Doc. 300.1.2

Higher Education Institution's Response

Date: 12/06/2026

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  European University Cyprus
- **Town: Nicosia, Cyprus**
- **Programme of study**
  Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

  In Greek:
  Βιολογικές Επιστήμες (4 έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο)
  In English:
  Biological Sciences (4 Years, 240 ECTS, B.Sc.)
- **Language(s) of instruction: Greek and English**
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: 1) Γενική Βιολογία, 2) Γενική Μικροβιολογία
  In English: 1) General Biology, 2) General Microbiology

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. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area. The answers' documentation should be brief and accurate and supported by the relevant documentation. Referral to annexes should be made only when necessary.*

- *In particular, under each assessment area and by using the 2nd column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:*

    - *the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
    - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*

- *The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report **without any interference** in the content.*

- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in *.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.*

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

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Increase cohort size and ensure programme sustainability • Student intake should be increased to improve academic sustainability. • The current target intake (~20 students) is below programme capacity and should be revised upwards. • Larger cohorts are needed to ensure viability of course offerings and avoid curriculum fragmentation. • The programme operates in a highly competitive national environment (notably with public universities), requiring strategic positioning.	Thank you for this important observation. We fully acknowledge that increasing student intake is essential for the long-term sustainability of the programme. Following internal evaluation, we are confident that the programme can effectively accommodate an annual intake of up to 40 students without compromising the quality of teaching, student support, laboratory training, or the overall learning experience. We are working closely with the University's Marketing and Admissions Departments to strengthen the visibility and strategic positioning of the programme within the national higher education landscape. Recruitment strategies and admission trends are continuously monitored through annual programme review processes to ensure that intake targets are realistic, sustainable, and aligned with available resources. Particular emphasis is placed on increasing outreach activities, including school visits and promotional events, as well as broader marketing initiatives such as digital campaigns, social media engagement, content marketing, education fairs, and student ambassador involvement. For a full list of the University's promotional and outreach activities please see Annex 1. These activities are designed to showcase our modern facilities, active research environment, and the distinctive features of the programme. With two concentration pathways the programme is currently unique in Cyprus in offering specialization in Microbiology through the General Microbiology concentration, while also providing interdisciplinary training in	Choose level of compliance:

	Integrative Biology, integrating molecular, organismal, and environmental perspectives in the biological sciences, through the General Biology concentration. We believe that this dual academic focus constitutes a distinctive strength of the programme and clearly differentiates it from comparable offerings at both public and private universities. In addition, the programme aligns with emerging scientific and societal needs in areas such as biotechnology, environmental sustainability, public health, and biomedical sciences, thereby enhancing graduate employability and postgraduate study opportunities. Efforts are also made to strengthen the international profile of the programme through strategic collaborations, student mobility opportunities, and initiatives aimed at enhancing the programme's international visibility (for a sample email used for exploring international academic collaboration opportunities please check Annex 2). Increased cohort sizes will additionally contribute to the sustainability and continuity of course offerings, strengthen the academic environment through greater student engagement and peer interaction, and reduce the risk of curriculum fragmentation. We therefore agree that strategic growth in student numbers is both necessary and achievable, and we are committed to implementing targeted actions to support this goal.	
Address curriculum structure and coherence • Review potential fragmentation of the curriculum, particularly in light of low student numbers spread across many courses.	Thank you for this valuable recommendation. We fully agree that maintaining a coherent, academically sustainable, and pedagogically effective curriculum structure is essential, particularly in relation to cohort size and the distribution of students across elective and specialized courses. The programme has been designed to provide students with both a strong common foundation in Biological Sciences and	Choose level of compliance:

• Ensure efficient course design and consolidation where appropriate.	opportunities for specialization through the two concentration pathways. Nevertheless, we recognize the need to continuously evaluate the balance between breadth of course offerings and efficient curriculum delivery. In response to the recommendation concerning curriculum coherence and the potential fragmentation of the programme, the list of elective courses was streamlined. The revised elective offerings now consist primarily of courses that are available to students in both concentrations (General Biology and General Microbiology), while only one course from each concentration is available as an elective to students in the other concentration. Furthermore, the courses *Cancer Biology, Pathobiology and Precision Medicine*, and *Systems Biomedicine* from the Biomedical Sciences programme, as well as *Pharmacology* from the Pharmacy programme, have been removed from the list of electives. These courses were excluded because they required background preparation that students enrolled in the Biological Sciences programme were generally unable to satisfy. As a result of these revisions, a decision was made to streamline the elective structure by reducing the number of elective courses required for degree completion from five to four, resulting in a decrease in elective ECTS credits from 30 to 24. For the revised structure of the study programme, please refer to Annex 3. The streamlined list of elective courses can be found on page 4 of Annex 4. The programme also reviewed opportunities for the consolidation of courses with overlapping learning outcomes and thematic content and proceeded with the following modifications. Following the curriculum review, the course *Environmental Education* is	

