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External Evaluation Report (Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

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

In Greek:
Βιολογικές Επιστήμες (4 έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο)"
- **In English:**
"Biological Sciences (4 Years, 240 ECTS, BSc"
- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek and English
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**
In Greek: 1) Γενική Βιολογία, 2) Γενική
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. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The onsite visit was carried out in accordance with the planned programme. All evaluators, as well as BSc programme representatives, were present throughout the visit. The evaluators wish to highlight the thorough preparation and engagement of all parties involved, as well as the excellent support provided by the agency representative, professorial and teaching staff, and students. This facilitated an open, constructive, and productive exchange of views and ideas. The evaluators particularly appreciated the structure and format of the evaluation programme, which supported a comprehensive assessment of the BSc programme.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Prof Markus Morrison	Director, Inst. Cell Biology & Immunology	University of Stuttgart
Prof Luc Leyns	Head of Department, Dept. of Biology	Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Prof James Dooley	Chair in Microbiology	Ulster University
Mr Pavlos Petrou	Student Member	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University
Name	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:*
 - *is a part of the strategic management of the program.*
 - *focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study program.*
 - *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*
 - *is developed with input from industry leaders and other stakeholders (i.e. industry leaders, professional bodies/associations, social partners, NGO's, governmental agencies) to align with professional standards.*
 - *integrates employer surveys to adapt to evolving workplace demands.*
 - *regularly utilizes alumni feedback for long-term effectiveness assessment.*
 - *is published and implemented by all 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*

- *Aligns course learning outcomes with student assessments using rubrics to ensure objectives are met.*
- *Connects each course's aims and objectives with the programme's overall aims and objectives through mapping, aligning with the institutional strategy.*
- *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*
 - *collaborates with industry experts for curriculum development.*
 - *conducts joint reviews with external academic specialists to maintain academic rigor.*
 - *performs periodic assessments with external stakeholders to ensure continuous alignment with market needs.*
 - *establishes collaboration with international educational institutions or/& other relevant international bodies for a global perspective.*
 - *conducts regular feedback sessions with local community leaders for societal relevance.*

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*

In addition, the program has established mechanisms of transparency & communication to ensure that

- Professional bodies validate program descriptions and outcomes.
- Community leaders actively participate in ensuring that the program's public information is relevant and resonates with the local and societal context.
- External auditors review public information for accuracy & consistency vis-à-vis the actual implementation of the program.
- Industry-specific & societal information is regularly updated with expert inputs.
- Alumni testimonials are included for a realistic portrayal of program outcomes.

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed using specific indicators and data i.e:*
 - *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*
 - *industry trend analysis.*
 - *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*
 - *data exchanges with professional networks*
 - *employer insights concerning career readiness*
- *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?
- How and to what extent are external stakeholders involved in the quality assurance process of the program?
- How is external stakeholder feedback gathered, analyzed and implemented,?
- In what ways do external stakeholders assist in making program information publicly available?
- How do external stakeholders contribute to evaluating graduate success in the labor market and obtaining feedback on employment 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 BSc in Biological Science at the European University of Cyprus is a well-structured and attractive programme. Students are motivated, with clear reasons for choosing the university, and there is a strong ambition to increase international participation (target up to 40%). Learning outcomes are clearly defined and appropriate for the BSc level, with specialisation after Year 2 timed effectively. The curriculum has external validation, and departmental governance is supported by dedicated committees for programme, quality, and health & safety management.

Graduate employability is high, with ~90% securing relevant employment within six months, and stakeholders report satisfaction with students' skills. Active engagement with external stakeholders, research networks, and alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals strengthen the programme's societal relevance. Student representatives are integrated into governance, and staff incentives and development initiatives, including strategic hiring, support both teaching and research.

Areas for improvement include increasing cohort size to enhance sustainability and course viability, potentially broadening curriculum coverage in ecology, conservation biology, sustainability, and clinical laboratory sciences. Publication output in the form of original research could strongly enhance the reputation of the school. Expanding external engagement, improving marketing and recruitment, allowing thesis submission in English, and making bioethics compulsory are also recommendations.

Overall, the programme demonstrates strong academic design, employability outcomes, and alignment with international standards (EQF). Addressing these areas for improvement would strengthen its sustainability, research integration, and international profile.

