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Date: 17 September 2021

# External Evaluation Report (E-learning programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
Philips University
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School of Education and Sciences
- **Department/ Sector:** Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

## In Greek:

Συμβουλευτική στον Τομέα των Εξαρτήσεων

## In English:

MSc Addiction Counselling with specialist pathway in Prevention or Interventions [Distance Learning study]

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme's status:** Choose status
- **Concentrations (if any):**

**In Greek:** Concentrations

**In English:** Concentrations



The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws of 2015 to 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

## A. Introduction

*This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.*

The External Evaluation Committee held a 'virtual onsite visit' facilitated by CYQAA on the 3rd September 2021. For full list of committee members see section B. The committee were offered the opportunity to meet with key stakeholders (including students, a community representative) and Faculty and Administrative staff of the University, and specifically the leadership of the Department Social and Behavioural Sciences, and the teaching team. The day was spent hearing presentations from each of the groups and whilst the committee found this very helpful, the committee noted that the agenda format did not leave sufficient time to engage in question and answers with the various teams. That said, the committee were grateful for all of the follow up requests that were granted to assist in the overall process, including access to a sample course on their Moodle Platform.

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>University</b>
<b>Carmel Clancy</b>	Professor	Middlesex University
<b>Johan Frank</b>	Professor	Karolinska Institutet
<b>Stephanos P. Vassilopoulos</b>	Professor	University of Patras
<b>Santi Caballé</b>	Professor	Open University of Catalonia
<b>Maria Christoforou</b>	Student representative	University
<b>Name</b>	Position	University

## C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

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

### **Findings**

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

### **Strengths**

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

### **Areas of improvement and recommendations**

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

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*
- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*
- **The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.**

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

### **Sub-areas**

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

### **1.1 Policy for quality assurance**

#### **Standards**

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
  - *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*
  - *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
  - *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*

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

### 1.3 Public information

#### Standards

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

### 1.4 Information management

#### Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
  - *key performance indicators*
  - *profile of the student population*
  - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
  - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
  - *learning resources and student support available*
  - *career paths of graduates*
- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*
- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*
- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*
- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*

### 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.*

Philips University received its university status only recently (in 2020) but springs from an academic institution that has been in existence for several years (Philips College; since 1978. Programmes are evaluated yearly by independent, external experts.

### Strengths

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

The University expresses an ambition to reach high academic standards and be competitive on a national and international level in the relevant educational programmes, as outlined by the President's statement.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

A greater focus on the continuous monitoring and quality assurance of on-site instructors involved in supervising interns would strengthen the pedagogical process of the investigated programmes.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
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**

**2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities**

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

#### **Standards**

- *The e-learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.*
- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*
- *A specific plan is developed to safeguard and assess the interaction:*
  - *among students*
  - *between students and teaching staff*
  - *between students and study guides/material of study*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the students focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of e-learning 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 e-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

- *A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on e-learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.*
- *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 e-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.*

## 2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

### Standards

- *A study guide for each course, fully aligned with e-learning philosophy and methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:*
  - *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*
  - *Presentation of course material, and students' activities on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)*
  - ***Weekly schedule of interactive activities and exercises (i.e. simulations, problem solving, scenarios, argumentation)***
  - *Clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
  - *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
  - *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
  - *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
  - *Synopsis*
- *Study guides, material and activities are appropriate for the level of the programme according to the EQF.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

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

### Findings

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

The University has a quality assurance system in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for quality assurance in the European area, and the Researcher Development Framework (RDF), a professional framework developed for researchers. It is further certified by The Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education (CYQAA). The University has internal quality assurance procedures for all its operations (based on self-evaluation, under the supervision by an Internal Evaluation Committee. There is also accreditation by professional bodies (Chartered Associations, Institutes) where relevant.

In general, the nature of the programme is compatible with distance learning delivery and the methodology provided is appropriate for the particular programme of study. The university's distance learning quality assurance is evaluated by external and voluntary accreditations, such as EFQUEL, to which the university is an active contributor.

