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Doc. 300.1.1/2

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report

(E-learning programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution: Frederick University**

- **Town: Limassol**

- **School/Faculty (if applicable): Department of Education**

- **Department/Sector: School of Education and Social Sciences**

- **Programme of study - Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

  In Greek:

  Programme Name

  In English:

  Educational Administration and Leadership (

  3 Academic Semesters, 90 ECTS, Master (MA))

- **Language(s) of instruction: Greek**

- **Programme's status: Currently Operating**

- **Concentrations (if any):**

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

In Greek: Concentrations
In English: Concentrations

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A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

Following a briefing of the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) by Dr. Lefkios Neophytou from the Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, the site visit with Frederick University took place on June 1st - 2nd 2021. As a result of COVID-19 restrictions this site visit was conducted remotely.

The EEC was welcomed by the rector of Frederick University, Professor George Demosthenous, along with senior members of the University management. Over the course of the two days of the visit, meetings were held with senior staff and programme coordinators from the School of Education Studies and the Department of Education as well as with:

- academic staff who proposed the programme
- academic staff – both full time and part time teaching on the programme
- representatives of administrative staff
- quality assurance committee
- distance learning platform team
- university library
- members of the student body who had undertaken linked programmes

Members of the EEC were able to ask questions and engage in a fruitful and open dialogue throughout the day. The EEC were particularly impressed with the swift response to requests for clarification whether in person or in the form of additional documentation. The committee felt that the event was extremely well organised and the presentations were very helpful.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Prof. Joe O'Hara	Chair	Dublin City University
Prof. Josefina Sala Roca	Member	Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona
Prof. Leena Krokfors	Member	University of Helsinki
Prof. Stylianos Hatzipanagos	Member	University of London Centre for Distance Education
Ms. Maria Anastasou	Student Member	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University

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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

Findings

The application was carefully formulated, and The Frederick University was well prepared for the evaluation process. The findings from the onsite (via zoom) visit were positive. Everybody who attended the meetings was active, well equipped with knowledge and information. The evaluation board got answers to all their questions.

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Policy for quality assurance of the MA in Educational Administration and Leadership (90 ECTS) programme has a formal status and is publicly available. It supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through structures, regulations and processes as well as teaching, administrative staff and students, to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance. Internal quality assurance and evaluation procedures are well organised but in this very student-centered university the student's role could be even more reciprocal when thinking of the feedback processes (which now are quite system-based) and possibilities to co-learn, create learning communities and use of process-learning methods. The programme ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud, guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff and supports the involvement of external stakeholders.

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

The programme of study is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes. It is designed by involving students and other stakeholders and it benefits from external expertise. It reflects the purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe. It is designed so that it enables smooth student progression. The exams and

assignments content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS**.** It includes placement opportunities and support where appropriate and needed and has a formal institutional approval process. The Leadership and Adminstration programme 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. It is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline and is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, and needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme. It is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders.

1.3 Public information

Regarding the programme of study; clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about for the most part about selection criteria, intended learning outcomes, qualification awarded, teaching, learning and assessment procedures, pass rates, learning opportunities available to the students and graduate employment information. As we will see later in the report there are some inconsistencies across aspects of the public information provided that might be addressed however as a whole, there is sufficient accurate information provided about key aspects of the programme.

1.4 Information management

Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed of the key areas.

Strengths

- The connection of instructor's research, teaching and course planning was coherent.
- The purpose and objectives of the programme were clear. Both practical competences and transferable skills were presented.
- The programme applies the quality assurance policy of the University engaging in this process and involves in this not only its staff but also its students. Specifically, at each semester students evaluate the course by

assessing the quality and the level of their satisfaction regarding various aspects e.g., content knowledge of the teachers, class organisation, teachers' availability, etc. This regular consideration of the students' perceptions on the effectiveness of each course is a key aspect especially for teachers' improvement and course updates constantly over time and is a strength of the programme as a whole.

