

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

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

- **Higher Education Institution:** LEDRA College
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** School/Faculty
- **Department/ Sector:** Department/Sector
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Certificate Health Sciences (1 year, 60 ECTS, annual)

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

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations



The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws” of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].



A. Introduction

The remote (online) full day External Evaluation was undertaken on 21 April 2022. This comprised a series of scheduled meetings with the Director of Administration, the Academic Director, the Programme Coordinator and the Quality Assurance Officer. It also involved meeting teaching staff, administrative staff, two students taking other courses at the Institution and a virtual tour of the premises (library, computer room etc). The Head of the Institution was unable to attend because he was ill. Following the meeting, additional material was requested and received by the External Evaluation Committee.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Russell Mannion	Professor of Health Systems	University of Birmingham
Sophia Yaliraki	Professor of Theoretical Chemistry	Imperial college London
Ernst A. Wimmer	Professor of Developmental Biology	Georg-August-University Göttingen
Michael Charalambides	Student	Cyprus University of Technology (TEPAK)
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

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**

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
 - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
 - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
 - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
 - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
 - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
 - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
 - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
 - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
 - *benefits from external expertise*
 - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
 - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*

- *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
- *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
- *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
 - *key performance indicators*
 - *profile of the student population*
 - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
 - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
 - *learning resources and student support available*
 - *career paths of graduates*

- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

Findings

Ledra College appears to have robust systems in place for ensuring the quality of the proposed programme. The ongoing monitoring of the programme will be carried out by the Academic Council at Program Board level. There are six mechanisms by which the programmes are monitored on an ongoing basis: (a) External examiner reports and feedback (b) Programmatic reviews (c) Staff meetings (d) Principal's Office (e) Academic Council (f) Student responses. Students will be given the opportunity to comment on the delivery of the course through an online questionnaire. Students may also approach their Academic Advisor in order to highlight specific problems. Any issue can then be raised by the Academic Advisor in program Board meetings and be considered at higher levels (Principal's Office, Academic Council). (c) The student representative can raise matters that he/she feels significant to Academic Council for consideration if they feel that satisfaction has not been achieved at program Board level

Strengths

- Evaluation questionnaire completed by students for each module
- Academic advisors for students
- Students have good access to teaching staff when required.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

It is not clear whether the Certificate will be recognised by universities as a route into traditional undergraduate physical and bio-medical science degree programmes. Ledra College were not able to provide written documentation supporting the claim that several overseas universities would accept the Certificate as a route into their undergraduate science programmes. Documentation from universities should be provided which states explicitly that the Certificate in Health Sciences provided by Ledra College will be recognised by them. The Certificate may be a useful qualification for the health labour market, but this is difficult to assess at the current time. Greater involvement of health employers in the design and development of the programme could perhaps help in this regard.

There is a discrepancy on the number of students to be enrolled for this Health Certificate programme within the application and the in person discussion with the College (on page 13: 16 students per year; on page 16: over 350 within 5 years; on page 95: 16 per semester). After discussing this during the evaluation, it seemed that the plan is to accept two cohorts of 16 students each Fall semester, thus annually 32 students. This should be clearly stated in the public information on the course.

The information on the compulsory courses should be more specific. Currently all descriptions in the application look as if all courses are based only on lectures. However, the in person discussion with the staff of Ledra College indicated that many of the courses will also have a practical lab component. This should be clearly stated in the

public information on the course. Moreover, it would be helpful to clarify for each course, how the 6 ECTS (180 working hours) are reached: Lectures, Lab practicals, Self-study time. Finally, the lab parts should also be indicated in the syllabus.

Regarding Information Management, parts of the application were incomprehensible: On page 16, it looks like the study programme already runs since 2020-2021, and on page 95 there are specific numbers given to the country of origin for the first 16 student cohort. Since the Health Certificate programme is not yet running, this information is misleading and needs to be removed as only expectations for the future could be provided.

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	Partially compliant
1.4	Information management	Not applicable

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.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *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.*

Findings

The course and module descriptors appear appropriate for a course such as this. Content and learning outcomes are clearly specified. It was reported that The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is applied. Assessment appears to be appropriate and supports the development of the learner. It is reported that a formal system for student appeals is in place and there are policies to detect plagiarism and maintain academic conduct and integrity. Assessment methods take into account mitigating circumstances.

Strengths

This is an ambitious programme which covers a range of science and technological knowledge for learners.