	no longer be offered as an elective due to consistently low student enrolment. Relevant components of this course have instead been incorporated into the course *Teaching Biology (BIO374)*, including the teaching of selected topics and concepts related to biodiversity, recycling, sustainable development, and environmental issues (please see green-highlighted parts on page 3 of Annex 5). This consolidation was undertaken to enhance curriculum efficiency and sustainability, while also strengthening academic coherence through the integration of complementary pedagogical and environmental education perspectives within a single interdisciplinary course. Please note that this is the only consolidation proposed; further structural adjustments to the curriculum are outlined in response to the subsequent reviewers' comments. We anticipate that the planned increase in student intake will further strengthen course viability, enhance peer-learning opportunities, and reduce the risk of fragmentation across specialized modules. Overall, we remain committed to continuous curriculum evaluation and improvement, in order to ensure both academic coherence and long-term programme sustainability.	
Broaden thematic coverage of the curriculum • Rebalance the curriculum to include more ecology and conservation biology, which are currently underrepresented. • Consider a distinctive focus on island ecology as a strategic niche. • Explore inclusion of topics such as circular bioeconomy, sustainability,	We thank the reviewers for this insightful comment, which has prompted further reflection on the thematic balance of the curriculum. We agree that a recalibration is required to strengthen the emphasis on ecology and conservation biology. In this regard, the course *Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation (BIO336)*, which was previously offered as an elective, has been upgraded to a compulsory course within the General Biology concentration to strengthen the representation of ecology and conservation biology in the programme, as suggested by the reviewers (please see green-	Choose level of compliance:

and reuse of biological by-products. • Evaluate whether additional content in clinical laboratory sciences (e.g. haematology, diagnostics) would strengthen employability, while avoiding overlap with biomedical programmes.	highlighted parts on pages 5-6 of Annex 5). Moreover, an emphasis on island ecology has been incorporated into the course *General Ecology (BIO328)*, as suggested by the reviewers (please see green-highlighted parts on pages 8-10 of Annex 5). This course will also be offered as an elective within the General Microbiology concentration. The current adjustment reinforces the programme's strategic focus on island ecosystems while maintaining flexibility between the two concentrations. Topics related to the circular bioeconomy, sustainability, and the reuse of biological by-products have been integrated into existing courses. Specifically, these themes have been embedded within *General Ecology (BIO328)* in the General Biology concentration (please see green-highlighted parts on pages 8-10 of Annex 5) and within *Environmental Microbiology and Physiology of Microorganisms (BIO482)* in the General Microbiology concentration (please see green-highlighted parts on pages 11-13 of Annex 5). Finally, in response to the recommendation to strengthen the clinical laboratory sciences component of the curriculum, the course *Clinical Immunology and Haematology (BIO406)* has been introduced as a compulsory course within the General Microbiology concentration (please see page 15 of Annex 5). This addition enhances the programme's applied and employability-focused dimensions while maintaining a clear distinction from existing biomedical programmes and avoiding unnecessary curricular overlap. Overall, we believe that these modifications adequately address the reviewers' recommendations while strengthening the coherence, thematic breadth, and strategic focus of the curriculum.	

Enhance research integration and output to increase attractiveness • The strong institutional emphasis on research and innovation is not yet sufficiently reflected in original research output to which BSc students could contribute. • Increased funding and dedicated time are needed to support original research activities, including student involvement, as an essential component of reputation. • Institutional support and strategic prioritisation are required to enhance research performance. • Reduce reliance on review articles and promote original research publications, which are more impactful and future-proof.	We thank the reviewers for these constructive comments and suggestions. Faculty members are already engaged in a range of research activities and scholarly collaborations, which provide an important foundation for further expansion of undergraduate research opportunities. We would also like to clarify that our students are already actively involved in original research projects conducted within the programme and, in several cases, have contributed to peer-reviewed original research publications. This aspect may not have been communicated sufficiently in the original submission or presentation during the site visit. An indicative list of selected original research publications from the last three years is provided in Annex 6, including publications arising from faculty-led research projects in which undergraduate students have participated. The programme has identified enhanced research support, including protected research time and increased funding opportunities, as important priorities for further strengthening original research activity and undergraduate student involvement. Indeed, institutional support and strategic prioritisation are essential for further strengthening research performance and output; we are confident that continued constructive collaboration between faculty and the Institute will facilitate the development of a coordinated strategy to enhance research activity, visibility, and overall impact within the programme. We fully agree that increasing original research output should constitute a strategic priority of the programme, given its importance for scientific impact, external visibility, and student research engagement. While original research is already an established component of programme activities, the programme will further	Choose level of compliance:

	strengthen undergraduate research integration by expanding opportunities for student participation in faculty-led projects, promoting research-oriented final-year projects, and supporting student engagement in summer research placements, scientific dissemination activities, and research publication opportunities. At the same time, review articles will continue to serve as a useful introductory framework for developing undergraduate students' scientific writing, literature evaluation, and critical analysis skills, particularly in the early stages of research training. However, these activities are intended to complement, rather than replace, participation in original research projects and outputs. The programme will also encourage greater participation in external funding applications and collaborative research initiatives to further strengthen research capacity, sustainability, and opportunities for undergraduate research engagement.	
Expand external engagement and career orientation • Strengthen interactions with external scientists and professionals beyond the university (e.g. industry, entrepreneurs), potentially leveraging alumni networks. • Integrate career perspectives and exposure to professional pathways earlier in the programme as a potential distinguishing feature.	We thank the reviewer for this valuable suggestion. The programme benefits from institutional initiatives aimed at strengthening student exposure to professional and research environments, including the University's annual Career & Internship Exhibition, in which clinical and diagnostic laboratories, hospitals, and research institutes participate. While this initiative provides students with valuable insight into potential career pathways, we fully acknowledge that further structured and earlier engagement with external professionals and working environments would further strengthen the programme's career orientation and distinctiveness. In response, we are currently establishing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with key external stakeholders,	Choose level of compliance:

	including the Bioiatriki Healthcare Group (https://bioiatriki.com.cy/en/bioiatriki-group/) and the Cyprus Research and Innovation Centre (CyRIC) (https://www.cyric.eu/). Through these collaborations, the program intents to introduce short, structured **observational placements** during the Spring break of the second year, during which students will spend approximately one week within a professional working environment. These placements will provide students with first-hand experience to applied biological sciences in practice and support the development of a clearer understanding of potential career pathways at an early stage of their studies. In parallel, the program now further strengthens engagement with its alumni network by involving graduates in guest lectures, career seminars, mentoring activities, and professional networking opportunities thereby broadening students' awareness of diverse professional trajectories within the biological sciences. In addition, students will have the opportunity to participate in a structured three-day practical programme at the Cyprus Environmental Study Centre, operated by Terra Cypria (https://terracypria.org/cesc/), a charitable, non-profit organisation. This activity will provide students with practical exposure to environmental education and field-based learning, thereby broadening their experience of applied and interdisciplinary professional contexts. Through these initiatives, the program aims to embed career orientation and external engagement more systematically throughout the student learning experience, ensuring meaningful exposure to professional pathways, applied scientific practice, and interdisciplinary career opportunities from an early stage of the programme.	

Improve programme visibility and attractiveness • Develop and implement more targeted marketing and recruitment strategies to increase student intake and competitiveness.	We thank the reviewers for this valuable suggestion. In collaboration with the University's Marketing Department, the programme is implementing targeted actions to enhance its visibility and attractiveness. These include the development of focused digital marketing campaigns, the enhancement of the programme's online presence with updated content and student testimonials, the engagement of student ambassadors to share their experiences and promote the programme, and increased outreach to secondary education institutions and career counsellors. Additional promotional activities, including school visits and programme presentation events, will further support student recruitment efforts. Particular emphasis will be placed on highlighting the programme's modern laboratory facilities, research environment, interdisciplinary curriculum structure, and the distinctive opportunities offered through its two concentration pathways. For a full list of the University's promotional and outreach activities please see Annex 1. Through these initiatives, the program aims to strengthen student recruitment and further improve its competitiveness.	Choose level of compliance:
Enhance flexibility in programme delivery • Allow students the option to write their Bachelor's thesis in English, subject to supervisor agreement.	We thank the reviewers for this valuable suggestion. We agree that allowing students the option to write their Bachelor's thesis in English would be a beneficial enhancement to the programme, particularly in supporting students' academic development, scientific communication skills, and future postgraduate or professional opportunities in an international environment. In response, we have revised the Undergraduate Thesis Writing Guide to explicitly state that students may choose to	Choose level of compliance:

	write their Bachelor's thesis in either Greek or English, subject to agreement with their supervisor (please see page 5 of Annex 7).	
Strengthen ethical and interdisciplinary components • Consider making bioethics a mandatory component of the curriculum.	We thank the reviewers for this valuable suggestion. In recognition of the importance of ethical literacy and responsible scientific practice within the biological sciences, the course *Bioethics in Biological Sciences (BIO435)* has been incorporated as a compulsory component of the curriculum in both programme concentrations (General Biology and General Microbiology) (please see page 18 of Annex 5). This ensures that all graduates receive formal training in ethical issues relevant to contemporary biological research and practice.	Choose level of compliance:
Mitigate external risks • Acknowledge and prepare for potential impacts of regional geopolitical conflicts on student recruitment, mobility, and admissions.	We thank the reviewers for this important observation. The programme, in alignment with the University's broader strategic planning, fully acknowledges the potential impact of regional geopolitical developments on student recruitment, mobility, and admissions. In this context, the programme is being accredited for the first time, in English, with the aim of broadening accessibility, strengthening international visibility, and enhancing resilience through diversification of the student recruitment base. In addition, measures are also in place to mitigate potential external risks, including: (i) the diversification of recruitment strategies (e.g. expanding outreach to new geographic regions); (ii) the strengthening of international partnerships (e.g. developing additional Erasmus+ and bilateral agreements with institutions across a wider range of countries (for a sample email used for exploring international academic collaboration opportunities please check [Annex 2]); and (iii) the enhancement of student support processes (e.g. providing guidance to	Choose level of compliance:

	applicants affected by travel or visa restrictions), in order to ensure the continuity and resilience of the programme. Through these measures, the programme aims to strengthen its adaptability, continuity, and long-term sustainability within an evolving international environment.	

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment

(ESG 1.3)

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Review course delivery formats and minimum enrolment policies • The current minimum enrolment requirement per course (5–6 students) leads to some courses being delivered only as tutorials (e.g. inverted classroom format), which appears to be ineffective in practice. • Consider alternative delivery models, such as offering low-enrolment courses on a biennial cycle, to maintain quality while reducing teaching load.	We thank the reviewers for this constructive suggestion. We agree that the recommendation to offer selected low-enrolment elective courses on a biennial cycle represents a practical and academically sound approach for maintaining course quality while ensuring the efficient use of teaching resources. Following the recent revisions to the programme curriculum and elective offerings (for full list please see Annex 4), the program intends to systematically monitor course enrolment patterns and student demand during the initial years of implementation. Based on this evaluation, adjustments to delivery models, will be considered where appropriate, including the introduction of biennial course offerings for selected low-enrolment electives. This approach is expected to support more sustainable curriculum delivery, strengthen peer interaction and classroom dynamics, and address concerns regarding the effectiveness of tutorial-only or highly fragmented delivery formats for very small student cohorts. At the same time, the programme remains committed	Choose level of compliance:

	to preserving sufficient curricular flexibility and elective choice while ensuring high-quality teaching and an effective learning experience for students	
Strengthen research-based learning and thesis opportunities • Limited availability of laboratory-based theses, particularly for microbiology students, represents a significant weakness. • Research thesis opportunities are heavily concentrated in cancer-related topics, with insufficient options in other areas such as ecology or marine biology. • Consider allowing group-based research projects (e.g. 2–4 students per overarching topic), where each student addresses a specific sub-question more broadly. • Further develop problem-solving abilities and an innovation-oriented mindset, particularly in R&D contexts.	We thank the reviewers for these valuable observations, which have provided an important opportunity to further evaluate and strengthen the research and thesis opportunities available to students within the programme. In response to the comments regarding the availability and diversity of laboratory-based thesis projects, the programme will ensure that sufficient research opportunities in microbiology are available to students within the General Microbiology concentration. In parallel, further diversification will take place of the thesis topics offered within the General Biology concentration by expanding opportunities in areas aligned with the program curriculum, including ecology, environmental biology, marine biology, and related interdisciplinary fields that reflect the broader scope of the General Biology concentration, beyond the currently predominant cancer-related research themes. The program already permits students to undertake group-based thesis projects involving up to three students working under a common overarching research theme, with each student addressing a distinct	Choose level of compliance:

	research sub-question. We consider this model pedagogically valuable, as it promotes collaboration while preserving individual academic responsibility and independent assessment. At present, however, increasing the number of students per project to four is not considered appropriate given the current cohort size of approximately 20 students. This option may be reconsidered should student intake increase substantially in the future. The program also acknowledges the reviewers' recommendation to further strengthen problem-solving abilities and cultivate an innovation-oriented mindset, particularly within research and development contexts. These competencies are already promoted through independent thesis research, critical analysis of scientific literature, regular supervisory feedback, laboratory training, and interaction with M.Sc. and Ph.D. students within the broader research environment. The program will continue to enhance research-based learning opportunities and encourage greater student engagement in scientific inquiry, applied problem-solving, and innovation-oriented activities.	
Improve flexibility and accessibility of thesis work • Allow submission of Bachelor's theses in English, in line with internationalisation goals and student needs.	We thank the reviewers for this valuable suggestion. We agree that allowing students the option to write their Bachelor's thesis in English would enhance flexibility and accessibility of thesis work. In response, we have revised the	Choose level of compliance:

	Undergraduate Thesis Writing Guide to explicitly state that students may choose to write their Bachelor's thesis in either Greek or English, subject to the agreement of their supervisor (please see page 5 of Annex 7).	
Enhance availability and reliability of elective courses • Many electives (e.g. in biodiversity, ecology, environmental biology) are not regularly offered due to low enrolment. This creates a perception of limited choice, as advertised options are not accessible in practice. • Ensure more reliable planning and delivery of electives, potentially through consolidation of offerings, guaranteed rotation schedules, or minimum provision of core electives.	We thank the reviewers for highlighting this important issue. We acknowledge that, due to low enrolment, some elective courses have not been offered consistently in recent years, which may create the perception of limited elective choice despite the breadth of courses listed in the curriculum. In response, the programme has undertaken a comprehensive review and revision of its elective structure with the aim of improving the sustainability, reliability, and accessibility of elective offerings. As part of this revision process, several curriculum adjustments have been implemented (for full list please see Annex 5, where all adjustments are highlighted in green). More specifically, the course *Pharmacology* has been removed from the elective offerings, as experience has shown that, while valuable within the Pharmacy programme where it is currently delivered, it presents challenges for Biological Sciences students in terms of background preparation and alignment with programme needs. Similarly, the courses *Cancer Biology, Pathobiology and Precision Medicine*, and *Systems Biomedicine* from the Biomedical Sciences programme, have been removed from the list of	Choose level of compliance:

	electives, because they required background that students enrolled in the Biological Sciences programme were generally unable to satisfy. In addition, the course *Bioethics in Biological Sciences (BIO435)* has now been incorporated as a compulsory component of the curriculum. Furthermore, the course *Environmental Education* will no longer be offered as an elective due to consistently low student enrolment. Relevant components of this course have instead been incorporated into the course *Teaching Biology (BIO374)*, including the teaching of selected topics and concepts related to biodiversity, recycling, sustainable development, and environmental issues (please see green-highlighted parts on page 3 of Annex 5). To further strengthen curriculum coherence and improve elective sustainability, the course *Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation (BIO336)* which was previously offered as an elective, has been upgraded to a compulsory course within the General Biology concentration (please see page 5 of Annex 5). Similarly, to strengthen the clinical laboratory sciences dimension and disciplinary focus of the General Microbiology concentration, the course *Clinical Immunology and Haematology (BIO406)* has been introduced as a compulsory course (please see page 15 of Annex 5). Following the reviewers' suggestions, the programme has also introduced	

	a new interdisciplinary elective entitled *Introduction to One Health (BIO376)*, available to students in both concentrations (page 20 of Annex 5). The course focuses on the interconnectedness of human, animal, plant, and environmental health, while addressing global challenges related to biodiversity, emerging diseases, environmental sustainability, and public health. As a result of these curricular enhancements and revisions, the elective structure was streamlined by reducing the number of elective courses required for degree completion from five to four, thereby improving the sustainability and viability of elective provision. Consequently, the elective credit requirement was reduced from 30 to 24 ECTS (Annex 3). This streamlining has enabled the programme to ensure the consistent availability of a core set of electives across both concentrations, namely *Biotechnology (BIO372)*, *Climate Change and Environmental Pollution (BIO360), Teaching Biology (BIO374), Nutrition and Regulation of Cellular Functions (LFS255)* and *Introduction to One Health (BIO376)* (for full syllabi please check Annex 5). The two additional electives are courses already offered as compulsory components within the two concentrations and will therefore continue to be delivered regularly. These include the course *General Ecology (BIO328)*	

	from the General Biology concentration available to General Microbiology students and the course *Microbial Biodiversity and Ecology (BIO424)* from the General Microbiology concentration available to General Biology students. We believe that these revisions, together with the consolidation and strategic alignment of elective offerings, will substantially improve the reliability, sustainability, and practical accessibility of electives, ensuring that advertised course options are consistently available to students in practice.	
Support student participation in placements and internships • Financial constraints can limit student participation in external placements or internships. Many students work alongside their studies, increasing the burden. Consider targeted support measures (e.g. transport subsidies or stipends) to improve accessibility and equity.	We thank the reviewers for this valuable suggestion. The programme acknowledges that financial constraints may limit student participation in external placements and internships, particularly for students who work alongside their studies. In response, in collaboration with the School and the University, the programme will introduce targeted support measures aimed at improving accessibility and equity in student participation. As the budget for the upcoming academic year cannot be revised at this stage, any commitments related to additional financial support will be aligned with future budget planning cycles. In this regard, the programme has secured a letter of commitment from the current Dean of the School of Sciences (Annex 8). According to	Choose level of compliance:

	this, such measures are expected to include modest transport subsidies, placement-related financial assistance, or other forms of practical support for students undertaking external placements and professional activities. The programme recognises the importance of ensuring that experiential learning opportunities remain accessible to all students, irrespective of financial circumstances, and will continue to consider mechanisms that support broader student participation in professional and research-based experiences.	
Increase funding for laboratory-based theses • Current budget allocation for lab-based theses (~€8,000 total; ~€1,000 per project) is insufficient. Increasing this funding (at least doubling it) would improve the quality and feasibility of experimental projects and enhance student learning outcomes.	We thank the reviewers for this important recommendation. We fully acknowledge the value of adequately supporting laboratory-based Bachelor's thesis projects in order to enhance the quality, feasibility and educational value of experimental research, as well as overall student learning outcomes. In response to this recommendation, the programme secured a letter of commitment from the current Dean of the School of Sciences, indicating that in future budget planning cycles the School will explore opportunities to enhance budget allocation for undergraduate experimental projects, with the aim of further supporting high-quality research training.	Choose level of compliance:

	Particular consideration will be given to the resource requirements of experimental projects in microbiology and other laboratory-intensive areas, with the objective of strengthening students' research experience and expanding opportunities for high-quality experimental work. The program recognises that sustained investment in undergraduate research constitutes an important component of research-based learning and contributes significantly to the academic development and practical training of students.	