- During the semester students have the opportunity to be involved in various activities, individual or team assignments, self-assessment quizzes and optional seminars. Students were very enthusiastic regarding these activities admitting that through their engagement they have significantly improved their digital literacy skills and their communication and teamwork skills.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

To improve the study programmes focus and clarity, the two optional study scenarios in the same programme should be discussed. As offering is a single MA program it may be confusing that students can choose between two scenarios;

- Scenario A: thesis option with 40 + 30 ECTS compulsory studies and 20 ECTS elective studies
- Scenario B: 40 ECTS compulsory studies and 50 ECTS elective studies

Scenario A, a traditional masters programme with thesis of 30 ECTS, is potentially less attractive than scenario B, a clearly more professional programme with no thesis. Most of the students appear to choose the professional orientation.

A student-centred approach as a mission and vision of the Frederick University is a good choice and well expressed in all levels of the organisation. The definition and idea of it could be further elaborated. At present it appears that the development of a student's full potential is the key focus along with new knowledge production and it's transfer from teachers to students, evaluation of students' performances against the programme goals through learning outcomes being of central importance. Arguably an approach that emphasises more learning processes with co-learners, more knowledge co-creation and process learning methods with students actively planning and steering the learning activities and learning environments could be equally successful. Also, research on student learning and higher education pedagogy could be an interesting opening as a field of study.

There is a need for coherent and consistent programme information across all platforms as there appears at times to be a number of contradictions between

internal programme information and that which is available on public platforms.

Policies outlined on the University website indicate an awareness of the workload conventions associated with ECTS. Arguably there might be more clarity when seeking to translate this across wider University teaching, assessment and certification policies.

Consideration should be given to examining the role of the higher education teacher as an autonomous professional. The goal of creating an environment where autonomous teachers are given an opportunity to develop their fields of expertise in partnership and dialogue with colleagues is a laudable one.

It draws on and helps develop a set of evolving skills and competences and skills that take account of and impact on a changing society. It is also important, at all educational levels, to discuss key issues such as the foundational concepts or 'hidden curricula' underpinning programme and course provisions. This sort of issue that might usefully investigated in a formal teaching qualification.

The University should investigate the possibility of developing a meaningful professional practice network to allow participants formally link their theoretical knowledge with the development of practical skills and competences.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

2. Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment *(ESG 1.3)*

Sub-areas

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

2.2 Practical training

2.3 Student assessment

2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

Findings

The University is clearly committed to providing a positive and transparent learning experience for its students. This is operationalised through structures at programmatic and assessment levels which appear to ensure the relevance of objectives, LO's content and methods to programme participants. Representatives from both staff and students confirmed the supportive nature of the institution which is built primarily on positive relationships. Some greater clarity on structures might be provided at times but this appears to be more an omission than a structural problem.

Q. Is the nature of the programme compatible with e-learning delivery?

It appears to be (see section 5). Reports from students indicated a very good experience of teleconferencing and the guidance received during this time that one of them asked for more due to the fact that distance learning programmes missed face to face sessions and is an important way to have interactions with other students and teachers.

Q. How do the programme, the material, the facilities, and the guidelines safeguard the interaction between students, students and teaching staff, students and the material?

Teaching staff use different strategies to safeguard and assess the interaction among students. Some teaching staff, for example, use rubrics and regularly share with students good examples of interaction in order for students to understand what teachers expect them to do and what matters for gaining a good grade. Others outlined how during activities they tended to check how many times students reply on a topic (frequency indicator).

Q. How many students upload their work and discuss it in the platform during the semester?

While it is unclear the extent which this happens, the intention is for all students to upload their work, discuss and receive feedback from colleagues and tutors.

Q. 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).

The general programme documentation, the student handbook, prospectus and general background information provided indicate an awareness of the need to explicitly link the teaching and assessment methods with the overall programme objectives and learning outcomes. The sample exam paper provided suggests that this intention is carried through to the formal assessment structure.

The three overarching pillars identified as programme objectives – theories, skills and critical thinking – are present in general programme learning outcomes and the individual course descriptors. This is useful in that it provides a coherence to the teaching structure and facilitates an engagement with each of these pillars in the teaching element of the programme. One particular challenge surrounds the measurement of skills development in programmes such as this. Staff presentations indicated a wide variety of opportunities to demonstrate and assess skills mastery which was useful however continued engagement with both the nature of skills needed in a leadership context and the manner in which these skills might be assessed is needed. Consideration might be given to using technology supported learning opportunities to allow students demonstrate skills attainment in a professional context either by the recording of practice, if feasible, or through the setting up of simulation type experiences.
There is a wide variety of detail contained within the course descriptors with regards to the mode and operation of assessment – ranging from impressive overviews of rationale and processes to a bare statement of the type of assessment. From the student perspective, information available on the University website is less intuitive than it might be and the presentation, as opposed to the content, might be revisited.

