

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

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

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

In Greek:

Φυσικοθεραπεία και Αποκατάσταση (18 Μήνες / 90 ECTS, Μάστερ (MSc))

In English:

Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation (18 Months / 90 ECTS, Master's degree (MSc))

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek / English
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating



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

Summary of compliance across standards

The heads of the University departments have identified several key drivers that are crucial for institutional development and long-term sustainability. Among these, digital transformation, international collaboration, and research excellence stand out as central pillars. Leaders emphasize the importance of investing in innovative teaching methods, such as blended and online learning, to enhance accessibility and student engagement also across different countries. Strengthening ties with industry is also viewed as a strategic priority, enabling the University to align academic programs with labor market needs. Additionally, policy support for academic mobility and cross-border partnerships is considered vital for fostering a more integrated and competitive European Higher Education Area. Lastly, sustainable funding models and a strong focus on inclusivity and social impact are increasingly recognized as essential to ensuring that the University serve both local and global communities effectively.

The institution demonstrates a strong and coherent framework for quality assurance, with the majority of standards rated as *compliant*. Policies and procedures are well-established, particularly in the areas of curriculum design and approval, public information, teaching methodologies, academic staffing, but not when it entails resources for research support and infrastructure maintenance.

In Area 1 (Quality Assurance Policy and Processes), the policies are comprehensive and consistently applied, ensuring a clear framework for curriculum design, approval, and monitoring. Public information is complete and accessible, however, they are not always clearly written down in the course descriptions for the students and therefore they should be explicitly integrated. The current curriculum places, however, a strong emphasis on physical rehabilitation but offers only limited coverage of the psychosocial dimensions. This gap is increasingly significant in the context of rapidly changing societal and health system demands. Populations are ageing, and the prevalence of non-communicable diseases and multimorbidity is rising sharply. These conditions often present with complex biopsychosocial profiles, including persistent pain, mental health comorbidities, and psychosocial barriers to recovery and participation. As such, future practitioners will be expected to work not only as technical experts but also as adaptable, resilient clinicians who can support the mental health and psychosocial needs of diverse patient groups. They will need strong skills in communication, and the application of psychosocial and behavioural science in evidence-based clinical decision-making. These actual and future challenges should also be reflected in the research methodologies. Therefore, the actual description of the research modules should account for future development and research designs and accompanying statistical approaches.

In Area 2 (Teaching and Learning), based on the presentations during the onsite visit, the institution demonstrated clear strengths. Teaching and learning are structured, transparent, and student-centred, with course outlines that specify objectives, outcomes, teaching methods, assessment schedules, and grading criteria. The use of varied pedagogical approaches, including lectures, assignments, lab sessions, and formative assessments, promotes active engagement, while immediate feedback should foster reflection and autonomy. However, it became apparent that despite these strengths, students lacked critical thinking skills and remained rather passive service.

consumers, which does not align with the requirements of master's programs as defined by the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). According to the EQF, master's level graduates are expected to demonstrate advanced knowledge and understanding, the ability to critically evaluate and integrate complex information, and a high degree of autonomy and responsibility in their learning, competencies that go beyond passive knowledge consumption. In the interviews with the former students, it became clear this critical thinking attitude seemed not to be well developed. This indicates partial compliance of the teaching and learning process with the standards. Student assessment is compliant, with clear grading policies, multiple assessment formats, and timely feedback mechanisms that align with intended outcomes. Practical training, however, is only *partially compliant*: although integration of theory and practice is evident, there is insufficient integration of critical reflective thinking, evidence-based clinical reasoning, formalized internship guidelines, and systematic collection of student feedback. Perhaps it is possible to find ways to formally assess whether students have adopted a critical thinking attitude. Enhancements such as standardized rubrics for practical training would further strengthen objectivity but do not compromise compliance.

In Area 3 (Staff), except for “teaching staff number and status”, all standards under this area are currently compliant. Recruitment and staff development are guided by transparent policies, multi-level approval processes, and promotion systems that are fully aligned with institutional regulations. The number and qualifications of the teaching staff are appropriate for effective programme delivery; however, their teaching workloads remain considerably high, which may limit the time available for research and scholarly engagement. Although the institution actively promotes a synergy between teaching and research, encouraging academic staff to contribute to both instructional duties and scholarly output, this expectation is currently constrained by the absence of structured research support. There is a clear and pressing need to appoint a dedicated lab research position with strong research and technical competencies to support the team's ongoing projects and to secure lab based teaching of the students. Without such support, there is a risk that the programme's research capacity will remain underdeveloped, which could weaken its academic profile, limit opportunities for external collaboration and funding, and reduce the integration of research-led teaching. Investing in a lab research position would directly enhance the programme's research productivity and visibility, while also creating more meaningful opportunities for students to participate in research activities. This, in turn, would enrich students' learning experiences, foster critical inquiry skills, and ensure that the programme continues to meet evolving academic and accreditation expectations for research-informed teaching.

