apparently employs fair processes for the recruitment and development of faculty, ensuring staff qualifications align with program objectives and desired learning outcomes. Regular engagement in professional development and training in teaching skills is a priority, fostering continuous improvement. Innovative teaching methods and new technologies are encouraged, enhancing educational delivery. Additionally, recognized visiting faculty contribute to the program, enriching the learning environment with diverse perspectives and expertise. Conditions of employment recognize and support the critical role of teaching.

Findings for teaching staff number and status

The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study. The teaching staff rank and affiliation is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study. Visiting staff are considered adequate.

Findings for synergies of teaching and research

The institutional visit showcased effective collaboration among teaching staff within and outside the institution, including practitioners and international peers. Scholarly activity linking education and research is actively encouraged. The ambition of establishing a balance between teaching hours and research time appeared adequate.

Strengths

There is a clear focus on development of teaching skills. It is a clear ambition to secure dedicated teachers in the program. There are strong research methodology driven activities.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

It is recommended to strive for international recruitment of highly esteemed researchers to support development of the program. Another solution is to further enhance engagement with external researchers with very strong profiles in sport and exercise research and education. The lack of international staff apart from Greece in further program development is the reason for the 'partially compliant' in 3.1.

Considerations related to the phd program

As noted for the bachelor program, it is recommended to strive for international recruitment of highly esteemed researchers to support development of the program. Another solution is to further enhance engagement with external researchers with very strong profiles in sport and exercise research and education. The lack of international staff apart from Greece in further program development is the reason for the 'partially compliant' in 3.1.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>		
		BSc	Ph.D.	NA
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	NA
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant	Compliant	NA
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant	Compliant	NA

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

Findings

Findings for student admission, processes and criteria

Pre-defined regulations for student admission were apparent. The assessment of students' prior education, including international qualifications, apparently supports appropriate admission decisions.

Findings for progression

The institution has established clear regulations and tools for monitoring student progression. Information on student progression is actively collected and used to enhance educational offerings and support student success, ensuring progression through their academic programs.

Findings for recognition

Practices adhere to the Lisbon Recognition Convention, promoting student mobility. Effective collaboration with national agencies ensures that recognition processes are in place.

Findings for certification

Students are provided with certification upon graduation.

Strengths

- A strong support system was in place to secure student progression. The value of the program developed across study branches was clear. The program accommodates the challenge of having primarily students who would have to work at the same time as completing their studies in order to ensure a sustainable economic situation.
- There is a clear sense of identity and connectedness among the students with the program, and the faculty.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

It appeared that all students who would apply with a relevant background were admitted to the program. An academic cut-off level exists in some, but not all, countries. The program would benefit from more national and international collaboration focusing on similar evaluation criteria. However, this remark is true for many different subject areas at a high number of universities.

Considerations related to the phd program

Relevant criteria are outlined, including an accredited Master's degree related to the specified field. Additionally, work experience in the field is advantageous. The proposed doctoral thesis should adhere to high scientific standards and address real-world needs in Exercise Science, Sports, and Rehabilitation. It must align with the Department's broader research and educational objectives. Candidates must also demonstrate sufficient English language proficiency to engage with relevant foreign literature. The admission process occurs through position announcements or upon request if positions remain unfilled. Evaluation factors include qualification relevance, diploma grades, recommendation letters, and other specified criteria.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>		
		BSc	Ph.D.	NA
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant	Compliant	NA
4.2	Student progression	Compliant	Compliant	NA
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant	Compliant	NA
4.4	Student certification	Compliant	Compliant	NA

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

Findings

Findings for teaching and learning resources

This B.Sc. program boasts a robust and well-established teaching framework. The utilization of Moodle as an e-learning platform exemplifies the department's commitment to accessible and versatile education delivery. We saw excellent research-oriented course formats, which are not only well-established but also extraordinarily engaging. These courses offer students valuable hands-on experience in the field of study, fostering a deeper understanding of the subject matter and enhancing their research skills. This approach prepares students for future professional endeavors. The standards implemented support a comprehensive and stimulating learning environment.

Findings for physical resources

The laboratories demonstrated are excellently equipped for the B.Sc. program, featuring tools and instruments that enhance both learning and probably also research (to a more limited extent). The leased external sports facilities are impressive and offer students valuable real-world experience in sports settings. This practical exposure is crucial for applying theoretical knowledge and prepares students effectively for professional roles in sports and exercise sciences.

Findings for human support resources

The generic resources and processes for the lecturers' professional development provided by Frederick University are excellent and are available to all professors, lecturers and teachers in the B.Sc. program under evaluation. The university strongly encourages faculty to utilize these resources, although it is not mandatory.