Strengths

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

Strong student motivation and programme attractiveness

- Students demonstrate clear and well-founded reasons for choosing the university.
- Ambition to increase international student participation (target up to 40%).

Clear academic structure and curriculum design

- Intended learning outcomes are clearly defined and appropriate for a BSc level.
- Specialisation (concentration) after Year 2 is well-timed.
- Curriculum has external validation (CYQAA; American Society for Microbiology)
- Clear structure and organisation at departmental level, supported by dedicated committees (e.g. programme, quality, health & safety).

Defined career pathways and employability outcomes

- Clear vision for graduate career paths (approx. 50% employment, 50% further studies).
- High employability: ~90% of graduates find relevant employment within 6 months.
- Strong reputation of graduates among employers.

Strong stakeholder engagement and relevance to labour market

- Active involvement of stakeholders in programme development and feedback processes.
- Stakeholders contribute placements and support alignment with real-world requirements.
- External stakeholders express high satisfaction with students' fundamental knowledge and skills.

Integration of research, innovation, and societal goals

- Research and innovation are central to the university's mission and programme vision.
- Alignment with European priorities and UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Active engagement in international networks (e.g. SUNRISE) and EU initiatives (e.g. Horizon Europe committees).
- Institutional recognition through HR Excellence in Research certification and Gender Equality Plan.

Supportive governance, quality assurance, and procedures

- Well-established processes and procedures across the programme.
- Robust quality assurance, including programme reviews, student evaluations, and external advisory board input.
- Clear quality control measures, including policies on plagiarism and AI usage.
- Programme coordinators actively ensure alignment and assessment quality.
- Transparent budgeting and resource distribution.

Student involvement and academic community

- Strong integration of student representatives in programme and university bodies.
- Active student engagement through extracurricular activities and outreach (e.g. European Researchers' Night).

Teaching–research balance and staff development

- Incentive systems to balance teaching and research (e.g. teaching load reductions linked to research activity).
- Structured staff evaluation and promotion framework with performance-based incentives.
- Strategic hiring plans (e.g. immunologist, bioinformatician) to broaden academic expertise.

Strategic development and growth vision

- Clear vision to expand in health and life sciences.
- Plans to extend programme offerings internationally (e.g. campuses abroad).
- Internal grant schemes under development to support future research growth.
- Awareness of emerging challenges (e.g. AI) and proactive institutional response.

Programme performance indicators

- Low failure rate (~20%), indicating good student progression.

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.

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.

Address curriculum structure and coherence

- Review potential fragmentation of the curriculum, particularly in light of low student numbers spread across many courses.
- Ensure efficient course design and consolidation where appropriate.

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, 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.

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.

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.

Improve programme visibility and attractiveness

- Develop and implement more targeted marketing and recruitment strategies to increase student intake and competitiveness.

Enhance flexibility in programme delivery

- Allow students the option to write their Bachelor's thesis in English, subject to supervisor agreement.

Strengthen ethical and interdisciplinary components

- Consider making bioethics a mandatory component of the curriculum.

Mitigate external risks

- Acknowledge and prepare for potential impacts of regional geopolitical conflicts on student recruitment, mobility, and admissions.

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

Sub-areas

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

2.2 Practical training

2.3 Student assessment

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

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*
- *Detailed schedules in course materials are included, explicitly stating the expected hours for lectures, self-study, and group projects, ensuring transparency in time allocation.*
- *A system is integrated where each learning activity is assigned a weight proportional to its importance and time requirement, aiding in balanced curriculum design.*

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.*

- *The expected hours for different components of practical training, such as lab work, fieldwork, and internships are clearly documented in the training manuals*
- *A weighting system is applied to various practical training elements, reflecting their significance in the overall learning outcomes and student workload.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*
 - *The time allocation for each assessment task is explicitly stated in course outlines, ensuring students are aware of the expected workload.*
 - *A balanced assessment weighting strategy is implemented, considering the complexity and learning objectives of each task, to ensure fair evaluation of student performance.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*

- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

Findings

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

The programme provides an attractive and supportive learning environment. Modern teaching and laboratory facilities offer hands-on, laboratory-based experiences, while theoretical knowledge is reinforced with parallel coursework. Students report that their feedback is valued and leads to tangible improvements, with clear assessment criteria (aligned with the EQF), transparent marking schemes, and formal mechanisms for complaints. Joint classes foster a strong sense of community, and student representatives are actively engaged in shaping the learning experience.