In Area 4 (Students), most standards are compliant. Admission processes are transparent and consistently applied, with clear criteria. Progression rules are embedded in course outlines and supported by feedback mechanisms. The presence of a centralized monitoring system fosters the institution's ability to identify and support at-risk students systematically. Student recognition processes are transparent and capped, but based on a review of the documents, there is limited alignment with the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which constrains the international comparability of qualifications. Certification is, based on the documents provided, only partially compliant: while certificates reflect learning outcomes, the absence of a standardized diploma supplement prevents full alignment with international best practices. However, current international collaboration have a huge potential for improvement. A more effective approach might be to strengthen a few strategic partnerships with select universities rather than collaborating with numerous international partners. This would enable more sustainable and meaningful exchanges, enhancing opportunities for

students to acquire knowledge and skills through international mobility and deeper academic engagement.

In Area 5 (Resources and Support for Students), all standards are compliant. Teaching and learning resources, physical infrastructure, and human support resources are adequate, modern, and responsive to programme needs. Students benefit from comprehensive academic, counselling, and administrative support, including tailored services for international, part-time, and special-needs students. A holistic welfare system addresses academic, psychological, social, and career development needs, reinforcing the student-centred character of the institution. However, as indicated in Area 3, investing in a lab research position would create more meaningful opportunities for students to participate in research activities. This, in turn, would enrich students' learning experiences, foster critical inquiry skills, and ensure that the programme continues to meet evolving academic and accreditation expectations for research-informed teaching. Although the infrastructure to support students is excellent, more effective information dissemination may be needed to ensure that students are fully aware of, and can benefit from, these resources.

In summary: The institution's overall framework is robust, transparent, and strongly student-centred, demonstrating particularly commendable performance in policy development, quality assurance systems, teaching delivery, staffing, and the provision of learning resources. These strengths reflect a clear institutional commitment to academic excellence, equity, and continuous improvement.

However, the most critical area requiring improvement relates to the provision of structured research support. While current research activities are ongoing, they lack the dedicated capacity needed to achieve greater coherence, continuity, and impact. The absence of a lab research coordinator limits the team's ability to sustain high-quality scholarly output, secure external funding, and systematically integrate research into teaching. Strengthening this component through the appointment of a qualified research coordinator will be vital to enhance the programme's research productivity and visibility, enrich the curriculum with research-informed content, provide students with meaningful opportunities to develop research skills, and reinforce the programme's academic reputation among external stakeholders and employers. This will also help strengthen students' competencies in line with the requirements of the EQF, such as developing their critical thinking skills.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Eling D de Bruin	Professor	ETH Zurich, Switzerland
Bettina Wollesen	Professor	German Sports University, Cologne, Germany
Davy Vancampfort	Professor	KU Leuven, Belgium
Nikolas Miltiadous	Student	University of Cyprus
Stalo Leonidou	Physiotherapist	Professional Association of Sports Physiotherapy

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

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

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

Sub-areas

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

1.3 Public information

1.4 Information management

Findings

The Master's program in Musculoskeletal and Sports Physiotherapy at the Higher Education Institution demonstrates a clear specialization focus and integrates theoretical knowledge with clinical practice. The curriculum is structured across three semesters: the first two semesters include required and specialized courses covering biostatistics, research methodology, musculoskeletal rehabilitation, therapeutic exercise, sports rehabilitation, and functional rehabilitation, while the third semester provides elective courses and the master thesis. The program's intended learning outcomes cover clinical, research, ethical, and communication skills, and align with patient-centred practice. Positive feedback from students and staff highlights the program's relevance, quality, and alignment with contemporary practice and employability needs. The University of Nicosia has implemented a comprehensive internal quality assurance framework for its Master in Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation, fully compliant with Cyprus legislation (Laws 2015 & 2016) and aligned with European Higher Education Area standards. The Internal Programme Evaluation Process engages internal and external reviewers, including professional representation from the Cyprus Physiotherapy Association, ensuring relevance to the profession and regulatory compliance. The Internal Quality Assurance Committee is well-composed, with broad representation from academic leadership, faculty, administrative staff, and students. Multiple layers of review, from internal review teams to the University Council, support robust governance and accountability. Quality assurance processes are supported by digital tools and central data repositories, while semester-level and annual reviews, including anonymous student feedback, foster continuous improvement. Faculty engagement in quality activities and the involvement of regulatory experts in programme design further ensure a collaborative and professionally aligned quality culture.

