ENQA
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION
FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

ΔΙΠΑΕ
CYQAA

ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
THE CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: …May, 17 2019

External evaluation report

- **Higher education institution:**

  European University of Cyprus

- **Town:** …Nicosia
- **Program of study (Name, ECTS, duration, cycle)**

  In Greek: "Βιολογία του Καρκίνου" (Μεταπτυχιακό) …

  In English: "Cancer Biology" (MSc)

- **Language of instruction:** English….

- **Program's status**
  New program:

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

A. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Prof Shai Izraeli	Chair	Tel Aviv University, Israel
Prof Nektarios Tavernarakis	Member	University of Crete, Greece
Prof Assaf Friedler	Member	Hebrew University, Israel
Nikolaos Kourtidis	Student representative	University of Cyprus

1. Study program and study program's design and development
(*ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.8, 1.9*)

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the program 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*

- *The program of study:*
    - *is designed with overall program objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
    - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*

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- o *benefits from external expertise*
- o *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)*
- o *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
- o *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
- o *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- o *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- o *results to 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*
- o *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline thus ensuring that the program is up to date*
- o *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, the student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the program*
- o *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

- *Public information (clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible):*
  - o *about the program of study offered*
  - o *the selection criteria*
  - o *the intended learning outcomes*
  - o *the qualification awarded*
  - o *the teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
  - o *the pass rates*
  - o *the learning opportunities available to the students*
  - o *graduate employment information*

-

Findings

The European University Cyprus (EUC) is a comprehensive private university teaching a wide variety of topics. There are 6200 students of them 25% are MSc students and 2% PhD students. Relevant to the current proposal the University has a undergraduate program in biology, a school of Medicine and Dentistry and a strong computer sciences department including a Microsoft innovation center. Currently there is no MSc or PhD program in the faculty of life sciences.

Strengths

1. *The University is an established teaching facility with a large number of MSc students in other areas. Thus there is significant experience in all issues regarding education of graduate students*
2. *The proposed program is an international program that will be taught in English*
3. *The acting Dean and the rest of the faculty are young, ambitious and enthusiastic. They have excellent training from superb research groups worldwide. They achieved quite a bit in building the infrastructure for the proposed program*
4. *Talking with the vice-rector we were impressed that the University is highly committed to this program*
5. *The area of the proposed program, Cancer Biology, is an area with high added value in biomedical research. It scope is wide thus potentially allowing integration with multiple areas beyond basic biology – for example bioinformatics imaging etc. Thus the choice of this specific topic for the first MSc program in life sciences has the potential with integration with other leading activities of the University. Furthermore it may encourage additional faculty for joining the University*
6. *EUC has extensive undergraduate education program in sciences. Therefore there is a larger reservoir of students that may continue to MSc, if such a program would exist.*
7. *The teaching courses are well thought and well planned*
8. *Strong collaborators from outside the University*

Areas of improvement and recommendations

1. *This is a very ambitious program which is, of course, excellent. However we are concerned that the number of faculty members who are active scientists and the relative limited laboratory space may not be compatible with a steady state of 30 MSc students (15 per year). Hence we have the following recommendations:*
   a. *We recommend accepting only 10 students per year in the first two years*
   b. *In the frontal courses (compulsory or elective) to allow participation of students outside the program , for example excellent students from the last year of the undergraduate program. This will increase the number of students in the courses (compensating for the lower acceptance to the MSc program during the first 2-3 years) and create a "pool" of optional future students*
   c. *Prepare a list of potential Master Thesis research projects and the specific instructors for the first year and publish them on the website, This will assist in specific planning of the program and also will attract students*
   d. *To enhance the potential faculty – enhance collaborations with other faculties within and outside the university.*

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2. *There are no clear criteria for admission. There is a need for at least to determine the lower threshold for acceptance*

Note what is applicable for each quality indicator/criterion

1 – 4: Non-compliant

5 or 6: Partially compliant

7 or 8: Substantially compliant

9 or 10: Fully compliant

	Quality indicators/criteria	1 - 10
1.1	Participation in quality assurance processes is ensured for:	
	1.1.1 the members of the teaching staff	10
	1.1.2 the members of the administrative staff	10
	1.1.3 the students	10
	1.1.4 other stakeholders	10
1.2	The guide and / or the regulations for quality assurance, provide detailed information and data for the support and management of the program of study.	10
1.3	The quality assurance process constitutes an academic process and it is not restricted by non-academic factors.	10
1.4	The organization of the educational process safeguards the quality implementation of the program's purpose, objectives and the achievement of the learning outcomes. Particularly, the following are taken into consideration:	
	1.4.1 The implementation of a specific academic calendar and its timely publication	10
	1.4.2 The disclosure of the program's curricula to the students, and their implementation by the teaching staff	10
	1.4.3 The course web-pages, updated with the relevant supplementary material	NA
	1.4.4 The procedures for the fulfillment of undergraduate and postgraduate assignments / practical training	10
	1.4.5 The procedures for the conduct and the format of the examinations and for student assessment	10