It is a strength that the course is in English and that the College provides support and training in English language skills, when required.

Classes are designed to be small and will not exceed 16 students, which allows for more engagement with individual learners.

There is good provision of IT facilities

Areas of improvement and recommendations

All modules are compulsory with no module options provided. In the future this may be something worth considering.

There appears to be more practical work than the documentation implies and this needs to be amended to clearly reflect the intended theoretical and practical components of each module.

Although the computing and IT training provision is good, training in biological and chemical sciences requires hands-on experience on wet lab facilities and equipment. However, such laboratory facilities have yet to be built. As a

result, we could not assess whether they would be adequate, appropriately equipped and following health and safety.

The assessment strategy is generally compliant but without a lab it is not possible to assess students' lab skills.

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	Partially 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.*

Findings

There are clear policies and procedures in place for the recruitment of staff. All posts are advertised and include a job description and person specification. It is reported that candidates are selected on the basis of relevant criteria and merit, and a full written record is kept of both the short-listing and interview proceedings and appropriate feedback is offered to candidates. Policies and procedures are in place for annual reviews. All staff teaching on the programme have relevant academic backgrounds and academic qualifications for teaching individual modules. Peer and Supervisor Appraisals of teaching staff appear comprehensive and robust and include student evaluation of teaching performance for each module and comments from External examiners.

Strengths

We met with 5 teaching staff and we were very impressed by their experience, motivation and passion for teaching their subjects. It was clear that they have thought about their modules and have designed them appropriately.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Part time lecturers are paid only for the hours spent teaching and not for preparation time. This should be addressed so that all lecturers are paid for all of their time spent on helping to develop and run the programme. The College should ensure that at least 70 % and preferably all of their teaching staff are full time and permanent. In the future it would be good for staff development if sufficient time and resources were made available for staff to develop their research.



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	Partially compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Not applicable

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.*

Findings

There are pre-defined and clear policies on student admission requirements for home and overseas students which take account of prior learning and proficiency in the English language. There are pre-defined regulations regarding student progression.

Strengths

Clear policies and procedures are outlined. Interviewing potential students to evaluate their potential is good practice.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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As discussed earlier in the report, the Committee has not seen written evidence that the Certificate from Ledra College would be accepted from other universities as a route into their undergraduate science programmes and so that should not be advertised unless such formal arrangements are made.

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.*

Findings

The College appears to have the infrastructure capacity to accommodate the new programme in terms of adequate classroom space and library and computer facilities. There are ten lecture rooms and two Computer Labs with computers fully incorporated into the College Network and having Internet access. There is also a social learning space and two cafeterias which are open during office hours. Although there is one lab, this is not of a standard in terms of possessing the appropriate technology to support practical scientific experiments and store chemicals safely etc. Student support is provided for a diverse student population with comprehensive policies in place for students with a range of disabilities and learning needs.

Strengths

There are clear policies and institutional support for students with disabilities and diverse learning needs. There is support for international students, library and IT facilities. The staff are very engaged and the students we met were very complimentary of the support and welcome they received. The students we met were also very positive about their course and their lecturers, but they were on different degrees .

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The laboratory facilities need investment and updating to make them suitable and safe for scientific experiments required by several of the modules. We note that this is the reason we evaluate the Physical Resources and Teaching and Learning Resources as only partially compliant.



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	Partially compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Partially compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

D. Conclusions and final remarks

Staff are clearly very dedicated and enthusiastic about developing the Certificate. The teaching staff were very committed and student-centred. The College appears to have good systems and procedures for quality assurance and has good support for people with a range of learning needs and welcoming students of different backgrounds. There may be a need for this course in terms of the labour market, although we were unable to verify this.

There is a need for investment in up to date and safe laboratory facilities for biological and chemical modules. There is a risk that students will enrol on the course and will not be provided with adequate and safe laboratory facilities. If this cannot be provided then it should not be used in promoting the course.

It was reported in the External Evaluation by the Director of administration that the Certificate had received letters of intent by a number of universities in the UK and Netherlands with regards to allowing access to their undergraduate science degree programmes. But Ledra College staff were unable to provide documented evidence of this when requested. Without such documentation, the College should not advertise this when promoting the course.



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Russell Mannion	
Sophia Yaliraki	
Ernst A. Wimmer	
Michael Charalambides	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 22/04/2022