Strengths

1.1. Policy for quality assurance

- Well-structured quality assurance framework aligned with Cyprus legislation and European Higher Education Area standards.
- Multi-layered review process ensuring governance and accountability.
- Inclusion of internal and external reviewers, including professional representatives, for programme relevance.
- Broadly representative University of Nicosia Quality Assurance Committee with academic, administrative, and student members.
- Comprehensive quality assurance mandate covering strategy, audits, accreditation, indicators, and digital quality assurance tools.
- Use of digital tools and central data repositories enabling evidence-based decisions.
- Semester-level and annual review processes promoting continuous improvement.
- Anonymous student evaluations providing direct feedback on teaching and courses.
- Faculty engagement at multiple stages fostering collaboration and inclusiveness.
- Regulatory expert involvement ensuring legal and professional compliance.
- A clear vision and mission based on key drivers.

1.2. Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

- Clear specialization focus: The program explicitly targets Musculoskeletal and Sports Physiotherapy, positioning graduates as skilled and competitive specialists.
- Balanced integration of theory and practice: Advanced theoretical content is combined with extensive clinical and practical training, ensuring graduates acquire depth of knowledge and applied skills.
- Interdisciplinary and collaborative approach: Open enrollment for physiotherapists and related professionals fosters multidisciplinary learning reflective of real-world practice.
- Theoretically alignment with contemporary research: Evidence-based practice and research methodologies are said to be emphasized across courses, aiming to promote graduates' adherence to international standards.

1.3. Public information

- Employability orientation: Training outcomes are explicitly linked to career readiness in health, public, and research sectors.
- Comprehensive goals and intended learning outcomes: Goals are aligned with bridging academic knowledge and clinical application, while intended learning outcomes cover technical skills, research competency, ethical practice, interprofessional collaboration, and use of emerging technologies.

1.4. Information management

The involvement of both students and staff in data collection, analysis, and follow-up planning fosters transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement, ensuring the curriculum remains responsive to learner needs and evolving professional requirements.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

1.1. Policy for quality assurance

- Enhance external benchmarking: To ensure that the programme remains competitive and aligned with best practices internationally, regular benchmarking against similar European and international physiotherapy programmes is recommended.
 - *Recommendation 1:* Benchmarking could involve comparing curriculum design, learning outcomes, teaching methods, and graduate employability. This process can foster innovation, identify strengths and gaps, and provide evidence to guide strategic enhancements. The programme could draw on the World Physiotherapy (WPT) guidance for curriculum development, which, while not prescribing a single standardized 'master curriculum,' provides comprehensive frameworks emphasizing a science-based approach, integration of theory and practice, development of autonomous lifelong learners, and robust clinical education. Key components include foundation subjects (anatomy, neuroscience, exercise science), professional subjects (musculoskeletal, physiotherapy), research, and extensive clinical placements. Core principles of WPT guidelines include professional autonomy and competence, integration of theory and practice, lifelong learning, hands-on clinical education, and preparation to manage patient function across the lifespan while collaborating with healthcare professionals and contributing to the broader community.
 - *Recommendation 2:* The university's key strategic priorities (i.e. key drivers) should be integrated into the modules to strengthen students' future prospects and their potential contributions to society.
- Increase transparency of quality actions: Students and staff currently provide feedback, but they may not always see how their input translates into tangible improvements.
 - *Recommendation:* Regular, concise updates on quality assurance action, highlighting specific changes implemented based on feedback, will foster a culture of transparency, reinforce stakeholder trust, and increase engagement in quality processes.
- Broaden stakeholder involvement: While internal and professional input is strong, the programme could further benefit from systematic engagement with external stakeholders such as alumni, (international) clinical placement partners, and employers. Their perspectives can ensure that the curriculum remains responsive to workforce needs globally, professional trends, and evolving competencies required in physiotherapy practice.
 - *Recommendation:* Mechanisms for structured input from international external stakeholders such as alumni, clinical placement partners, and employers could include surveys, focus groups, or advisory board participation.