3. Teaching staff
(ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Encourage curriculum innovation and novel content • Microbiology staff should be encouraged to explore emerging topics such as microbiome studies, immunology, and bioinformatics to complement the traditional structure. • Opportunities exist to strengthen statistical and computational training (e.g., PCA, linear mixed models), particularly in connection with the new bioinformatician role.	We thank the reviewers for these constructive suggestions regarding curriculum innovation and the incorporation of emerging topics into our programme. In response, the syllabi of several microbiology-related courses have been revised to incorporate components of microbiome studies, immunology, and bioinformatics, thereby complementing the programme's traditional structure and aligning it with current developments in the biological sciences.	Choose level of compliance:

	Specifically, the course *General Microbiology (BIO206)* has been updated to include modules on human microbiome science, immunology, and host–pathogen interactions (please see green-highlighted parts on pages 23-24 of Annex 5). In parallel, the course *Microbial Biodiversity and Ecology (BIO424)* has been expanded to include interactions among microorganisms, other organisms, and humans, as well as an introduction to fundamental bioinformatics approaches used in microbial ecology and biodiversity research (please see green-highlighted parts on pages 25-27 of Annex 5). Furthermore, the course *Microbial Genetics (BIO346)* has been revised to provide a theoretical overview of bioinformatics applications in microbial genomics and genetic analysis (please see green-highlighted parts on pages 28 and 30 of Annex 5). Minor modifications have also been introduced to the courses *Food Microbiology (BIO362)*, *Mycology (BIO348)*, and *Virology (BIO344)* as part of ongoing efforts to maintain alignment with contemporary developments in the biological sciences. The revised syllabi are included in pages 46-53 of Annex 5 with all adjustments highlighted in green. In addition, in line with the reviewers' recommendations to strengthen statistical and computational training, the	

	course *Biostatistics (HEA102)* has been updated to include topics such as linear and logistic regression (please see green-highlighted parts on pages 31-33 of Annex 5). These additions will further support the integration of quantitative and bioinformatic approaches within the programme, further strengthened by the planned appointment of a bioinformatician. Through these curriculum enhancements, the program aims to strengthen students' exposure to contemporary methodologies and emerging interdisciplinary areas that are increasingly important in modern biological and biomedical sciences.	
Expand coverage of ecology, environmental, and "One Health" themes • Limited coverage of ecology, marine biology, and field-based experiences, despite programme location advantages. Integrate UN health-environment linkages more prominently, potentially through a "One Health" cross-cutting theme. This could make less popular ecology electives more attractive. Supports programme claims of embedding UN Sustainable Development Goals and could serve as a unique selling point.	We thank the reviewers for this valuable comment. While "One Health" concepts had not previously been developed as a distinct thematic component within the programme, we fully recognize the importance of strengthening the integration of ecology, environmental health, and interdisciplinary health-environment linkages within the curriculum. In response to this recommendation, we have introduced a new interdisciplinary elective course entitled *Introduction to One Health (BIO376)*, which will be available to students in both	Choose level of compliance:

	concentrations. The course will emphasize the interconnectedness of human, animal, plant, and environmental health, while addressing global challenges linked to biodiversity, emerging diseases, environmental sustainability, and public health (pages 20-22, Annex 5). The programme also recognises the importance of expanding student exposure to ecology, marine biology, and field-based learning opportunities, particularly given the geographical and environmental advantages offered by Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean region. In this context, the programme will continue to support and further develop environmentally focused and field-based educational activities, including opportunities linked to environmental monitoring, biodiversity, and applied ecological studies. The introduction of the *Introduction to One Health* course, together with the strengthening of environmental and interdisciplinary components across the curriculum, reflects the programme's commitment to embedding the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the curriculum. We expect the inclusion of such a course to increase student interest in ecology- and environment-related topics.	