	1.4.6	The effective provision of information to the students and the enhancement of their participation in the procedures for the improvement of the educational process	10
1.5		The purpose and objectives of the program of study are formulated in terms of expected learning outcomes and are consistent with the mission and the strategy of the institution.	10
1.6		The purpose and objectives of the program and the learning outcomes are utilized as a guide for the design of the program of study.	10
1.7		The following ensure the achievement of the program's purpose, objectives and the learning outcomes:	
	1.7.1	The number of courses	10
	1.7.2	The program's content	10
	1.7.3	The methods of assessment	10
	1.7.4	The teaching material	10
	1.7.5	The equipment	8
1.8		The expected learning outcomes of the program are known to the students and to the members of the teaching staff.	10 (NA for students as there are no students
1.9		The learning process is properly designed to achieve the expected learning outcomes.	10
1.10		It is ensured that learning outcomes may be achieved within the specified timeframe.	10
1.11		The program, in addition to the courses focusing on the specific discipline, includes an adequate number of general education courses according to the European practice.	10
1.12		The content of the program's courses reflects the latest achievements / developments in science, arts, research and technology.	10
1.13		New research results are embodied in the content of the program of study.	10
1.14		The content of foundation courses is designed to prepare the students for the first year of their chosen undergraduate degree.	NA

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1.15	The program of study is structured in a consistent manner and in sequence, so that concepts operating as preconditions precede the teaching of other, more complex and cognitively more demanding, concepts.		10
1.16	The learning outcomes and the content of the program are consistent.		10
1.17	The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is applied and there is correspondence between credits, workload and expected learning outcomes per course and per semester.		10
1.18	The higher education qualification awarded to the students, corresponds to the purpose, objectives and the learning outcomes of the program.		10
1.19	The higher education qualification and the program of study, conform to the provisions of their corresponding professional and vocational bodies for the purpose of registration to these bodies.		10
1.20	Program's management with regard to its design, its approval, its monitoring and its review, is in place.		10
1.21	It is ensured that the program's management and development process is an academic process which operates without any non-academic interventions.		10
1.22	The program's collaborations with other institutions provide added value and are compared positively with corresponding collaborations of other departments / programs of study in Europe and internationally.		10
1.23	Procedures are applied so that the program conforms to the scientific and professional activities of the graduates.		10
1.24	Indicators for the employability of graduates and the employability record of the department's graduates are described in the feasibility study.		10
1.25	The graduation rate for the program of study is analogous to other programs with similar content.		10
1.26	The program of study benefits the society.		10
1.27	Information relating to the program of study are posted publicly and include:		
	1.27.1	The provisions regarding ECTS	NA
	1.27.2	The expected learning outcomes	NA
	1.27.3	The methodology	NA
	1.27.4	Course descriptions	NA
	1.27.5	The program's structure	NA
	1.27.6	The admission requirements	NA

| 1.27.7 | The format and the procedures for student assessment | NA |
| 1.27.8 | The pass rates | NA |

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Please circle one of the following for:

Study program and study program's design and development

Fully compliant

2. Teaching, learning and student assessment (*ESG 1.3*)

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development and respects their needs.*
- *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.*
- *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.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for and 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.*

-

Findings
See comments above

Strengths
See comments above

Areas of improvement and recommendations
See above

Note what is applicable for each quality indicator/criterion

compliant

5 or 6: Partially compliant

7 or 8: Substantially compliant

9 or 10: Fully compliant

	Quality indicators/criteria	1 - 10
2.1	The number of students in each class allows for constructive teaching and communication.	7
2.2	The number of students in each class compares positively to the current international standards and/or practices.	7
2.3	A policy for regular and effective communication, between the teaching staff and the students, is applied.	10
2.4	The methodology utilized in each course leads to the achievement of the course's purpose and objectives and those of the individual modules.	10
2.5	Formative assessment and feedback are provided to the students regularly.	NA
2.6	The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance, are clear, adequate, and known to the students.	10
2.7	Educational activities which encourage students' active participation in the learning process, are implemented.	10
2.8	Teaching incorporates the use of modern educational technologies that are consistent with international standards, including a platform for the electronic support of learning.	10
2.9	Teaching materials (books, manuals, journals, databases, and teaching notes) meet the requirements set by the methodology of the program's individual courses, and are updated regularly.	10
2.10	It is ensured that teaching and learning have been enlightened by research.	10
2.11	Students, teaching and administrative staff participate in research activities and projects.	7
2.12	Students are trained in the research process.	NA
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies. 2.1 – there is a need to ensure enough participation in the elective courses. This can be achieved by allowing some advanced undergraduate students to participate as well as students from other disciplines.		

