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External Evaluation Report

(Programmatic within the framework of Departmental Evaluation)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
European University of Cyprus
 - **Town:** Nicosia
 - **School/Faculty:** School of Medicine, School of Sciences
 - **Department:** Interdepartmental (Department of Medicine of the School of Medicine and Department of Health Sciences of the School of Sciences)
 - **Programme(s) of study - Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
Programme 1 – PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)
- Language(s) of instruction:** English

[Title 2]

[Title 3]

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 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

A. Introduction

The European University of Cyprus has applied for getting the right to deliver training and release PhD degree in the field of public health at the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education.

As the staff declared the University has a PhD programme which was accredited by a different accreditation agency in 2013. No detailed information about this can be found in the Internal Evaluation document. The website of the University refers in Greek to a PhD programme in Public Health. The permission to train PhD students is valid till 2020.

Reflecting multidisciplinary of public health, the University has developed a new interdepartmental PhD programme in 2019, i.e., two Schools (Medicine and Sciences) together, but as an evolution of the current one operating in Greek postgraduate training.

The University presented the agency and in consequence us with the internal evaluation document which contains the most important facts about the structure, content, methodology and expected outcomes of the training. During the site visit presentations were given by the staff with slightly different content in comparison with the internal evaluation document.

The staff convinced the visiting committee about their strong dedication to develop and implement a PhD programme being in harmony with the international standards.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Roza Adany	Professor of Public Health	University of Debrecen, Hungary
Alex Burdorf	Professor of Public Health	Erasmus Medical Centre, Rotterdam, the Netherlands
Edouard Battegay	Professor of Internal Medicine	University of Zurich and University Hospital, Zurich, Switzerland
Eleni Xenophontos	Medical Student	University of Cyprus, Cyprus

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 5		
1.	Study programme and study programme's design and development	<i>PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/- 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)</i>	[Title 2]	[Title 3]
1.1	Academic oversight of the programme design is ensured.	4	Choose mark	Choose mark
1.2	Internal Quality Assurance processes safeguard the quality and the fulfillment of the programme's purpose, objectives and the achievement of the learning outcomes. Particularly, the following are taken into consideration:			
1.2.1	The programme webpage information and material	2	Choose mark	Choose mark
1.2.2	The procedures for the fulfillment of undergraduate and postgraduate assignments / practical training	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
1.2.3	The procedures for the conduct and the format of the examinations and for student assessment	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
1.2.4	Students' participation procedures for the improvement of the programme and of the educational process	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
1.3	The knowledge (theoretical and/or factual) gained is of the appropriate level to which the programme of study corresponds to, according to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
1.4	The skills (cognitive and practical) obtained are of the appropriate level to which the programme of study corresponds to, according to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
1.5	Samples of assignments and exams ensure the ability of the learner to apply knowledge and skills autonomously and with responsibility, according to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).	5	Choose mark	Choose mark

1.6	The content of the programme's courses reflects the latest achievements / developments in science, arts, research and technology.	3	Choose mark	Choose mark
1.7	Students' command of the language of instruction is appropriate.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
1.8	The learning outcomes and the content of the courses are consistent.	4	Choose mark	Choose mark
1.9	The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is applied and there is correspondence between credits, workload and expected learning outcomes per course and per semester.	4	Choose mark	Choose mark
1.10	The higher education qualification and the programme of study conform to the provisions for registration to their corresponding professional and vocational bodies for the purpose of exercising a particular profession.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark

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

See findings and recommendations.

Provide information on:

1. Employability records

Students consider getting PhD degree important to get an attractive job and to be promoted by their employers. Records are available for this particular program.

2. Pass rate per course/semester

No information is available.

Findings

Findings for PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)

The website gives information only for the existing PhD training in Greek (although the language of the website is English). No information is given on the development of the interdepartmental programme.

Some of the students involved in the programme are (and supposedly will be) part time students, so the ECTS calculations cannot be in full accordance with the current way of credit calculation.

Strengths

Strengths for PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)

The interdepartmental nature of the programme.

The involvement of students in the evaluation and improvement of the programme

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)

Concerning the learning programme certain crucial elements of modern public health methodology are not visible in the documentation. The subject of epidemiology, as a basic methodology of public health, is not properly addressed. The description of the advanced research methodology course is very superficial, not detailed information about the public health methodology including study designs. In addition, basic and fundamental sub-disciplines of public health are not fully represented in the documentation. There is no adequate discrimination between medical and health sciences issues relevant for public health.

The schools are encouraged to improve the content of the curriculum by inserting modern public health methodology (ecological study design, multilevel models), statistics (for example Bayesian methods, repeated measurements, big data analytics, etc.), creating, handling and validating databases, respecting data protection, reflecting emerging topics regarding global health aspects, etc.