The university's learning management system supports online teaching, learning and administrative processes. This is a Moodle installation with all the basic online services available. The platform specifically provides synchronous (through MS Teams) and asynchronous tools to support the interaction needs of students with the lecturers, the other students and with the materials. The platform also provides e-assessment procedures through quizzes with automatic feedback in order to assess students' knowledge. The provision of more complex forms of e-assessment to assess competences and skills, such as critical thinking, is also provided though was not shown the specific assessment procedures during the meetings. Each course has a minimum of 7 hours of synchronous communication (teleconferences) between teacher and students.

Collaboration among teachers and students (and among students) is conducted through the online forums of the subject and other forums that can be created ad-hoc for facing special needs. In addition, collaboration among students is promoted by collaborative activities based on project-based learning, though it was not detailed the design, procedure and technical support for these activities.

Formative assessment of the courses is based on submitted essays and reports with provision of personalized feedback during the course counting to 20% of the final grade while summative assessment is based on a mandatory final exam counting to 60% of the final grade. Assessment procedure during the course is completed with a number of online quiz-based assignments counting to 20%. Optional formative (self-assessment) activities are included in the weekly study guides in order to self-evaluate student knowledge and skills of the course.

### Strengths

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

There is a scheduled and systematic quality assurance of educational programmes based on defined standard-operating procedures.

The EEC believes that continually evaluating the quality assurance of distance learning by non-mandatory external accreditation organisations is a good practice.

The EEC considers the university's distance learning model to be in line with the specific profile of full and part-time online students who have professional duties and need to learn effectively and in a timely fashion though it was not clear how the educational visits to centres (internships) were managed for those students who live abroad for professional reasons.

The provision of personalized feedback in the submitted assignments and during the teleconference sessions as well as the feedback based on rubrics and peer-assessment are considered best practices, even if they were not shown during the meetings. In addition, the EEC recognizes the many benefits of collaboration among students promoted by collaborative activities, project based, and discussions organized in online teams. Finally, the weekly study guides, which allow the students to determine the work to be done every week, is also considered a best practice. The EEC urges the university to keep up these strong elements of their distance learning model while reinforcing them when possible.

### 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 continuous and recurrent monitoring of pedagogical skills and teaching competence of clinical staff (I e, during 'practicum') may represent a challenge due to the high number of clinical teachers/supervisors involved in some programmes.

The EEC strongly recommends guaranteeing that the educational visits to centres (internships) are available to every DL student regardless of his/her geographical location and personal situation. Either ad hoc collaborative agreements with centres nearby to students should be provided or face-to-face visits should have their replica online through videoconferencing and/or other forms of remote interaction and monitoring with similar benefits to face-to-face visits. From the meetings it was not clear how the university manages the situation of those DL students who live abroad temporarily or permanently.

The EEC wants to point out that onsite final exams may not be in line with the learning style of online students, and formative continuous assessment through the writing assignments during the course could be reinforced instead.

From the documentation provided and the information gathered from the meetings, it was not clear if gamification strategies are used to increase the student levels of motivation and engagement with the e-assessment process. In addition, more sophisticated forms of feedback based on intelligent tutoring systems and conversational pedagogical agents are also encouraged to support immediate and automatic feedback to students and self-evaluate their advances.

While the EEC emphasizes the benefits of any form of interaction and collaboration, the online synchronous teleconferences and the teamwork among students were perceived as problematic if in the next years the program is expanded internationally and attended by many students across different time zones. It was not clear how the university would support this type of collaboration from the coordination perspective while recommending the constant adaptation of their distance learning model to support this situation by increasing the asynchronous online interaction and collaboration.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Partially compliant
2.2	Practical training	Partially compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Partially compliant
2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	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.*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the teaching staff focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *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:*

- *Is the teaching staff qualified to teach in the e-learning programme of study?*
- *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.*

Overall the ECC found evidence that the teaching staff were competent, knowledgeable, and with appropriate qualifications in the generic and specialist subject areas. Their commitment to their students was evident; and supported by the student representatives of the University. There was evidence that selection and recruitment of faculty followed standard approaches taken by other Institutions, and that annual performance reviews were undertaken. There was evidence of the synergy between teaching and research, and that students had access to strong role models in this area. However, it is noted that there is only one librarian and not subject specific. This is not a reflection on the current role holder who more than adequately addressed the ECC's questions but given the size of the University and student numbers this does not feel a sufficient resource and should be reviewed.