Strengthen ethics education • Bioethics is currently optional; consider making it compulsory. Explore integrating ethical considerations into existing modules to provide a more coherent approach across the curriculum.	The programme fully recognises the importance of strengthening ethics education; accordingly, the programme syllabi have been revised, and the course *Bioethics in Biological Sciences (BIO435)* has been made compulsory (page 18-19, Annex 5). The ethical dimension is already embedded in a number of courses, including *Academic Skills for Health and Life Sciences (HLS100)*, *Research Methodology (HEA132), Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation (BIO336), Biotechnology (BIO372)*, *Marine Biology (BIO415),* and *Undergraduate Thesis I & II (BIO490 & BIO495)*. These courses address themes such as research integrity, responsible conduct of research, environmental responsibility, and ethical challenges associated with modern biomedical science and emerging technologies. Building on this foundation, and following a review of the curriculum as a whole, the programme has identified additional courses in which ethical perspectives can be more explicitly integrated: • *Introduction to Genetics (BIO208):* has been extended to include a discussion of ethical issues related to genetic screening, data privacy, personal genomics, and the societal implications of emerging gene-editing technologies (please see green-highlighted parts in pages 35 and 37 of Annex 5). • *Epidemiology (HEA124)*: has been enhanced to address	Choose level of compliance:

	topics in public health ethics, including informed consent, data confidentiality, responsible management and reporting of epidemiological data (please see green-highlighted parts in pages 39 and 40 of Annex 5). • *Environmental Microbiology and Physiology of Microorganisms (BIO482)*: has been improved to include environmental ethics, with particular emphasis on biosafety, environmental responsibility, the ethical implications of microbial applications, and the responsible use of microorganisms in bioremediation and wastewater treatment (please see green-highlighted parts in pages 42-44 of Annex 5). These additions have been selected to ensure that ethical engagement is introduced early (*Introduction to Genetics [BIO208]*), reinforced in applied and societal contexts (*Epidemiology [HEA124]*), and extended to environmental and technological applications (*Environmental Microbiology and Physiology of Microorganisms [BIO482]*). This approach promotes the development of ethical awareness, critical reflection, and responsible scientific practice across the curriculum.	
Improve thesis opportunities for microbiology students	Thank you for this valuable observation and for the	Choose level of compliance:

• Current thesis offerings are largely literature-based rather than laboratory research. Expand lab-based research thesis options to increase hands-on experience and practical training.	opportunity to further evaluate the research training opportunities available within the General Microbiology concentration. We acknowledge that, in recent years, a proportion of thesis projects undertaken by students within the concentration have not been directly related to microbiology or laboratory-based experimental research. In response, the Undergraduate Thesis Writing Guide has been revised to emphasise that thesis topics should align, as closely as possible, with each student's chosen programme concentration and intended area of specialization (please see green-highlighted part in page 5 of Annex 7). In addition, the programme will ensure that a sufficient number of microbiology-focused, laboratory-based thesis projects are made available to students within the General Microbiology concentration, in subsequent academic years. These measures aim to strengthen hands-on laboratory experience, enhance discipline-specific practical training, and further support research-based learning within the microbiology pathway of the programme.	
Elective course availability • Many elective courses do not run due to insufficient student numbers. Consider strategies to increase elective uptake, such as: rotating	We thank the reviewers for this important observation. Following this recommendation, the list and structure of elective courses within the programme have been carefully reviewed and revised in	Choose level of compliance:

offerings, bundling elective topics, integrating popular cross-cutting themes (e.g., One Health, sustainability).	order to improve course viability, strengthen curriculum coherence, and increase elective uptake. As part of this revision process, the course *Pharmacology* has been removed from the elective offerings, as experience has shown that the course, although valuable within the Pharmacy programme where it is currently delivered, it presents challenges for Biological Sciences students in terms of background preparation and alignment with programme needs. Similarly, the courses *Cancer Biology, Pathobiology and Precision Medicine*, and *Systems Biomedicine* from the Biomedical Sciences programme, have been removed from the list of electives, because they required background that students enrolled in the Biological Sciences programme were generally unable to satisfy. The previously elective course *Bioethics in Biological Sciences (BIO435)* has been incorporated as a compulsory component of the curriculum in both programme concentrations, ensuring that all graduates receive formal training in the ethical dimensions of contemporary biological research and professional practice. In addition, the course *Environmental Education* will no longer be offered as an elective due to consistently low student enrolment. Relevant components of this course have instead been	

	incorporated into the course *Teaching Biology (BIO374)*, including the teaching of selected topics and concepts related to biodiversity, recycling, sustainable development, and environmental issues (please see green-highlighted parts on page 3 of Annex 5). This consolidation was undertaken to enhance curriculum efficiency and sustainability, while also strengthening academic coherence through the integration of complementary pedagogical and environmental education perspectives within a single interdisciplinary course. Furthermore, the courses *Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation (BIO336)* has been converted into a compulsory course within the General Biology concentration (page 5 on Annex 5). These changes strengthen the core curriculum while simultaneously reducing the total number of elective courses required for completion of the degree from five to four, thereby improving the sustainability and viability of elective delivery. Following the reviewers' recommendation to strengthen cross-cutting and interdisciplinary themes, the programme has also introduced a new elective entitled *Introduction to One Health (BIO376)*, available to students in both concentrations page 20 of Annex 5). This course integrates concepts related to human,	

	animal, plant, and environmental health, while addressing issues linked to sustainability, biodiversity, emerging diseases, and public health. The full list of electives can be found in page 4 of Annex 4. The program will continue to monitor elective enrolment patterns and, where appropriate, consider additional measures such as the strategic rotation of selected low-enrolment electives in order to ensure reliable course availability and effective resource utilisation. We believe that these revisions, together with the consolidation, alignment and thematic integration of elective offerings, will substantially improve accessibility, sustainability and attractiveness of electives, while ensuring that advertised course options remain available to students in practise.	