2.11 This is a very ambitious program which is, of course, excellent. However, we are concerned that the number of faculty members who are active scientists and the relative limited laboratory space may not be compatible with a steady state of 30 MSc students (15 per year). Hence we have the following recommendations:

    a. We recommend accepting only 10 students per year in the first two years

    b. In the frontal courses (compulsory or elective) to allow participation of students outside the program , for example excellent students from the last year of the undergraduate program. This will increase the number of students in the courses (compensating for the lower acceptance to the MSc program during the first 2-3 years) and create a "pool" of optional future students

    c. Prepare a list of potential Master Thesis research projects and the specific instructors for the first year and publish them on the website, This will assist in specific planning of the program and also will attract students

    d. To enhance the potential faculty – enhance collaborations with other faculties within and outside the university.

Please circle one of the following for:

Teaching, learning and student assessment

Substantially compliant

3. **Teaching Staff** (*ESG 1.5*)

Standards

- *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 program, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *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).*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participate in teaching the study program.*

- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Assessment of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*

-

Findings
See comments at the beginning. The EUC has a substantial experience in teaching

Strengths
Enough excellent teachers for the frontal courses including visiting faculty from Cyprus and abroad. For example the immunology/immunotherapy course will be lead by an outstanding scientist from University of Athens

Areas of improvement and recommendations
There are not enough faculty in with substantial ongoing research in EUC facilities. This can be overcome by including more collaborating/visiting faculty and other senior research faculty from the medical school and the computer sciences departments in EUC school of sciences. This is important for guidance of MSc theses and by future recruitment of additional research faculty to EUC.

Note what is applicable for each quality indicator/criterion

1 – 4: Non-compliant

5 or 6: Partially compliant

7 or 8: Substantially compliant

9 or 10: Fully compliant

	Quality indicators/criteria	1 - 10
3.1	The number of full-time teaching staff, occupied exclusively at the institution, and their fields of expertise, adequately support the program of study.	7
3.2	The members of teaching staff for each course have the relevant formal and fundamental qualifications for teaching the course, as described by the legislation, including the following:	
	3.2.1 Subject specialization, preferably with a doctorate, in the discipline	10
	3.2.2 Publications within the discipline	10
3.3	The program attracts visiting professors of recognized academic standing.	10

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3.4	The specializations of visiting professors adequately support the program of study.	10
3.5	Special teaching staff and special scientists have the necessary qualifications, adequate work experience and specialization to teach a limited number of courses in the program of study.	10
3.6	In every program of study the special teaching staff does not exceed 30% of the permanent teaching staff.	10
3.7	In the program of study, the ratio of the number of courses taught by full-time staff, occupied exclusively at the institution, to the number of courses taught by part-time staff, ensures the quality of the program of study.	10
3.8	The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching staff supports and safeguards of the program's quality.	7
3.9	The teaching load allows the conduct of research and contribution to society.	10
3.10	Future redundancies / retirements, expected recruitment and promotions of teaching staff safeguard the unimpeded implementation of the program of study within a five-year span.	10
3.11	The program's coordinator has the qualifications and experience to coordinate the program of study.	10
3.12	The results of the teaching staff's research activity are published in international journals with the peer-reviewing system, in international conferences, conference minutes, publications etc.	10
3.13	The teaching staff are provided with training opportunities in teaching methods, adult education and new technologies.	10
3.14	Feedback processes for teaching staff with regards to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.	10

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

3.7 see general comment above about the need for more faculty members to guide MSc research theses

3.8 – see our general recommendation above to limit the number of MSc students to 10 per year for the first few years

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Please circle one of the following for:

Teaching Staff

Substantially compliant

4. **Students** (*ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7*)

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission, progression, recognition and certification are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*
- *Information on students, like key performance indicators, profile of the student population, student progression, success and drop-out rates, students' satisfaction with their programs, learning resources and student support available, career paths of graduates, is collected, monitored and analyzed.*
- *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.*

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- *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.*
- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population (such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities).*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Students are involved in evaluating the teaching staff.*
- *Students' mobility is encouraged and supported.*

Findings
There are still no students in this program

Strengths
There is significant experience in the university with MSC students. Currently 1239 MSC students and 64 PhD students in the University.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
Clearer admission criteria including acceptance thresholds are required.