The university has a distance educational unit that provides technical training and support of distance learning to the faculty members of the different University's Faculties. Faculty members can participate in training programs to increase their skills to conduct quality online teaching. However, the effectiveness of these training programs in the form of professional development and certification relevant to distance learning was not shown during the meeting with the teaching staff.

### Strengths

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

Positive teaching attitudes, and clear commitment to student body.

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.*

None of significant note – see above statements

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
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)

##### **Sub-areas**

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

##### **4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria**

###### **Standards**

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

##### **4.2 Student progression**

###### **Standards**

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

##### **4.3 Student recognition**

###### **Standards**

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

##### **4.4 Student certification**

###### **Standards**

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*

- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

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

### Findings

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

The Admission Process in terms of International Students and their ability to 'access' internships has been noted under a number of areas which the ECC recommend needs further review and clarification. Recognition of Prior Learning is not supported for these specific programmes. With respect to the Assessment Process – the ECC note the lack of 'formal connection' within the overall assessment process and credit bearing part of the course for the 'internship' should be revisited, so that a student who may be exceptionally strong academically, but fails to meet the necessary competencies clinically will not be able to gain an award that implies masters preparedness as a counsellor. Furthermore it is noted that the credit bearing aspect of the program and the fact the practicum does not appear to correspond to specific ECTS (15 ECTS are the standard for other MSc counselling programs in Greece) is problematic. Albeit that there might be a "pass/fail" evaluation process it is always advantageous (for the prospective students) to have their internship hours matched with specific ECTS credits (if they want their degree to be comparable with other similar MSc degrees in Greece and elsewhere).

The university's Moodle platform provides a wide range of learning analytics tools for monitoring student progression and performance based on collecting information from the student with lower grades, poor participation or with undelivered activities. However, it was not clear the extent the instructors use this information to support their students on a daily basis.

The ECC would like to note that students benefit from a very good student-teacher ratio (1/12) and student feedback is very positive.

### Strengths

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

A strength was noted around the very low drop-out rate (even though numbers were not reported). In addition, student feedback is actively sought at course end and on an on-going basis throughout course delivery. However, the effectiveness of this information in terms of specific measures for improvement taken by the university was not shown.

### 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.*

Assessment Literacy – there is a clear and consistent approach to the assessment process which would benefit from considering ‘other forms’ of assessment other than examination that reflect different learning styles. Furthermore, each courses’ learning outcomes should be mapped to the assessment framework so that the student can clearly understand how their learning is to be assessed.

More sophisticated forms of learning analytics mechanisms based on AI and specifically Machine Learning are encouraged to be used to monitor and predict student performance and dropout in order to be able to provide timely corrective measures. This is strongly recommended in case of university's expansion plans through increasing the academic portfolio and/or the number of online students.

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

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

- *Weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*

- *The e-learning material and activities take advantage of the capabilities offered by the virtual and audio-visual environment and the following are applied:*
  - *Simulations in virtual environments*
  - *Problem solving scenarios*
  - *Interactive learning and formative assessment games*
  - *Interactive weekly activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities for reality reconstruction and further processing based on hypotheses*
  - *They have the ability to transfer students to real-life situations, make decisions, and study the consequences of their decisions*
  - *They help in building skills both in experiences and attitudes like in real life and also in experiencing - not just memorizing knowledge*
- *A pedagogical planning unit for e-learning, which is responsible for the support of the e-learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*
- *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 e-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.*

In the overall Department Programme Report the EEC had nothing of significance to report – in these areas other than the identification that there is only one librarian employed to address the needs of 'all university students', which the EEC felt required strengthening in terms of resource allocation.

The proposed courses have a complete syllabus plus a weekly study guide which are very well presented and includes relevant information: objectives, learning outcomes, material to use, activities to perform, and complementary bibliographic references and recommended study time. Each course has an adequate number of hours of synchronous communication between teacher and students.