The programme demonstrates a clear motivation to link research and teaching, with BSc students acknowledged in scientific publications, and mobility opportunities such as Erasmus+ are actively encouraged. Technical and teaching staff support ensures continuity and quality in practical instruction, and English-language competencies are generally strong.

Areas for improvement include reviewing course delivery formats and minimum enrolment requirements, as some low-enrolment courses are currently delivered ineffectively as tutorials. Research-based thesis opportunities are limited and concentrated in cancer research, with insufficient or no options in microbiology, ecology or marine biology. Expanding research thesis opportunities, including group projects, and allowing thesis submission in English would enhance accessibility and internationalisation. Elective courses with themes in biodiversity, ecology, and environmental biology are often unavailable due to low enrolment; more reliable planning and scheduling is recommended. Finally, financial support for students undertaking placements and for lab-based theses should be increased to meet the needs for high-quality learning and training experiences.

Overall, the programme demonstrates effective student-centred teaching and assessment practices, with clear opportunities to enhance research integration, flexibility, and student engagement.

Strengths

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

Attractive learning environment and programme features

- Modern teaching and laboratory facilities enhance the learning experience and attract students.
- The concentration in microbiology is a strength and valued by students.
- Laboratory-based learning experiences are highly appreciated and form a core component of the programme.
- Students have access to hands-on practice and laboratory experiences from the start of the programme.
- Practical experiences are integrated into the curriculum, reinforcing theoretical learning.

Effective student feedback and continuous improvement

- Teaching evaluation processes are well established and function effectively.
- Students report that their feedback is taken seriously and leads to tangible curriculum improvements.
- The Programme Coordinator systematically reviews evaluation results and ensures appropriate follow-up actions.

Supportive and transparent assessment framework

- Clear and transparent marking schemes are in place, with well-defined assessment criteria.
- Assessment processes include monitoring and quality checks.
- Students have formal mechanisms to raise complaints or request review of grading.
- The overall learning environment is perceived as supportive and encouraging.

Student engagement and sense of community

- Joint classes contribute to a strong sense of community among students.
- Students are actively involved in shaping their learning experience through feedback mechanisms.

Language competencies and international orientation

- Students generally demonstrate good English proficiency.
- There is openness towards offering the programme also in English.

Integration of research and teaching

- There is clear motivation to link research and teaching activities.
- BSc students are included and acknowledged in scientific publications, supporting early research exposure.

Mobility and international opportunities

- Participation in Erasmus+ is encouraged, including opportunities for training abroad.
- The programme offers potential to attract incoming Erasmus students.

Human resources and teaching continuity

- Availability of technical support staff (e.g. laboratory technicians) supports practical teaching.
- Engagement of part-time teaching staff is stable over time, contributing to continuity in teaching quality.

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.

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.

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.

Improve flexibility and accessibility of thesis work

- Allow submission of Bachelor's theses in English, in line with internationalisation goals and student needs.

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.

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.

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.

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	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

- 3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development
- 3.2 Teaching staff number and status
- 3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*

- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*
- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

Findings

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

The teaching staff of the BSc programme demonstrate strong professional engagement, innovative teaching practices, and effective use of student feedback. Faculty actively incorporate AI tools and interactive methods, including quizzes and laboratory exercises, while maintaining strong links between contact teaching and practical work. Feedback mechanisms are well-established, anonymous, and acted upon promptly, fostering a supportive and motivating learning environment.

Staff provide targeted support to students from diverse backgrounds, particularly in the first semester, and the small cohort sizes currently allow close attention to individual learning needs. Professional development is well supported through mandatory workshops, SUNRISE alliance initiatives, lecturer training, and incentives such as Teaching Hour Reduction to balance research and teaching duties. Students report strong relationships with instructors, contributing to a positive and encouraging academic environment. Cross-programme experience, including expertise from pharmacy and biomedical programmes, further strengthens teaching quality, including delivery in both Greek and English.