Note what is applicable for each quality indicator/criterion

1 – 4: Non-compliant

5 or 6: Partially compliant

7 or 8: Substantially compliant

9 or 10: Fully compliant

	Quality indicators/criteria	1 - 10
4.1	The student admission requirements of the program of study, are based on specific regulations and suitable criteria.	7
4.2	The award of the higher education qualification is accompanied by the diploma supplement which is in line with the European and international standards.	10
4.3	The program' s evaluation mechanism, by the students, is effective.	NA
4.4	Students participation in exchange programs is compared favorably to similar programs across Europe.	10
4.5	There is a student welfare service that supports students with regards to academic, personal problems and difficulties.	10

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4.6	Statutory mechanisms, for the support of students and the communication with the teaching staff, are effective.	10
4.7	Control mechanisms for student performance are effective.	10
4.8	Flexible options / adaptable to the personal needs or to the needs of students with special needs, are provided.	10

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

4.1 – *Clearer admission criteria including acceptance thresholds are required.*

Please circle one of the following for:

Students

5. Resources (*ESG 1.6*)

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, financial, physical and human support resources*) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study program.*
  * Physical resources: premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, etc.
  Human support resources: tutors/mentors, counselors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff
- *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.*
- *Teaching staff is involved in the management of financial resources regarding the program of study.*

-

Findings
There is a substantial experience in teaching and all resources for teaching are available. Research facilities are new and space is limited
Strengths
There is a big investment for developing research resources

Areas of improvement and recommendations
Research space is insufficient for 30 (15X2) MSC students

Note what is applicable for each quality indicator/criterion

1 – 4: Non-compliant

5 or 6: Partially compliant

Substantially compliant

9 or 10: Fully compliant

Quality indicators/criteria			1 - 10
5.1	Adequate and modern learning resources, are available to the students, including the following:		
	5.1.1	facilities	7
	5.1.2	library	10
	5.1.3	infrastructure	7
	5.1.4	student welfare	10
	5.1.5	academic mentoring	8
5.2	Statutory administrative mechanisms for monitoring and supporting students are sufficient.		10
5.3	Suitable books and reputable journals support the program of study.		10
5.4	An internal communication platform supports the program of study.		10
5.5	The equipment used in teaching and learning (laboratory and electronic equipment, consumables etc) are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate.		10
5.6	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are adequate and accessible to students.		10
5.7	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are updated regularly with the most recent publications.		10
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies. 5.1.1, 5.1.3 and 5.15 – as described above there is a need for more lab space and more teachers to guide MSC students in their MSC thesis			

Please circle one of the following for:

Resources

Substantially compliant

6. **Additional for distance learning programs** *(ALL ESG) Not relevant*

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Standards

- **_The distance learning methodology is appropriate for the particular program of study_**_.
- _A pedagogical planning unit for distance learning, which is responsible for the support of the distance learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established._
- _Feedback processes for students in relation to written assignments are set._
- _Specific plan is developed to ensure student interaction with each other, with the teaching staff, and the study material._
- _Teacher training programs focusing on interaction and the specificities of distance learning are offered._
- _A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on distance learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination._
- _Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, guidance are set._
- _A study guide for each course, fully aligned with distance learning methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:_
  - _Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the program, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner_
  - _Presentation of course material, on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)_
  - _Weekly outline of set activities and exercises and clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback_
  - _Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide_
  - _Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study_
  - _Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material_
  - _Synopsis_

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7. **Additional for doctoral programs** _(ALL ESG) – Not Relevant_

8. **Additional for joint programs** *(ALL ESG) Not relevant*

Note what is applicable for each quality indicator/criterion

1 – 4: Non-compliant

5 or 6: Partially compliant

7 or 8: Substantially compliant

9 or 10: Fully compliant

B. **Conclusions and final remarks**

This is an ambitious program that is highly likely to succeed. It will lead to training of future professional in an highly demanded field. It is also likely to serve as a basis for future PhDs in biomedical and life sciences sciences in EUC and other Cypriot universities.

Thus, our clear recommendation is to approve, in principle this program, subject to some modifications as detailed below:

   a. *We recommend accepting only 10 students per year in the first two years*
   b. *In the frontal courses (compulsory or elective) to allow participation of students outside the program, for example excellent students from the last year of the undergraduate program. This will increase the number of students in the courses (compensating for the lower acceptance to the MSc program during the first 2-3 years) and create a "pool" of optional future students*
   c. *Prepare a list of potential Master Thesis research projects and the specific instructors for the first year and publish them on the website, This will assist in specific planning of the program and also will attract students*
   d. *Planning and building additional lab space that should be ready by the third year of the program when the number of students will reach a steady state of 30 (15X2).*
   e. *To enhance the potential faculty – enhance collaborations with other faculties within and outside the university.*
   f. *Clearer admission criteria with a defined acceptance threshold*

C. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Prof Shai Izraeli	
Prof Nektarios Tavernarakis	
Prof Assaf Friedler	
Nikolaos Kourtidis	

Date: …17 May 2019