- Develop higher-order skills throughout the entire curriculum: Critical thinking, clinical reasoning, and problem-solving should be embedded throughout the entire curriculum in all different courses.
 - *Recommendation 1:* To develop critical thinking skills in students, teachers should foster a curious and questioning environment and provide opportunities for problem-solving and structured debates. They should encourage students to analyse information from various perspectives, draw logical conclusions, and reflect on their own thought processes to identify assumptions and biases. Additionally, students should be guided to engage with emerging developments in physiotherapy and evolving research methods, enabling them to critically evaluate new evidence, anticipate future trends, and apply innovative approaches in practice and research.
 - *Recommendation 2:* The curriculum should be regularly reviewed and updated to integrate emerging therapeutic approaches, technological innovations, and advances in evidence-based practice. Students should be exposed to contemporary research methods, data analysis techniques, and critical appraisal of new evidence, preparing them to contribute to the evolution of the profession. Embedding foresight-oriented learning will equip graduates to adapt to changing healthcare needs, implement innovative interventions, and participate in research that shapes the future of physiotherapy.

1.2. Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

- The current curriculum places strong emphasis on physical rehabilitation but offers only limited coverage of the psychosocial dimensions. This gap is increasingly significant in the context of rapidly changing societal and health system demands. Populations are ageing, and the prevalence of non-communicable diseases is rising sharply. These conditions often present with complex biopsychosocial profiles, including persistent pain, mental health comorbidities, and psychosocial barriers to recovery and participation. As such, future practitioners will be expected to work not only as technical experts but also as adaptable, resilient clinicians who can support the mental health and psychosocial needs of diverse patient groups. They will need strong skills in communication, and the application of psychosocial and behavioural science in evidence-based clinical decision-making.
 - *Recommendation 1:* While the abovementioned topics are currently included within the Therapeutic Exercise module, we strongly recommend their more explicit and structured integration to ensure students develop practical competencies in assessment and intervention, grounded in existing interdisciplinary models (e.g. motor learning, exercise science principles and behavioural change models, etc.).
 - *Recommendation 2:* Introduce dedicated modules or structured workshops addressing mental health, stress management, resilience-building, and the psychosocial dimensions of chronic pain and sports injury care. Embedding this content more profoundly will better equip graduates to manage complex clinical cases, support patient self-management, and remain resilient in the face of the emotional and cognitive demands of clinical practice.
- Health policy and advocacy training: Graduates' ability to engage critically beyond clinical roles seems to be underdeveloped.

- *Recommendation:* Integrate courses or workshops on evidence-based service development, health policy, and advocacy to expand graduate career pathways and leadership potential in line with the key drivers.

1.3. Public information

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1.4. Information management

- Continuous professional development linkage: The program is not fully positioned as a foundation for lifelong learning.
 - *Recommendation:* Explicitly connect the curriculum with continuous professional development frameworks and post-graduate specialization opportunities to enhance long-term professional growth.
- Student feedback could be more actively and transparently integrated into decision-making processes. This could likewise be an opportunity to integrate aspects of developing critical thinking skills. Such measures would not only enhance the legitimacy and impact of feedback mechanisms but also cultivate a culture of shared ownership and co-creation in the educational process.
 - *Recommendation:* Systematically share feedback evaluation results with students, and clearly communicate how their input informs curricular adjustments.

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	Partially compliant

Rationale from the Advisory Board:

1.1 Policy for quality assurance – Compliant

Policies are clearly established.

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review – Compliant

Procedures are clearly established, with structured curriculum design, approval processes, and ongoing monitoring.

1.3 Public information – Compliant

Public information appears complete, with course details, learning outcomes, and programme objectives accessible.

1.4 Information management – Partially Compliant

This area is only partially compliant because, while the programme provides students with a solid foundation of professional knowledge and practical skills, it does not explicitly position itself as the starting point of a lifelong learning journey. The curriculum currently places limited emphasis on fostering habits of self-directed learning, reflective practice, and critical inquiry beyond graduation. There are few formal linkages or signposts directing students toward recognised continuous professional development (CPD) pathways or post-graduate specialisation opportunities. In the context of rapidly evolving healthcare knowledge, emerging technologies, and changing population health needs (such as the growing burden of chronic and non-communicable diseases), graduates must be prepared to continually update their skills and adapt their practice. Without an embedded culture of lifelong learning, there is a risk that graduates may struggle to maintain professional currency, pursue advanced roles, or contribute to innovation within the profession.