Q. How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?

The documentation provided suggests an awareness of the need to tailor the teaching and learning activities to the diverse range of experiences brought by an experienced student body undertaking postgraduate study. The decision by the programme providers to design learning experiences and assessments that allow participants integrate their personal and professional experiences into their engagement with the theory and practice of leadership is notable. In addition, the research modules focus

on the use of exemplars from practice as well as engagement with theoretical models which is welcome.

The formal support structure, consisting as it does of academic and peer elements, indicates an understanding of the need to create an environment that takes account of the needs of a diverse student population at post-graduate level. This commitment was noted by student representatives with staff representatives also highlighting support and communication as being key features of the programmes under discussion. Arguably there could be a more explicit statement relating to differentiation at programme and course level however the detailed learning outcomes and standards identified at programmatic and thematic unit levels also indicate an awareness to differentiate in a general sense.

Q. How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?

There is a general programmatic commitment to the development of key competencies in the areas of skills, critical thinking and theoretical engagement. In addition, there is extensive use made of ICT support platforms – perhaps most importantly the MOODLE VLE. Given the fact that this is a DL programme, the mastery of online learning skills is a core element of the preparatory programme provided for both staff and students. All students engaged with indicated an increased level of technical competence as a result of taking part in the programme.

Support systems within the University exist to facilitate student use of a range of ICT supported learning opportunities including:
- VLE
- Library Platforms
- Asynchronous discussion platforms

Again, there are different levels of engagement with this element across the different course descriptors.

The assessment structure provides students with an opportunity in a general sense to demonstrate mastery of general competencies. Some additional information might have been provided with regards to the demonstration of the attainment of skills focused competencies relating to the practical application of leadership skills as opposed to more generic, transversal skills.

Q. How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?

Learning support is organised on the programme's learning platform. It consists of interactions on the VLE (discussion forum and chat function) and the use of email.

Q. Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?

As an e-learning programme, all staff are required to integrate technology in their teaching.

Q. How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?

The University and teaching faculty clearly view this as an applied programme that uses the professional experiences of the student body to form the basis of an applied teaching and learning engagement. This can be seen in the regular use of class discussion, a variety of dialogic assessment modes and interactive feedback opportunities. The use of assessment structures to, for example, allow students critically engage with current research with a view to critiquing their own practice is a good example of this.
The centrality of the practice context is confirmed both by the programme documentation and the input of students from other Faculty programmes, and who were at pains to emphasise the relevance and rooted nature of the theoretical inputs to their professional lives. Some students suggested that this programme, by virtue of its delivery through Greek, spoke to their professional, contextual and personal needs and interests and as such it was viewed as being a critical facilitator of linking theory to practice.

Q. 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?

This is an interesting question. As an applied programme there is some element of practical engagement at assessment level which is noteworthy. There might perhaps be an overall focus on how to integrate exemplars of skills development in the programme as a whole and in particular in the assessment structures relating in particular to leadership skills. Student feedback suggested that there was a genuine

effort to use professional practice contexts as key sources for assessment and class discussion material which was viewed as being important.

One element that the course team might consider is the more explicit inclusion of a tailored practicum element that would allow participants demonstrate their mastery of identified skills and competencies within an educational setting.

Q. Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?

Research is viewed as a core function of this programme and is integrated in a number of elements. The formal research module included is comprehensive, well-structured and links explicitly to the two thesis elements. It might be argued that the research focus is weighted predominantly towards quantitative research which should be kept under review over the course of programme delivery.

Discussions with the programme team suggest that they see research as being a core element of the programme and as already mentioned, there are examples of assessment modes specifically requiring participants to engage with and apply research ideas and skills.