Findings for student support

The support services available to students are of a high standard.

Strengths

A significant strength of Frederick University is its extensive experience in designing support services for both students and faculty. This expertise ensures a nurturing environment that enhances the B.Sc. program,

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The committee is confident that everything is in good order and identifies no weaknesses that need to be addressed now.

Considerations related to the phd program

The panel felt it was important for staff within the department to think strategically about how supervisory teams were constructed. It is important that the most experienced, senior academics within the department are included within supervisory teams as this is more likely to ensure success. Moreover, it is also of importance to secure interaction with internationally well-recognized researchers (e.g. in Greece, but also beyond) in order to secure research excellence. Additionally, it is also important for the University to consider how early career researchers can develop and gain experience of the PhD supervision process, for example, initially brought into the team as a third supervisor when they have relevant expertise to a PhD project.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>		
		BSc	Ph.D.	NA
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant	Compliant	NA
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant	Compliant	NA
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant	Compliant	NA
5.4	Student support	Compliant	Compliant	NA

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

Findings

The PhD program proposal is new within the department, however, Frederick University has extensive experience from more established academic departments offering PhDs for many years. Therefore, there are clear established processes and procedures for selecting, monitoring, supporting and examining PhD candidates.

Strengths

The panel was very pleased to hear that budgetary requirements for PhD research and support were considered before any data was collected at the planning stage. This is important for managing budgets and the expectations of postgraduate research students.

The panel was also pleased to see a raft of measures designed to support postgraduate students within the University. It was not clear whether there was a budget to encourage attendance at academic conferences to present their research findings. We would recommend some consideration for this when research budgets are set, and the postgraduate community within the department grows.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The panel felt it was important for staff within the department to think strategically about how supervisory teams were constructed. It is important that the most experienced, senior academics within the department are included within supervisory teams as this is more likely to ensure success. Moreover, it is also of importance to secure interaction with internationally well-recognized researchers (e.g. in Greece, but also beyond) in order to secure research excellence. Additionally, it is also important for the University to consider how early career researchers can develop and gain experience of the PhD supervision process, for example, initially brought into the team as a third supervisor when they have relevant expertise to a PhD project.

The panel felt that the department required a more consistent and clearer strategy regarding authorship on academic papers emanating from PhD projects. The panel recommends that the department follows the Vancouver guidelines.

We noted that there was a requirement for PhD students to publish two research articles from their studies. Whilst we acknowledge that this is in-line with international standards, we do not believe it should be mandatory for PhD students at Frederick University. This is because the format of PhD studies can vary significantly across sports, exercise science and rehabilitation PhD projects. We would propose that individual evaluation committees take a steer on what is appropriate for each PhD student on a case-by-case basis.

The panel felt it would be helpful for the University of Frederick to consider a modification to how annual PhD monitoring and progress meetings are conducted. We felt it may be helpful to involve an independent chair (i.e. someone who is completely independent to the PhD project), to chair the annual progress meetings (involving senior academics within the institution). We felt this was more likely to help in each students' annual progress and may identify any potential "red flags" to PhD progress so any remedial support can be provided at an earlier juncture.

The panel felt that a PhD program was a logical next step in the development of the department. This will increase and enhance research activities within the department and will naturally increase research capacity and output. Increasing the critical mass of leading researchers within the department is an important part of its natural growth and development. The panel was convinced that the proposed PhD program was required to help grow research activities within the department.

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

Sub-areas		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Compliant
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Compliant
6.3	Supervision and committees	Compliant

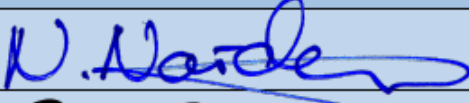


C. Conclusions and final remarks

We would like to thank the department for very fruitful and helpful discussions regarding the revalidation of the Bachelor (BSc) program in Physical Education and Sports Sciences. We fully agree that this programme has been a success over the past 5 years and we fully support that the program should continue.

We would also like to commend the ambition of the department in its proposal to offer a new PhD in Exercise Science, Sport & Rehabilitation program for suitable candidates. The panel believes that offering such a program is a logical next step in the department's development. However, we have made some recommendations above which we believe will be helpful to improve the overall offering of the PhD program.

Overall, the panel is fully supportive of the reaccreditation of the Bachelor program in Physical Education and Sports Science and the newly proposed PhD program in Exercise Science, Sport & Rehabilitation and suggest that they be implemented as soon as possible to add to the department's portfolio of programs.

D. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Nikolai B Nordsborg	
Ralf Brand	
Lee Ingle	
Magda Anthousi	
Antonis Tsolakis	

Date: 26-04-2024