Areas for improvement include encouraging staff to incorporate emerging content in microbiology (e.g., microbiome, immunology, coupled with bioinformatics) and strengthening statistical and computational training. Coverage of ecology, marine biology, and One Health themes could be expanded, with integration of UN health-environment linkages and sustainability topics to enhance curricular relevance and student engagement. Bioethics education should be made compulsory, with ethical considerations embedded across the curriculum. Thesis offerings for microbiology students are currently literature-based; expanding laboratory-based opportunities is essential. Finally, elective course availability should be improved through rotation, bundling, or integration of popular cross-cutting themes to ensure students have access to advertised options.

Overall, teaching staff are highly engaged and skilled, with clear opportunities to further enrich the curriculum through novel content, expanded research experiences, and adjusted thematic coverage.

Strengths

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

Innovative teaching practices

- Faculty actively explore and implement AI tools in teaching methods, including exercises where AI-generated outputs are analyzed and deconstructed.
- Various teaching and assessment methods are used, including interactive components such as quizzes and hands-on laboratory exercises.
- Strong interlinking of contact teaching and laboratory experiences enhances student learning.

Effective use of student feedback

- Established feedback mechanisms allow students to evaluate both courses and teaching staff.

- Feedback is taken seriously, acted upon quickly, and can influence contract renewal decisions.
- Feedback processes are anonymous and foster an encouraging, supportive learning environment.

Support for diverse student backgrounds

- First-semester students from different educational backgrounds receive sufficient guidance and resources.
- Smaller cohort sizes allow staff to pay close attention to students needing additional support.

Professional development and faculty motivation

- Mandatory workshops and seminars for faculty development are well established.
- The creation of a staff academy within the SUNRISE alliance further enhances teaching quality, research support, and interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Teaching Hour Reduction point system incentivises faculty to engage in research while balancing teaching and administrative duties.
- Lecturer training options and opportunities for professional growth are widely available.

Strong faculty–student relationships

- Students report very good relationships with instructors.
- The learning environment is supportive, encouraging, and fosters engagement.

Experience and cross-programme learning

- Staff bring experience from related programmes (e.g., pharmacy, biomedical), supporting teaching in both Greek and English.
- Active communication among staff regarding AI-related challenges ensures consistent and quality-controlled integration in assessments.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Improve thesis opportunities for microbiology students

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.

Elective course availability

Many elective courses do not run due to insufficient student numbers. Consider strategies to increase elective uptake, such as: rotating offerings, bundling elective topics, integrating popular cross-cutting themes (e.g., One Health, sustainability).

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 programme demonstrates a structured and transparent admission process. Clear, bilingual and systematic enrolment procedures ensure fairness, and each student is assigned a staff mentor to provide guidance from the outset. Preparatory courses in Year 1 and continuous monitoring of student performance through assessments, advisor support, and departmental oversight effectively support student progression. High pass rates and low failure rates indicate strong academic achievement.

Student engagement is promoted through active representation in decision-making bodies and strong communication with faculty. Mobility and internationalisation are well supported, with Erasmus placements fully recognised and collaborations through the SUNRISE University Alliance providing further opportunities for internships and postgraduate pathways. The provision of full academic schedules at the start of each semester, combined with tailored guidance, fosters effective preparation and reduces stress.

The main area for improvement is increasing student intake. Current enrolment (~20 students) is below the demonstrated interest (>40 applicants), and expanding cohort size through targeted marketing and competitive positioning against other universities would enhance programme sustainability, course viability, and overall student experience.

Strengths

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

Structured and transparent admission process

- Clear and well-defined admission criteria ensure fairness and transparency for all applicants.
- Admission and enrolment processes are bilingual and systematically organised.
- Each student is linked to a staff mentor, providing guidance from the start of the programme.

Effective student support and monitoring

- Preparatory courses in Year 1 help compensate for pre-existing gaps in knowledge or skills.
- Continuous monitoring of student performance is implemented through data collection, assessment evaluation, and regular communication with instructors and personal academic advisors.
- The Department and School can act promptly on issues related to student progress, supported by teaching staff and advisors.

High student progression and achievement

- Programme reports a high pass rate and low failure rates.
- Methods for monitoring progression are well-established and effective.