As has been mentioned earlier, it might have been helpful to have a more explicit outline of how the different modes of the programme facilitate the engagement with research based on their alternative structures. Again, it is probably necessary to explore the manner in which the second, non-thesis mode of study integrates the idea of student research engagement. While there is an explicit structure relating to the role of engagement with and production of research in the thesis option, the alternate mode is less explicit and the role of production and engagement might be more clearly elucidated.

Q. How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?

At thesis level, there appears to be a traditional supervisory structure in place with faculty given responsibility for regular engagement with individual students throughout the research period.

In addition, as has already been mentioned, there is a support and supervisory structure in place and the feedback structures appear to be both formative and summative in nature.

Q. Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?

There is an explicit link between EQF and the programme at all levels.

Q. How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?

There appears to be a general connection between the assessment methods, programme objectives, and learning outcomes and overall sectoral needs. Documentation provided suggest a range of feedback modalities and more clarity might be provided at institutional level with regards to this. One aspect that the course team might look at is the number of assessment points. The use of multiple points across multiple modules can add to student difficulties and needs to be monitored.

There is some variety in the type of briefing given with regards to the operation of different aspects of the assessment structure but where it is done, the detailed outline of what is expected in each assessment modality is very thorough. For example, the identification of what counts as 'participation' in certain course descriptions should be very helpful to students.

The level of detail provided relating to examination processes and associated appeals on institutional websites is to be welcomed, however as has been mentioned there might be more clarity in the mode of presentation. Finally, although absolutely legitimate and defensible within the programme philosophy, the range of the F grade which precludes repeating in a second exam diet, needs to be monitored in order to ensure that it does not develop into a significant barrier for students and in particular non-traditional learners.

Q. How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?

As has been mentioned there is a detailed, well-structured and integrated examinations and assessment process that draws on programmatic learning outcomes in order to inform the course assessments.

Strengths

- Integration of professional experiences as a core element of programme content and assessment.

- A detailed, well-structured and integrated examinations and assessment process that draws on programmatic learning outcomes in order to inform the course assessments.

- Focus on key areas of theory, skills and critical thinking.

- Quality of some of the course descriptors – the inclusion of detailed explanations and assessment criteria clearly benefits the staff and the students.

- Commitment of the University to the provision of up-to-date academic material through their:
    - Staff led translation of key concepts in the areas of leadership and administration into Greek
    - Formal arrangement between library and publishers to translate key texts into Greek

- Centrality of research as a key theme of programme and assessment.

- Applied nature of many of assessment activities – in particular those that offer students the opportunity to reflect on the theoretical material through the lens of their own professional practice contexts.

- Offering students examples of "good" answers is a very useful technique especially for those students who are not very familiar with distance learning processes and how to share effectively their thoughts and communicate their knowledge with other students or with the teachers.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- There is a danger of over assessment, and the course team needs to monitor the number of assessment points across the programme as a whole. While each may be justifiable in isolation, the cumulative impact of multiple assessment points across a programme such as this targeted at professional learners, many of whom are returning to learning, can be significant.
- While many of the course descriptors are of a very high quality, there is a substantial variation across the programme. This is particularly marked with regards to the currency of the bibliographies. While the EEC is conscious of the challenges posed by the limited number of Greek language texts and the associated need to translate both concepts and texts, the substantial difference in the breadth and currency of publications listed in the course descriptors is striking. Consideration should be given to each programme team including details not only of Greek texts – whether classic or modern – but also a list of relevant journals that will be used to source relevant publications.
- Greater clarity with regards to role of research in 'taught mode', particularly with regards to engagement with and production of research.

- Need to provide opportunities for skills development opportunities in professional practice contexts. One element that the course team might consider is the more explicit inclusion of a tailored practicum element that would allow participants demonstrate their mastery of identified skills and competencies within an educational setting.

- While teacher autonomy in the context of the teaching practices and methods used during the modules is to be welcomed, it is important that the programme develop mechanisms to ensure that every teacher has the appropriate skills to teach by distance. For this reason it is suggested that making the optional professional development for supporting distance learning skills mandatory for everyone is considered.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant
2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	Compliant

3. *Teaching staff* (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

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

Findings

3.1. Teaching staff recruitment and development

Frederick University ensures the competence of their teaching staff through the selection process and the teaching-skills training program. Full time teaching staff is selected by commissions with internal and external members. Part time teachers (collaborators instructors) are selected by the faculty coordinators. All of them are required to have a PhD. Research activities, publications and university teaching experience are taken into account in the selection and promotion process.

Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme. All of them have a PhD and qualifications for the courses they are in charge of.

The university provides some training seminars to support and promote teaching-skills. For example, new professors are provided with basic training for DL teaching if teaching in that mode at the beginning of each semester. It is unclear whether there are specific courses offered for those engaging in conventional teaching. Having said that, during the semester webinars are offered to train in new tools or methodologies, or specific demands. Nevertheless, there is not a structured plan that leads to a specific accreditation in university teaching methodologies and skills that there is in some Universities.

The promotion of teaching innovation should be prioritised with initiatives such as the prize for innovative teaching continued and expanded.

Teaching staff were assessed considering the results of the students' questionnaires and their self-evaluation report. On the visit day we receive a report with the students' assessments on fall 2020. Data shows that students provided a positive feedback to all the courses. In the meeting with students, all the participants express their satisfaction with the programme in which they have participated and emphasised how supportive the teachers were providing different examples of their

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teaching and mentor skills. These observations are in agreement with the numerous examples that teachers provided us on their management of courses and student involvement showing their high commitment with their teaching tasks.

Teachers have a periodic meeting with the head of the department to receive feedback about their commitments. These evaluations affect neither remuneration nor promotion.

3.2. Teaching staff number and status

Full time academic staff have teaching, research and managing responsibilities. Frederick University establishes that an average full-time professor should invest 40% of their time in teaching tasks, 40% in research tasks, and 20% in managing tasks. Part time professors are professors from other Universities, professionals in the Education field, or civil servants from Educational institutions. The maximum teaching workload is 12h/week (3 groups) but depending on the other responsibilities and task assignments they might not reach the maximum. Even 12h is the maximum in the regulations, to be in charge of three groups and coordinate with other teachers could surpass the intended 40%. During teachers' meeting, one of the participants report that even the amount of teaching responsibilities could be overwhelming in some academic periods, at the university there is a good coordination that helps to be more effective with the teaching hours assigned.

The number of the FT professors is in accordance with the regulations. The list of courses offered in the programme includes 3 compulsory courses, 10 elective courses and the master thesis.

According to the report presented during the site visit, Frederick University has signed exchange programmes for students and teachers with different universities from Greece, Poland and US. In the last 5 years, 8 members of the Department academic staff participated in mobility programmes, but none of the master students participated. Considering that all of the students are engaged in DL programmes, one must assume that if students have problems to move to participate in a conventional programme, it is more difficult for them to engage in mobility programmes.

3.3. Synergies of teaching and research

In general, teaching staff have sufficient expertise in the courses for which they have responsibility. They all have a PhD in related subject areas. However, some FT teachers have a low level of research publications. Teacher collaborators are only

hired for teaching tasks, but at the same time, their research production is an important factor in their selection to work on the programme. This is challenging for collaborator teachers.

During the visit, we found out that there is a programme to support teachers to develop research. This programme includes financial support to attend conferences, publish, and for projects. However, only FT teachers can apply to all these supports. Collaborators can participate in the granted research projects that FT academic leads, but don't have access to grants for conference attendance and publications. The argument not to grant PT academics is their permanence. Nevertheless, some of them have been working in Frederick University for several years and their research productivity contributes also to the programme's reputation.

Teachers explained that they involve students in research, helping them to develop research skills, asking students to search publications and data about one topic, thinking in how to apply research results into practice. In the meeting with the students, they explain that they must do research for all the courses and that is a different perspective of their previous program studies, and they were very satisfied.

Student assessments are in agreement with academic staff observations. They emphasise their enthusiasm for the way the courses develop their research skills.

Strengths

- Data programmes shows that students provide generally positive feedback on this aspect of the course. In the meeting with students, all the participants express their satisfaction with the programme in which they have participated and emphasised how supportive the teachers were. They also provided a wide range of examples of teaching and mentor skills demonstrated by the staff. These observations are in agreement with the numerous examples that teachers provided relating to course management and student involvement. All engagements with staff and demonstrated a noteworthy commitment to their teaching tasks.