Recommendation: Clearly map potential post-graduate specialisation pathways (e.g., advanced clinical practice, research, education, leadership). This could include integrating portfolio development, career planning, and mentorship components into the programme. Strengthening this link will foster graduates' motivation and capacity for continuous professional growth, improve their long-term career progression, and align the programme with professional regulatory expectations.

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

Sub-areas

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

2.2 Practical training

2.3 Student assessment

Findings

The current framework demonstrates strong structure, transparency, and alignment in several ways. The requirement for every faculty member to prepare and distribute a detailed course outline ensures that teaching is guided by the approved syllabus and coordinated across sections and programs. The inclusion of assessment policies, grading criteria, teaching methods, and schedules within these outlines promotes clarity for students and consistency across courses. Furthermore, the integration of multiple assessment modalities (formative, summative, written, and practical) shows a deliberate effort to align teaching strategies with intended learning outcomes, thereby supporting constructive alignment between curriculum design, delivery, and evaluation. At the same time, there are opportunities for improvement that would further enhance quality and compliance with international standards. First, although teaching and assessment are well-structured, the framework could place greater emphasis on self-critical learning, for example by embedding active learning approaches, supporting student autonomy, and making provisions for diverse learning needs. Second, while assessment and training components are clearly described, there is scope to formalize workload transparency, particularly by documenting expected hours and relative weightings of assignments, practical training, and assessments. This would promote fairness, help students manage their learning time effectively, and ensure alignment with credit hour systems or frameworks such as the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). Third, the academic staff should work towards greater alignment by establishing shared goals and a unified vision for the programme. Strengthening collaboration and reducing siloed approaches would enhance curricular coherence, ensure consistent learning experiences for students, and support the programme's long-term strategic development.

Strengths

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

- Clear course outlines which are structured and aligned with the approved syllabus. This ensures transparency and coordination across faculty.
- The inclusion of teaching methods, study requirements, schedules, and assessment policies in course outlines provides clarity for students.
- Students receive continuous formative and summative assignments, fostering active participation.

- Practical lab exams provide immediate feedback, supporting student engagement and learning.
- The process promotes transparency in workload allocation (lecture hours, self-study, assignments).
- There is evidence of coordination with program heads and other faculty, reducing duplication and ensuring consistency across the curriculum.

2.2 Practical training

- There is a clear link between theoretical and practical components (final practical lab exam complements written theory exam).
- Immediate feedback during lab exams fosters experiential learning and reflective practice.
- Practical training elements are formally integrated into assessment policies and course outlines.
- Coordination with stakeholders (departments, faculty) helps align training with professional expectations.

2.3 Student assessment

- A wide range of assessment methods (final exam, midterm, summative and formative assignments, lab exams) are used, promoting comprehensive evaluation of learning outcomes.
- Feedback mechanisms are embedded, with formative assignments and immediate lab exam feedback.
- Assessment criteria and policies are communicated in advance through course outlines, ensuring transparency.
- Use of both theory and practice exams ensures alignment with learning outcomes and connection between knowledge and skills.
- Course outlines provide grading policies and schedules, ensuring consistency.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

To foster evidence-based critical thinking and self-reflection, and to support the transformation of students from passive service consumers into active contributors to clinical practice, the teaching and learning process should integrate advanced methodologies such as complex (including multimorbidity scenarios and social determinants of health) problem-based and case-based learning scenarios, encourage evidence-based clinical reasoning, and require students to critically appraise complex, real-world case scenarios.

- **Recommendation:** Embed structured opportunities for independent research, international interdisciplinary collaboration, and reflective practice. This can further develop the analytical and self-directed learning skills expected at the master's level.

2.2 Practical training

The practical components of the programme could be strengthened to ensure that they provide meaningful, high-quality learning experiences.

- *Recommendations:*
 - Enhance the organization of internships or field placements by creating standardized guidelines (placement process, supervision responsibilities, reporting, feedback cycles).
 - Collect systematic student feedback on practical training experiences and use it to refine placements and supervision.
 - Encourage research and project-based practical experiences, allowing students to contribute to knowledge production as part of their training.