Please tick one of the following for each programme:

Study programme and study programme's design and development

	Non-Compliant	Partially Compliant	Compliant
PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[Title 2]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[Title 3]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Teaching, learning and student assessment

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 5		
2.	Teaching, learning and student assessment	<i>PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)</i>	[Title 2]	[Title 3]
2.1	The teaching and learning process is adequate and effective for the achievement of the expected learning outcomes.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
2.2	The actual/expected number of students in each class compares positively to the current international standards and/or practices.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
2.3	The methodology implemented in each course leads to the achievement of the course's purpose and objectives and those of the individual modules.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
2.4	Constructive formative assessment for learning and feedback are regularly provided to the students.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
2.5	The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear, adequate, and known to the students.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
2.6	Educational activities which encourage students' active participation in the learning process are implemented.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
2.7	Teaching incorporates the use of modern educational technologies that are consistent with international standards, including a platform for the electronic support of learning.	4	Choose mark	Choose mark
2.8	Teaching materials (books, manuals, journals, databases, and teaching notes) meet the requirements set by the methodology of the programme's courses and are updated regularly.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
2.9	It is ensured that teaching and learning are continuously enriched by research.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark

2.10	The programme promotes students' research skills and inquiry learning.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
2.11	Students are adequately trained in the research process.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark

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

See findings and recommendations.

Findings

Findings for PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)

The size of groups in training is optimal for effective teaching. The students are dedicated to achieve sufficient knowledge and skills to their future work. The students are actively involved in further improvement both the content of training and teaching methodology.

Strengths

Strengths for PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)

The faculty/student ratio is very favourable (1:3.2), the faculty members can be easily accessed by the students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)

Considering the fact that students are frequently part-time ones introducing certain e-learning modules into the curriculum might be useful.

Please tick one of the following for each programme:

Teaching, learning and student assessment

	Non-Compliant	Partially Compliant	Compliant
PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
[Title 2]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[Title 3]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Teaching Staff

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 5		
3.	Teaching Staff	<i>PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters / - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)</i>	[Title 2]	[Title 3]
3.1	The number of full-time teaching staff, occupied exclusively at the institution, and their fields of expertise, adequately support the programme of study.	3	Choose mark	Choose mark
3.2	The members of teaching staff for each course have the relevant formal and fundamental qualifications for teaching the course, including the following:			
3.2.1	Subject specialisation	3	Choose mark	Choose mark
3.2.2	Research and Publications within the discipline	3	Choose mark	Choose mark
3.2.3	Experience / training in teaching in higher education	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
3.3	The programme attracts visiting professors of recognized academic standing.	3	Choose mark	Choose mark
3.4	In the programme 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 programme of study.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
3.5	The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching staff supports and safeguards the programme's quality.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
3.6	The teaching load allows for the conduct of research and contribution to society.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
3.7	The programme's coordinator has the qualifications and experience to coordinate the programme of study.	3	Choose mark	Choose mark

3.8	The teaching staff is provided with adequate training opportunities in teaching methods, adult education and new technologies.	4	Choose mark	Choose mark
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Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

See findings and recommendations

Provide information on the following:

In every programme of study, the special teaching staff should not exceed 30% of the permanent teaching staff.

Almost exclusively permanent staff members are involved in the PhD training.

Findings

Findings for PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)

The majority of the staff in the Faculty of Medicine does not really represent multidisciplinary public health. Almost none of them had formal training in public health, although some of them have very impressive scientific record in other disciplines. From the academic point of view they are well equipped for supervising PhD students, but the main concern on the quality of public health training remains.

One of the program coordinators does not have relevant track records in research, while the other coordinator has no experience in supervising PhD students (his PhD degree was obtained in 2017). Discerning the administrative tasks of coordination versus academic leadership needs to be reconsidered. The current appointment of one of the coordinator(s) without a dedicated track records in Public Health or science is suggested to be administrative. There is a lack of academic leadership at the senior level in Public Health.

Strengths

Strengths for PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)

An adequate research environment has been created. Teachers invest substantial time and efforts into supervision.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)

Upgrading training for faculty members in the field of public health sub-fields is strongly recommended (see programs of different public health training institutions).

Publication activities in the field of public health should be significantly improved especially in case of staff members from the School of Medicine.

A research agenda with focus on public health topics should be established in collaboration of the two Schools.

Inviting visiting professors from leading European institutions to cover fields missing is strongly suggested.

Internationally recognized academic leaders in Public Health should be recruited to the programme.

Please tick one of the following for each programme:

Teaching Staff

	Non-Compliant	Partially Compliant	Compliant
<i>PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[Title 2]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[Title 3]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Students

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 5		
4.	Students	<i>PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters / - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)</i>	[Title 2]	[Title 3]
4.1	The student admission requirements for the programme of study are based on specific regulations and suitable criteria that are favourably compared to international practices.	4	Choose mark	Choose mark
4.2	The programme's evaluation mechanism, by the students, is effective.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
4.3	Students' participation in exchange programmes is compared favourably to similar programmes across Europe.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
4.4	Statutory mechanisms, for the support of students and the communication with the teaching staff, are effective.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
4.5	Students are satisfied with their learning experiences.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
4.6	Students' command of the language of instruction is appropriate.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark

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

See findings and recommendations.