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

(ESG 1.4)

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Increase student intake • Current intake (~20 students) is below the demonstrated interest (>40 applicants expressing interest). Consider strategies to expand cohort size by marketing and higher competitiveness to other universities while ensuring programme sustainability and resource capacity.	We thank the reviewers for this observation. We would like to clarify that the current cohort size primarily reflects the present level of applicant demand, which in recent years has been in the range of approximately 15–20 applicants annually. Therefore, the current cohort size is aligned with demand rather than limitations in program admission capacity. Nevertheless, the programme fully recognizes the importance of increasing its visibility, attractiveness and competitiveness in order to strengthen student recruitment and support long-term sustainability. In collaboration with the University's Marketing and Admissions Departments, targeted actions are being implemented, including enhanced digital promotion, clearer communication of the programme's academic strengths and career prospects, and increased outreach to secondary education institutions. For a full list of the University's promotional and outreach activities please see Annex 1. Particular emphasis will be placed on highlighting the programme's modern laboratory facilities, interdisciplinary curriculum structure, research	Choose level of compliance:

	environment, and the distinctive opportunities offered through its two concentration pathways. These initiatives aim to gradually expand the applicant pool while ensuring sustainable programme growth and maintaining high academic standards and student support.	

5. Learning resources and student support

(ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Enhance extracurricular activities and student engagement • The university could consider assisting in promoting student activities and clubs e.g. by advertising and newsletter announcements. • Consider reinvigorating student clubs and events post-COVID to enhance student life and community building.	We thank the reviewers for raising this important point and for the opportunity to elaborate on current practices and future plans. The programme has consistently encouraged and supported student participation in extracurricular, outreach, and community-building activities, including active involvement in the European Researchers' Night since 2018. It has also been a strong supporter of student-led initiatives, such as the establishment and continuation of the Biological Sciences Newsletter. Each new issue of the Newsletter is promoted through the University's official social media channels and disseminated via email to all Biological Sciences students. To further strengthen student engagement, current student editors have been encouraged to visit classes and promote broader participation and contributions. In addition, on 11 May 2026, the University's Biology Club and Biomedical Science Society jointly organized an all-day interactive pop-up event open to all programme students. The event aimed to introduce participants to the microscopic world through hands-on	Choose level of compliance:

	activities involving microscopes and stereoscopes. The initiative was supported by the programme as well as the Office of Student Affairs and reflects the type of collaborative, student-centred activities we aim to foster. Building on such efforts, the programme is committed to further strengthening extracurricular engagement by actively supporting and promoting similar student-led events on a regular basis, with the goal of organizing at least two such activities per academic year. These actions are intended to contribute to a more vibrant student community and enhance overall student experience.	

6. Additional for doctoral programmes

(ALL ESG)

N/A

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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7. Eligibility (Joint programme)

(ALL ESG)

N/A

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Overall, the BSc programme in Biological Science at the European University of Cyprus demonstrates strong academic design, high student engagement, and clear alignment with international standards and societal priorities. The programme benefits from motivated students, supportive and skilled teaching staff, modern facilities, robust governance, and well-established quality assurance processes. Graduates are highly employable and well-prepared for further study or professional careers, while research integration, mobility opportunities, and stakeholder engagement further enrich the learning experience. Addressing the identified areas for improvement, such as expanding cohort size, enhancing research-based learning, broadening thematic coverage, and strengthening extracurricular support, will further enhance the programme's sustainability, international profile, and distinctiveness. Overall, the programme corresponds excellently with the EQF, is well-positioned to continue delivering high-quality education and to grow as a centre of excellence in Biological Sciences.	We would like to sincerely thank the reviewers for their highly positive evaluation of the program and for their constructive and insightful recommendations. We greatly appreciate the recognition of the programme's academic quality, student-centred approach, research integration, and alignment with international standards and societal priorities. The recommendations provided by the reviewers have offered valuable opportunities for reflection, development, and continuous improvement. We are confident that the adjustments and enhancements proposed in response to the identified areas for improvement will further strengthen the program's sustainability, international profile, and distinctiveness, and overall student experience. We also remain dedicated to advancing the program's long-term goal of developing into a centre of excellence in Biological Sciences. We would once again like to express our sincere appreciation to the reviewers for their time, expertise, and thoughtful feedback throughout the evaluation process.	Choose level of compliance:

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

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