2.3 Student assessment

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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	Partially compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

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

The teaching and learning framework is clearly structured, transparent, and aligned with the intended learning outcomes. Detailed course outlines are prepared and distributed at the start of each semester, ensuring consistency across programs. A variety of teaching methods are used, including lectures, assignments, practical labs, and formative assessments, which encourage active student participation and continuous engagement with the learning process. Immediate feedback in lab settings, together with ongoing feedback on assignments, supports student-centred learning by fostering reflection and autonomy. The framework also allows for flexibility and accommodates different modes of delivery through the use of modern educational technologies. These practices collectively demonstrate that the process of teaching and learning is development-oriented. However, it became apparent that despite these strengths, students lacked critical thinking skills and remained rather passive service consumers, which does not align with the requirements of master's programs as defined by the European Qualifications

Framework (EQF). According to the EQF, master's level graduates are expected to demonstrate advanced knowledge and understanding, the ability to critically evaluate and integrate complex information, and a high degree of autonomy and responsibility in their learning, competencies that go beyond passive knowledge consumption.

2.2 Practical training – Partially Compliant

There is evidence of integration between theory and practice, especially via lab exams and immediate feedback. Yet, workload transparency (expected hours, weighting of components) and structured organization of internships/fieldwork (guidelines, supervision, reporting, feedback) are not fully formalized. Student feedback on training is also not systematically captured. These gaps prevent full compliance with the standards.

2.3 Student assessment – Compliant

Assessment is well-structured, transparent, and varied, including formative, summative, theoretical, and practical components. Clear grading policies and feedback mechanisms are in place, ensuring fairness and alignment with learning outcomes. Some enhancements (e.g., standardized rubrics,) would further strengthen objectivity and comparability, but the current system already meets the stated standards

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Findings

The Higher Education Institution demonstrates a well-structured and strategically aligned approach to academic staffing and faculty development. The institution also fosters synergies between teaching and research by recruiting faculty capable of contributing to both domains, supporting academic excellence and scholarly engagement. Although the number and qualifications of the teaching staff are appropriate for effective programme delivery, their teaching workloads remain considerably high, which may limit the time available for research and scholarly engagement. The capacity of academic staff to contribute to both instructional duties and scholarly output is currently constrained by the absence of structured research support. There is a clear and pressing need to appoint a dedicated lab research position with strong research and technical competencies to support the team's ongoing projects and to secure lab-based teaching of the students.

Strengths

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

- Alignment with strategic academic development: Recruitment and faculty development are clearly linked to strategic priorities and student demand, ensuring that staffing decisions support the growth and sustainability of academic programs.
- Structured planning process: The process for identifying specialized faculty needs during program planning demonstrates foresight and comprehensive resource allocation.
- Multi-level approval: Involvement of the Department, School Councils, Senate, and Council ensures that staffing requests undergo thorough scrutiny and alignment with institutional priorities and budget considerations.
- Timely recruitment: Emphasis on recruiting specialized faculty in a timely manner supports smooth program delivery and reduces gaps in teaching capacity.
- Clear career advancement pathways: Promotion and ranking are structured through dedicated committees, providing transparency and fairness in career progression. Detailed documentation in internal regulations enhances clarity for staff.
- Documentation and accessibility: Policies and procedures are well-documented and accessible (Annex 5, Chapter 6), ensuring consistency and reference for both management and faculty.

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

- Exceptional breadth and depth of expertise. The faculty profile demonstrates a strong mix of clinical, research, and academic excellence across musculoskeletal, sports, neurorehabilitation, cardiopulmonary, biomechanics, pathology, exercise physiology, and biostatistics.
- Strong international backgrounds – Many faculty members have studied, taught, or conducted research in leading institutions across the UK, Australia, USA, Greece, Cyprus, and Qatar, which strengthens the program's global relevance and credibility.
- Notable leadership and professional service. Several staff members have held significant positions in national associations, international societies, editorial boards, and bioethics committees.
- Diversity of roles: the inclusion of adjunct, visiting, and special teaching faculty enhances flexibility and allows for specialized expertise to enrich the curriculum.