Findings

Findings for PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)

The admission requirement (see page 7 of the Internal Evaluation) "In case that a candidate is a holder of only a Bachelor's degree, he/she has to attend first, master level courses of 60 ECTS (e.g. six courses). With the successful completion of those courses, the student will qualify to attend and complete the PhD program 240 (60+180=240)" is not in harmony neither with the Bologna process nor international practice.

Strengths

Strengths for PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)

Communication between students and teachers is very active and effective.

The interdisciplinary background of the students is impressive.

Participation of students in the Erasmus+ mobility program is very useful.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)

To raise admission requirements to international standards, i.e., only students with master degree or corresponding extent of formal education (eg MDs) may enter into the PhD training, is highly suggested.

Please circle one of the following for each programme:

Students

	Non-Compliant	Partially Compliant	Compliant
PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
[Title 2]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[Title 3]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Resources

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 5		
5. Resources		<i>PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semester s/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)</i>	[Title 2]	[Title 3]
5.1	Adequate and modern learning resources are available to the students.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
5.2	The library includes the latest books and material that support the programme.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
5.3	The library loan system facilitates students' studies.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
5.4	The laboratories adequately support the programme.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
5.5	Statutory administrative mechanisms for monitoring and supporting students are sufficient.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
5.6	Suitable books and reputable journals support the programme of study.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
5.7	An internal communication platform supports the programme of study.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark
5.8	The equipment used in teaching and learning (laboratory and electronic equipment, consumables etc.) are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate.	5	Choose mark	Choose mark

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

See findings and recommendations.

Findings

Findings for *PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)*

In the new, modern buildings of the Schools an excellent library and well-equipped laboratories can be found. Adequate and modern learning resources are available.

Strengths

Strengths for *PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)*

Each lecture room features modern telecommunication system and video recording.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Areas of improvement and recommendations for *PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)*

Further strengthen the communication/collaboration with other PhD programs.
Enter into European public health organizations (as ASPHER, EUPHA).

Please circle one of the following for each programme:

Resources

	Non-Compliant	Partially Compliant	Compliant
<i>PhD in Public Health (3 years /6 semesters/ - 180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
[Title 2]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[Title 3]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Additional for doctoral programmes

Quality indicators/criteria		1 - 5
6.1	The structure and the content of a doctoral programme of study ensure the quality provision of doctoral studies.	3
6.2	The doctoral studies' supervisors have the necessary academic qualifications and experience for the supervision of the specific dissertations.	4
6.3	The research interests of academic advisors and supervisors adequately cover the thematic areas of research conducted by the doctoral students of the programme.	5
6.4	Research equipment, laboratories, workshops and existing bibliographic material support the programme of study.	5
6.5	The quality of the doctoral theses of the programme in this field is in line with international standards.	4
6.6	Doctoral candidates have publications in scientific journals and/ or participate in international conferences.	4
6.7	The candidates demonstrate skills in designing and in conducting productive self-directed research.	4
6.8	Candidates are aware of the ethical implications of their research and of their responsibilities as scientists.	4
6.9	Suitable procedures of monitoring and periodic assessment of students' research progress are set.	5

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

See findings and recommendations.

Findings

The programme is focused on compulsory courses, no activities supporting continuing and education during the entire PhD trajectory can be found, eg summer schools, seminars, etc.. GDPR considerations seem to be missing in some cases.

Strengths

Cyprus-wide electronic access to scientific journals is highly appreciated.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Activities to support continuing and upgrading education as well as to further strengthen professional communication between students should be introduced (as journal clubs, thematic events, seminars, etc).

Publications in peer-reviewed international journals of reasonable quality in the field of public health should be a basic requirement.

Ethical issues and privacy regulations in collecting and managing data should be strongly considered.

Please tick one of the following for:

Additional for doctoral programmes

	<i>Non-Compliant</i>	<i>Partially Compliant</i>	<i>Compliant</i>
PhD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

C. Conclusions and final remarks

The staff of the Schools of Medicine and Sciences have created a more developed international PhD programme in the field of public health and are ready to implement it in an attractive student-friendly environment. The teacher/student ratio is extremely favourable, and it allows to create a truly interactive and frequent supervision of PhD students/studies. The content of compulsory courses should be further developed by improving comprehensive public health methodology and addressing various required issues and contents of Public Health. The lack of a senior academic leader in Public Health should be addressed. Training materials should also be improved as to health economics and public health policy development, in order to more effectively transfer knowledge into practice. Research and consequently publication activities should focus on public health challenges and thereby support the credibility of the PhD programme.

D. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Roza Adany	
Alex Burdorf	
Edouard Battegay	
Eleni Xenophontos	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 8 February, 2020