- Teachers have periodic meetings with the head of the department to receive feedback about their commitments.

- Teachers explained that they involve students in research, helping them to develop research skills, asking students to search publications and data about topics, and reflecting on how to apply research results in practice. In the meeting with the students, they explained that they actively engage in research tasks for all of the courses and that this marks a significant

difference in perspective from their previous programmes of study. They were very satisfied with this research orientation. Student assessments are in agreement with academic staff observations. They emphasised their enthusiasm for the way courses continually develop their research skills.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Ensure that if run, the MA in Leadership and Administration has an identity of its own and caters for students who consciously chose an in-person programme of study.

- Analyse the possibility of developing a training programme plan increasing the formative actions that provide a wide spectrum of skills, not solely focusing training and development in the realm of technology supported teaching. The achievement of the formative plan could be recognized with a specific accreditation in university teaching methodologies and skills as some universities do.

- Consider implementing programmes and resources to promote innovation initiatives. The teaching innovation prize could be seen as a model for these initiatives, but other initiatives such as a program to provide financial support for innovation projects could have more impact gathering and involving several academics around a project.

- Evaluate the benefits of linking teaching assessments promotion. It is common practice to see career advancement in Higher Education linked to evidenced examples of teaching quality. This can recognise and stimulate teaching quality and prevents teaching being viewed as secondary to research as marker for career advancement. This approach has the benefit not only of recognising good teaching but also of ensuring that students continue to benefit from innovative and high-quality teaching experiences.

- In addition, consideration might be given to linking teaching quality to increased remuneration.

- Consideration should also be given to offering grants for PT academics who have been at Frederick University for several years and could be promoted in the future. The University benefits from research in terms of improving their reputation and increasing teaching quality levels. For private universities could be challenging to compete with public universities in the research productivity, but it's important to guarantee some level of research production to attract students.

- The qualifications for collaborative staff should continue to meet high level quality standards with the holding of or working towards a PhD considered to be important for ensuring that the staff have both adequate skills and knowledge and safeguard the quality of teaching.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
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

Findings

It should be noted that commentary on student related aspects of the programme are integrated throughout this report.

- The admission criteria presented in the application are in place. Nevertheless, the committee identified some differences between the application and the published admission criteria on the website. On the one hand, at the application and admission criteria section (A.5 p. 11-12) it says that "advantage is considered the demonstration of satisfactory knowledge of English Language". On the other hand, the admission criteria on the website say that a very good English Language knowledge is a prerequisite for students' enrolment to the programme.

- In the application and also during the zoom's presentations some extra criteria named as "General Criteria for Distance Learning Programme" were presented. These extra criteria cannot be identified on the program's webpage on the relevant section.

- The regulations about students' progress and recognition are in place and well explained not only in the application but also during our zoom meeting and are also available students' handbooks and on University's website.

- During the onsite visit the staff explained to us that they sometimes use interview techniques in order to examine students' qualifications (e.g., students' prior preparation, etc) further. They admitted that interviewing students happens regularly and especially for distance learning programmes where teachers will not have the opportunity to meet face to face the accepted students.

Strengths

- The student handbook is a nice example of a good practice to support the new students. In this handbook the students are informed on various

processes around their studying including important dates for selecting courses, assessment methods and explanation of the process in case of failing on a course.

- The University's electronic system seems to work pretty well according to multiple sources (students, teachers, and administrative staff) supporting monitoring processes of students' progress, and other requests or concerns of the staff or the students.
- Offering a diploma supplement according to European standards supports students' academic mobility in other European countries offering opportunities for expanding University's reputation and recognition of the program not only nationally but also on international level.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The University should be consistent in its application of English language requirements to ensure that the student body has the competence to engage in the curricular elements that involve English. The present extended admission criteria presented in the application should be also published in the program's webpage. In this way students will be able to know exactly what skills they need to have in order to have a successful completion of the programme.
- The students' handbook describes the general studying regulations applied for every student at the University. It would be useful to offer a differentiated handbook dedicated to students enrolled on a postgraduate distance learning programme.

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

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

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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

Findings

Overall, this is a well-designed programme with sufficient attention to detail in terms of learning and teaching resources and provision for student support.