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

- Research-active team. Multiple members have high-impact publications, international collaborations, and leadership in European projects, ensuring students are exposed to current evidence and innovation.
- Balance of academic and clinical experience. Many faculty members maintain active clinical practice, which bridges theoretical teaching with real-world application.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

While the programme meets standards regarding teaching staff qualifications and overall research engagement, there is currently no dedicated research coordinator to support academic staff. This limits the team's capacity to sustain and expand research activities alongside heavy teaching workloads. The absence of structured research support reduces opportunities for collaborative projects, external funding applications, and the systematic integration of research into teaching. It also constrains students' exposure to active research environments, limiting the development of their research skills and critical inquiry competencies.

- **Recommendation:** Appoint a dedicated lab research position with strong research and technical competencies to support ongoing and future projects. This role should include assisting with technical research support, data collection and analysis, research administration, ethical approvals, and dissemination activities. Establishing this position will:
 - Strengthen the programme's research productivity, quality, and visibility.
 - Enhance staff capacity to balance teaching and scholarly work.
 - Expand opportunities for students to participate in research and develop inquiry-based learning skills.
 - Support the integration of research findings into the curriculum, enriching its relevance and currency.
 - Improve the programme's competitiveness for external funding and institutional collaborations.

Embedding this role will align the programme with institutional goals of fostering a vibrant research culture and ensure that teaching is consistently informed by up-to-date evidence and innovation.

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

Rationale from the Advisory Board:

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development – Compliant

The University has a structured and transparent process for recruitment and development of academic staff. Faculty needs are identified during program planning, requests undergo multi-level approval (Department, School, Senate, Council), and recruitment is timely. Career advancement is governed by clear ranking/promotion committees as detailed in the Internal Regulations (Annex 5,

Chapter 6, Sections 6.2 and 6.4). Professional development and succession planning are integrated, ensuring staff capabilities align with program requirements.

3.2 Teaching staff number and status – Compliant

The institution ensures that the number and qualifications of teaching staff are generally appropriate to programme demands. Staffing allocations are responsive to programme popularity and student interest, ensuring adequate coverage of specialised subjects. Faculty status and workload are clearly defined, which supports the effective delivery of academic programmes and alignment with institutional strategic goals.

Although this standard is compliant, there is room for improvement because current staffing levels are heavily weighted toward teaching, with no dedicated lab research position to share the research-related workload. As a result, teaching staff carry high teaching loads alongside full responsibility for research activities, which limits their capacity to engage in sustained scholarly work, secure external funding, and integrate current research into their teaching. This imbalance places staff at risk of burnout and constrains the development of a robust research culture within the programme.

Recommendation: Appoint a dedicated lab research position to support data management, project coordination, and dissemination tasks. This will relieve some of the research burden from teaching staff, enabling them to balance teaching and scholarship more effectively, enhance the quality of research output, and enrich students' learning through exposure to active research environments.

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research – Compliant

Academic staff recruitment and development emphasize both teaching and research competencies. Faculty are selected for their ability to contribute to program delivery and research activities, fostering integration of teaching and scholarly work. The transparent promotion and career advancement policies further support research engagement and professional growth, ensuring a productive synergy between teaching and research.

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

Strengths

4.1. Student admission, processes and criteria

- Clear and pre-defined admission criteria.
- English language requirements are explicit and measurable, with multiple accepted certifications and scores.
- Transfer credit policies from relevant accredited Master programs are well-defined and include evaluation against learning outcomes.
- Admission processes are transparent, consistent, and aligned with institutional regulations.

4.2. Student progression

- Regulations for student progression are embedded in course outlines and communicated at the start of the semester.
- Multiple assessment methods (final exams, summative assignments, weekly formative assignments, midterms, practical labs) provide continuous monitoring of student performance.
- Immediate and structured feedback, particularly in practical labs, supports timely corrective action.

4.3. Student recognition

- Transfer credit and prior learning recognition processes are clearly defined, aligned with learning outcomes, and capped to ensure academic integrity (maximum 1/3 of required ECTS).
- Recognition procedures align with principles of fairness and transparency, facilitating mobility and cooperation with other institutions.

4.4. Student certification

- Students receive detailed course outlines and assessments, ensuring transparency in what is required to achieve certification.
- Certification reflects the achievement of learning outcomes, program content, and context, supporting clarity and employability.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

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4.2. Student progression

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4.3. Student recognition

Include explicit reference to alignment with the Lisbon Recognition Convention to strengthen international recognition of qualifications.

4.4. Student certification

- Ensure all graduates receive a diploma supplement consistent with European and international standards, detailing learning outcomes, study context, and qualification level.