Engagement and representation

- Student representatives actively participate in decision-making bodies and contribute meaningful feedback for programme evaluation.
- Strong communication and teamwork between students and faculty are evident, fostering a supportive learning environment.

Internationalisation and mobility opportunities

- Erasmus placements are actively supported, with full academic recognition ensured through Learning Agreements.
- The programme has established collaborations with other universities and research institutions, including membership in the SUNRISE University Alliance, facilitating student placements, internships, and future postgraduate opportunities.

Clear academic scheduling and guidance

- The full academic schedule, including exam dates, is provided at the start of each semester, reducing stress and supporting effective preparation.
- Tailored support and guidance are provided to each student throughout the programme.

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.

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.

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	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

5.2 Physical resources

5.3 Human support resources

5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

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

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

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

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

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

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

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*
- *Students receive support in research-led teaching through engagement in research projects, mentorship from research-active faculty, and access to resources that enhance their research skills and critical engagement with current studies.*

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

The BSc programme provides strong learning resources and comprehensive student support. The joint university library offers broad access to physical and digital collections, including Open Access materials, textbooks, databases, and e-books, complemented by extended opening hours and additional study spaces. IT and laboratory facilities are modern, well-maintained, and designed to support small-group learning, practical exercises, and research activities.

Each student is assigned a personal advisor, and administrative support, including accommodation arrangements, is attentive and effective. Policies and guidance on AI use help ensure responsible and effective learning. Career support is well-established, with alumni networks, placement guidance, and high-quality practical experiences in the 4th year, often leading to job offers. Opportunities to focus on General Biology or Microbiology in Years 3–4 enhance engagement, knowledge depth, and employability. Financial aid, Erasmus mobility, and support for students with special needs contribute to an inclusive and equitable learning environment. Student feedback is actively considered, and numerous university events foster communication, collaboration, and community building.

Areas for improvement include enhancing support for extracurricular activities. The university could assist by promoting clubs and student initiatives also through access to their advertising and newsletters channels to further promote events and activities. Reinvigorating student clubs and activities post-COVID would strengthen community engagement and student life.

Strengths

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

Library and learning resources

- Joint library with other Cyprus universities providing broad access to physical and digital collections, including Open Access, textbooks, databases, and e-books.
- Excellent library facilities and opening hours (9 PM; additional learning spaces open until midnight).
- Webinars and seminars are organized for both students and faculty to enhance learning and research skills.

IT and technical support

- Strong IT support with extended hours and comprehensive software capabilities.
- Excellent teaching laboratories designed for small classes, enhancing practical learning experiences.
- Laboratories and equipment are well-maintained and support both teaching and research.

Student guidance and advisory

- Each student is assigned a personal advisor at the start of the programme to support academic organisation and administration.
- Administrative support is sufficient and attentive to student needs, including accommodation arrangements before semester start.

- Established policies and guidance for AI use support responsible and effective learning.

Career support and employability

- Career services are well-developed, including alumni networks, and guidance for placements.
- Practical placements in the 4th year are of high quality; students report positive experiences, and many receive job offers after placement.
- The programme structure (options to focus on General Biology or Microbiology in Years 3–4) enhances student engagement and career preparation.
- External stakeholders note that graduates possess strong fundamentals in professional settings.

Student engagement and wellbeing

- Financial aid and scholarship opportunities are available.
- Student mobility is supported through Erasmus programmes.
- Support is provided to students with special needs, aligned with national law and international practices.
- Numerous university events foster communication, collaboration, and a sense of community among students.
- Feedback from students is actively considered and often leads to concrete changes in programmes and services.
- Student clubs receive funding and can contact advisors

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.

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.

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

6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

6.3 Supervision and committees

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards

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

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

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

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

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

- reports per semester and feedback from supervisors
- support for writing research papers
- participation in conferences
- The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.

You may also consider the following questions:

- How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?
- Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?
- Are the criteria reflected in dissertation samples?

Findings

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Compliant
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Compliant
6.3	Supervision and committees	Compliant

D. Conclusions and final remarks

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

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.



E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Prof Markus Morrison	
Prof Luc Leyns	
Prof James Dooley	
Ms Pavlos Petrou	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 24.03.2026