Strengths

Organisation
- There is a Distance Learning infrastructure that supports the development and delivery of Distance Learning Programmes that overviews quality assurance issues regarding distance learning at the institution, including a Distance Learning Unit which deals with operational and administrative matters associated to the distance learning provision. Pedagogical considerations seem be taken into account in the design and delivery of the programme.
- The nature of the programme is compatible with distance learning delivery.

Programme design and delivery
- There are some established mechanisms and technologies that support interaction between students and staff, mainly the virtual learning environment (VLE, Moodle) and the use of computer mediated communication.
- The virtual learning environment offers opportunities for interaction, predominantly through the use of discussion fora and a chat function.
- There was evidence of activities and exercises that supported student learning and encouraged reflection and self-evaluation.

Staff and student support
- Teacher training and professional development on the specificities of distance learning is offered. This is optional.
- There is an induction to distance and online learning offered to students in the beginning of their studies. This is optional.
- Support is provided to the students, from academic and administrative staff.

Resources

- Adequate sources of information of students are available. There is a library which offers hard and electronic copies of academic texts. We were not able to visit the University because of the pandemic consequently we did not manage to have a hands-on experience of assessing the full extent of physical resources and teaching materials (books, textbooks, scientific journals and databases, etc.) available to support the programme. From discussions we had with the programme team and documentation that we were shown it appears that these seem to be adequate.

Human resources

- Academic staff are either permanent or associate part time lecturers. Administrative staff numbers appear to be adequate for delivery of the programme.

Assessment

- Assessment approaches in the distance learning mode include the use of an end of term exam (50%), and continuous assessment consisting of coursework and formative tasks self-evaluation activities. During the pandemic exam operations were moved online. This had an impact on examination process and on the content of the exam: submission windows, some open book exams. This transition of exams to an open book format seemed to be more suitable for this type of programme and it also helps to address potential issues of academic integrity and academic offences. However, from our discussions there was an indication that the university was moving back to traditional face-to-face exams.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- There seems to be a reliance on end of year exams (50%) that operate mainly in a face-to-face format and have been transferred to online assessment because of the pandemic. An option would be to think about alternative forms of assessment, e.g., coursework or project-based work.
- While the use of formative assessment and activities is commendable in the distance learning delivery, it was not clear from the structure of the activities if they just consisted of optional electronic quizzes that the students were asked to complete. Learning analytics was mentioned as a method for monitoring student progress, however it was not clear if this also applied to the self-assessment activities.
- The virtual learning environment offers opportunities for interaction; however, these seem to be limited. The panel has not seen examples of innovative use of technology such as computer simulation/games or virtual reality, embedded in teaching. In our discussions, the use of virtual and augmented reality was

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mentioned as examples of learning technologies the programme team was planning to develop further.

Recommendations

- We recommend that the induction becomes compulsory for all students as this will help with learning support and the students benefitting further from the affordances of the learning platform

- We recommend that staff professional development around distance and online learning becomes part of a professional accreditation programme.

- We recommend that the online interaction is further developed by the use of technologies such as virtual/augmented reality and simulation/games, use of data analytics to monitor and support students etc. and that the full affordances of the online platform are fully used. In order to ensure full compliance, the panel suggests:

    o The University develops an implementation **plan** to indicate how they will seek to integrate the enhanced online functions mentioned which could include, but not be limited to, the use of technologies such as virtual/augmented reality and simulation/games, use of data analytics to monitor and support students.
    o Further attention be given to enhancing the interactive elements in the programme's online platform to provide personalised feedback to student input.
    o It is not intended that this be completed by the end of the review process rather that there is a firm intention at institutional level to move in this direction.

- We recommend that innovating assessment practice (e.g., use of open book exams) continues after the pandemic as it is more suitable for this type of programme and discipline

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

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

D. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC records its appreciation of the welcome it received from the staff of Frederick University and to commend the manner in which the evaluation visit was conducted. Members of the EEC would like to formally acknowledge the quality of the engagement from the entire Frederick University community and of the time taken to prepare and present us with extensive information on the new programme, and to address our questions.