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

Rationale from the Advisory Board:

4.1. Student admission, processes and criteria – Compliant

Admission requirements are explicit, transparent, and consistently applied, with clearly defined criteria (including language and transfer credits).

4.2. Student progression – Compliant

Progression requirements are embedded in course outlines, communicated early, and supported with varied assessment methods and feedback. There is a centralized tracking system for student progression which means that early identification of at-risk students is systematic.

4.3. Student recognition – Compliant

Recognition processes are defined, capped, and transparent, supporting fairness and mobility.

Yet, the lack of explicit alignment with the Lisbon Recognition Convention limits , in part, international comparability of qualifications.

4.4. Student certification – Compliant

Certification reflects learning outcomes and ensures clarity. However, the absence of a guaranteed diploma supplement aligned with European/international standards, plus the lack of digital certification options, represents, in part, an areas needing further development for full compliance with international best practice.

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

- 4.5. Teaching and Learning resources**
- 4.6. Physical resources**
- 4.7. Human support resources**
- 4.8. Student support**

Findings

The University of Nicosia demonstrates a strong and systematic approach to ensuring that teaching and learning resources, physical infrastructure, human support systems, and student welfare mechanisms are adequate and responsive to student needs. The MSc programme benefits from purpose-built physiotherapy laboratories (Physiotherapy Labs 1–3, Human Performance Lab, Patient Simulation Suite) equipped with state-of-the-art facilities such as Vicon gait analysis systems, Delsys EMG, and isokinetic dynamometers, aligning closely with programme learning outcomes and fostering research-informed education. The institution has embedded multiple layers of student support, ranging from academic guidance (pre-registration, course planning, ongoing counselling) to psychosocial services (KESY counselling and psychological support), peer-led initiatives (Math and Writing Labs), and structured transition support (Student Success Centre). Student welfare services are holistic and inclusive, addressing academic, psychological, social, and professional dimensions, with particular attention to international students, students with special needs, and first-year cohorts. Modern student homes and dormitories are located close to campus, providing convenient, safe, and well-equipped accommodation that further enhances the student experience. Infrastructure is further strengthened by integration with central university services such as IT resources, library access, and the Student Affairs Department, which promotes extracurricular engagement. Student feedback suggests high satisfaction with available facilities and support, though opportunities remain to expand services for ongoing mentoring, mental health awareness, and career development integration.

Strengths

- Inclusive support mechanisms: A comprehensive welfare framework integrates academic, psychological, career, and social support, ensuring students are holistically supported.
- High-quality infrastructure: Specialized physiotherapy and performance laboratories, alongside access to university-wide resources, provide an excellent platform for research-led and practice-based learning.
- Effective counselling services: Confidential, flexible counselling (individual and group) through KESY enhances student well-being.
- Student Success Centre: Targeted workshops, tutorials, and peer tutoring (e.g., Math Lab, Writing Lab) facilitate smoother academic transitions.
- Career development services: CV guidance, internships, mock interviews, and employer engagement prepare students for professional careers.
- Integration into student life: Student Affairs Department fosters leadership, cultural engagement, and teamwork through clubs, societies, and events.
- Support for international students: Accommodation support, orientation services, and roommate matching contribute to smoother integration.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Strengthen alignment with alumni networks.

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

Rationale from the Advisory Board:

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources – Compliant

Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources are provided, including specialized labs, up-to-date equipment, and well-structured academic support. Resources are aligned with programme objectives and flexible enough to respond to changing needs.

5.2 Physical resources – Compliant

The physical infrastructure, including specialized physiotherapy laboratories, IT facilities, and access to library resources, is robust and fit for purpose. Facilities are modern, well-maintained, and effectively support both practical training and research-led learning.

5.3 Human support resources – Compliant

Students have access to qualified academic staff, tutors, counsellors, and administrative personnel who provide comprehensive support throughout the study programme. Services are clearly communicated to students and responsive to diverse needs.

5.4 Student support – Compliant

A holistic student welfare system covers academic, psychological, social, and career development needs, with tailored services for international, part-time, and special needs students. Student engagement, mobility opportunities, and research-led mentoring are actively encouraged.

D. Signatures of the EEC

Name		Signature	
Professor Eling de Bruin			
Professor Bettina Wollesen			
Professor Davy Vancampfort			
Nikolas Miltiadous			
Stalo Leonidou			

Date: September 12, 2025