The university's DL unit is responsible for providing pedagogical support for designing, creating, implementing and evaluating online courses. The DL unit addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative and summative assessment in accordance with international standards. The DL unit also provides a Faculty Handbook with guidelines for the development and delivery of distance learning that establishes the main characteristics a distance learning course should have. It is a good reference that guarantees the quality and homogeneity of the distance learning courses.

### Strengths

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

The DL unit is considered a best practice, due to its potential structure, resources, infrastructures and services devoted to enhanced distance learning. The EEC believes that it can be a powerful support for guaranteeing and maintaining the quality of the teaching provided while offering a solid base to faculty members seeking to enhance their distance learning expertise.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

While the online courses include a good variety of learning materials (e-books, articles, videos, etc.) which are good for distance learning, the EEC suggests that the recorded teleconferences and video lectures to be usable and accessible for students by making them short, include the teacher in all the videos to provide non-verbal communication, and add subtitles for accessibility.

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

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

## D. Conclusions and final remarks

Overall this Department and Programmes under review satisfied the ECC in its mission, objectives, processes and general commitment to a worthy area of study, that is certainly needed both locally, regionally and internationally given the burden of disease related to problematic substance use and addictions.

With the exception of the 'internships' (see specific comments below) the ECC found the MSc Programmes well conceived and well structured.

The ECC were impressed by the commitment and organisation of the University and the Department and clearly have a team of academics (teachers and researchers), and administrators capable of delivering the programmes under review, who were competent and enthusiastic.

There are clearly two broad areas that the ECC identified that would benefit from review and strengthening




1. The Internship Aspect of the Programme – whilst this is an exceptionally important and innovative aspect of the programme, and is highly commended, the team do need to consider a number of issues that were not clear or transparent in either the site visit or paperwork e.g.
  - What occurs if a non Greek Speaking student applies – if that is not possible this needs to be reflected in the international advertising campaign
  - What occurs if an international student (on the DL) wishes to undertake their Internship in their local country – what are the quality assurance arrangements in selecting, and determining if the host site can facilitate and meet the needs of the student and comply with the programme regulations (see specific comments below)
  - How are internships overall managed – explicitly – operationally, and how can students, stakeholders be reassured of the qualifications of the clinical tutors/supervisors
2. Assessment Literacy – there is a clear and consistent approach to the assessment process which would benefit from considering 'other forms' of assessment other than examination that reflect different learning styles. Furthermore, each courses' learning outcomes should be mapped to the assessment framework so that the student can clearly understand how their learning is to be assessed.

In addition, the lack of 'formal connection' within the overall assessment process and credit bearing part of the course for the 'internship' should be revisited, so that a student who may be exceptionally strong academically, but fails to meet the necessary competencies clinically will not be able to gain an award that implies masters preparedness as a counsellor. Furthermore it is noted that the credit bearing aspect of the program and the fact the practicum does not appear to correspond to specific ECTS (15 ECTS are the standard for other MSc counselling programs in Greece) is problematic. Albeit that there might be a "pass/fail" evaluation process it is always advantageous (for the prospective students) to have their internship hours matched with specific ECTS credits (if they want their degree to be comparable with other similar MSc degrees in Greece and elsewhere).

The ECC strongly recommend that these two broad issues need to be reviewed and addressed (particularly for International Student admissions) before moving forward.

The MSc program is in general compatible with distance learning methodology, including some strong elements that reinforce their distance learning model (i.e., the distance educational unit, faculty handbook, ratio instructor/students and e-assessment procedures). However, the particular face-to-face internships, while mandatory activities for all students, they are not compatible with distance learning delivery as they do not have an online/remote replica, thus becoming unavailable for those online students who live permanently or temporarily outside Cyprus and Greece. The EEC urges the university to find a sound response to this issue in line with their distance learning model.

## E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Carmel Clancy	
Johan Frank	Electronically signed by Johan Franck Date and time of signature 2021-09-16 14:58 UTC Authenticated by Karolinska Institutet eduSign
Stephanos P. Vassilopoulos	
Santi Caballé	
Maria Christoforou	
Click to enter Name	

**Date:** 17 September 2021