The committee finds that proposed MA in Educational Administration and Leadership is worthy of support and recommends that it be approved. The programme draws on a range of research and teaching expertise within the School of Education and Social Sciences and is designed in such a manner as to provide prospective students with an in-depth postgraduate engagement with a wide range of challenging and interesting subject specialisms. The focus of the programme on both the application of theory to practice and the provision of high-quality teaching and research experiences in contextually appropriate areas of study is to be particularly welcomed.

All the evidence presented to the EEC would indicate that Frederick University is committed to supporting its students academically, personally, professionally and financially and that the proposed programme will undoubtedly follow this well-established model of excellence.

In terms of the programme's design and delivery – including its proposed curriculum – the EEC suggests that Frederick University continue to challenge itself, its staff and its students to remain at the 'cutting edge' of professional and academic knowledge in the fields of Administration and Leadership. It notes with interest and approval the commitment of the University to provide Greek speaking students with access to translations of relevant English language texts as well as the pedagogic structures put in place to ensure engagement by the student body with key concepts in the areas of Administration and Leadership. It would urge the academic body to continue to produce and publish high quality, contextually relevant research in the Leadership and Administration areas in order to mirror the professional practice contexts of the student body. There is evidence in both the content and teaching focus of the programme to suggest an awareness of the importance of this with attention being paid to critical concepts such as culture, diversity and context when engaging with ideas and practices of leadership and administration.

The EEC further commends the commitment of the University to support the development of research capacity within the teaching staff of the programme. It notes in particular the ability of part time, CAS faculty to access research funding in partnership with full time academic staff. It would urge the University to continue to

prioritise staff development in the research area and to find ways of supporting all staff – full time and part time – to undertake research that is embedded in the realities of the educational experiences of teachers within Cyprus and the broader Hellenic world.

The EEC notes the recent initiation of teaching excellence awards and targeted teaching and learning support seminars/ materials and recommends their continuation. Staff on the MA in Administration and Leadership clearly have a commitment to high quality teaching, and they should continue to prioritise this area of their professional practice. Given the diversity of teaching profiles and experiences, consideration might be given to peer development structures and opportunities formally linked to teaching and learning certification of some sort. The committee notes the significant number of assessment points in the programme under discussion and recommends vigilance with regards to this aspect of course provision.

At a general level, the EEC would suggest that the University needs to keep under observation the balance between teaching, research and academic development – in particular for CAS. While staff indicated a general satisfaction with the manner in which workload (teaching) was applied, there was a recognition that the ongoing currency of their own research work needed supported time to remain current.

Issues relating to the nature and number of assessments also need to be considered by the programme team as does the desirability of keeping those of the pandemic related innovations that benefit students. The EEC particularly draws attention to the highlighted success of open book exams in this context.

The EEC would also like to highlight the importance of coherence with regards to the information held and disseminated by the University across all of its platforms. This is important in the area of programme recruitment, admission criteria, English language requirements and examination protocols. The EEC understands that a process of consolidation and re-design of public facing communications is ongoing and it would see this as being an important project for the University.

The EEC made one finding of partial compliance. We recognise that the University has made substantial progress in the area of technology supported learning and the recommendation – repeated here – is designed to encourage a wider organisational conversation around the nature and opportunities offered by technology supported learning. We expect to outcome to be general plan to be implemented over the short to medium term. To repeat, therefore, we recommend that the online interaction is further developed by the use of technologies such as virtual/augmented reality and simulation/games, use of data analytics to monitor and support students etc. and that the full affordances of the online platform are fully used. In order to ensure full compliance, the EEC suggests:

- The University develops an implementation **plan** to indicate how they will seek to integrate the enhanced online functions mentioned which could include, but not be limited to, the use of technologies such as virtual/augmented reality and simulation/games, use of data analytics to monitor and support students.
- Further attention be given to enhancing the interactive elements in the programme's online platform to provide personalised feedback to student input.

It is not intended that this be completed by the end of the review process.

Overall, the EEC would like to commend the course team involved in the MA in Leadership and Administration for the work they have put into developing a high quality, innovative and impactful programme.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Prof Joe O'Hara	
Prof Josefina Sala Roca	
Prof Leena Krokfors	
Prof Stylianos Hatzipanagos	
Ms Maria Anastasou	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 08/06/2021