

# Higher Education Institution's Response

(Departmental)

Date: 30/1/21

- Higher Education Institution: CYPRUS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
- Town: LIMASSOL
- School/Faculty: SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES
- Department: REHABILITATION SCIENCES (SPEECH LANGUAGE THERAPY)
- Programme(s) of study under evaluation  
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

## Programme 1

In Greek:

Πτυχίο Επιστημών Αποκατάστασης στην κατεύθυνση  
Λογοθεραπείας/Λογοπαθολογίας (4 Έτη, 240 ECTS, πτυχίο)

In English:

BSc in Rehabilitation Sciences/Speech Language Therapy/Speech  
Language Pathology(4 years, 240 ECTS, bachelor)

## Programme 2

In Greek:

PhD ΔΙΔΑΚΤΟΡΙΚΟ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΕΣ ΑΠΟΚΑΤΑΣΤΑΣΗΣ 8 ΕΞΑΜΗΝΑ 240  
ECTS

In English:

PHD IN REHABILITATION SCIENCES 8 SEMESTERS 240 ECTS  
LANGUAGE GREEK AND ENGLISH CYCLE 5

- Department's Status: Currently Operating

A.

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 external examination committee (from now on EEC) was asked by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education to evaluate the Bachelor in Rehabilitation Sciences – Speech- Language Therapy/Speech Pathology at the Cyprus University of Technology in October (26th) 2020. The evaluation included a thorough analysis of the report prepared by the institution. Also a virtual tour of the University of Technology and the specific rehabilitation clinic were added. There was also the possibility to follow live streaming of the courses. Due to the Corona pandemic a remote site visit (using ZOOM) took place on the 26th of October 2020. The ECC had online meetings with the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs Prof. Keriles, with the dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences Prof. Middleton and the department head of the program Prof. Petinou. The EEC had also the opportunity to meet the teaching staff, one student from the bachelor program and the administrative staff. The academic Bachelor program in Rehabilitation Sciences consist of 4 years (8 semesters/each semester has 30 ECTS) corresponding to 240 ECTS. The training of the students will be achieved through compulsory courses, elective courses, the writing of a thesis and several clinical education courses (different levels) and clinical placement opportunities. The PhD program in Rehabilitation Sciences coordinated by Prof. Konstantinou consists of 4 years (8 semester/each semester has 30 ECTS) corresponding to 240 ECTS. The program requirements are 60 ECTS compulsory courses and 180 ECTS (6 semesters of 30 ECTS/semester) undergraduate/postgraduate assignments. After reading the accreditation report, the EEC had some questions on the various aspects that they needed to be evaluated in this report. Most of these questions were answered satisfactorily and the meetings led to insightful extra information. Some additional information was submitted after the online meetings. On the basis of this, the EEC can conclude that all standards are met. Below we will give a more elaborate description of how these standards are met and in some cases we give some suggestions for improvement.

B. This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

C. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name Position University

Ona Bo Wie Professor University of Oslo Name

Rosemary Varley Professor University College London

Name Kristiane Van Lierde Professor University Ghent, Belgium

Name Anna Theodoulou Member of the Professional Association Body University

Name Evrydiki Kolokoudia Student psychology University of Cyprus Name

#### A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*
  - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
  - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*
  - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.1.1).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

#### D. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas and sub-areas.

Under each assessment area there are quality indicators (criteria) to be scored by the EEC on a scale from one (1) to five (5), based on the degree of compliance for the above mentioned quality indicators (criteria). The scale used is explained below:

1 or 2: Non-compliant 3: Partially compliant 4 or 5: Compliant

The EEC must justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

It is pointed out that, in the case of indicators (criteria) that cannot be applied due to the status of the Department, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted and a detailed explanation should be provided on the Department's corresponding policy regarding the specific quality indicator.

□ In addition, for each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements. In particular, the following must be included:

Findings A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - 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 followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation. □ The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.

## 1. Department's academic profile and orientation

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**Areas of improvement and recommendations** A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Increased recruitment of international students would be nice (in the bachelor program). An increased collaboration between other departments and other universities is suggested by the EEC.

*Noted as a recommendation, one way to increase recruitment of international students is through ERASMUS + projects. Currently the department holds several Memoranda of Understanding MOU with numerous Universities. A number of students have been attending the program and specifically have been taking the courses taught in English. Note that the language of the program is Greek, a fact that compromises optimum attraction of international students. Nevertheless, over the past three years the program has been offering courses in English (e.g., SLT 452 Evidence Based Practice). The revised program includes classes taught in English aiming to attract international students and familiarize the Greek-speaking students with the English language. Furthermore, the Department organizes seminars and offers interdepartmental courses taught by colleagues as per elective course requirements. Regarding collaboration with other departments the program offers interdepartmental courses and co-supervision of bachelor's theses (Faculty from Cyprus International Institute CII). In some courses students might have a chance to tutor their peers on a number of clinical cases that are of particular interest (i.e., through our affiliation and MOU with the Cyprus Institute of neurology & genetics offering the trading on dysphagia evaluation and in special populations such as neurodegenerative disorders; in addition students can tutor their peers on specific disorders (i.e. laryngectomy rehabilitation) through their involvement with a number of Hospitals and ENT affiliations*

## 2. Quality Assurance

**Areas of improvement and recommendations** A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

**Lack of clarity of internal quality audit processes**

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*This is indeed a very important recommendation. In addressing this issue, we provide a table/list of the process and steps involved in quality assurance related to the program. There is a two-fold process involving a University Quality Assurance Committee and a Departmental Quality Assurance Committee. Specifically, the University has set up an Internal audit committee which consists of members from all University Faculties. They have developed an internal audit process which nevertheless is monitored closely, and updated with each iteration. The process of Quality Control entails a number of stages that also encompass feedback from students: 1. Department Quality Control Committee with Students Representatives reviews the proposed program and forwards to -> 2 Department Undergraduate and Graduate programs Committee which forwards to -> ; 3. Department Council Monthly Meetings with student representatives checks the proposed program and forwards to -> 5. School Council Committee for recommendations/ revisions and resubmission for and forwards -> 6. Senate Studies Committee for existing programs (with student representatives) to Strategic Planning University Committee for newly proposed programs which forwards to 7. University Quality Assurance Committee for final decision regarding final submission to CYQAA. The department agrees that there is more room for improvement which should include more active participation of the Department in process and incorporating a feedback loop between Department-Committee in the process.*

### 3. Administration

The Agency should impose strict timelines for submission of information and not send panel members further links/documents after this deadline. Departments are encouraged to produce document that clearly addresses each of the criteria of the evaluation. CUT should ensure that support staff in the Bursar Office, Research and Program Office, and Quality Assurance Department Committee are aware of and attend meetings with the review panel, consistent with the schedule. Better organization and timeliness of documentation might be assisted by increased administrative support to the Department and its academics.

*These comments are well received. It is true that sometimes under the pressure of deadlines and the necessity for bulk of information submission, prompt and efficient submissions are compromised. It is important to highlight that the department coordinator at the time of submission incorporated and prepared ALL necessary documents Nevertheless, the process was in part insufficient possibly due to administrative drawbacks. It was unfortunate that administration representatives were not available when called upon; however, this was an isolated example. It is underscored that the administrative support has by most been very present during other similar situations (e.g. master program evaluation). Nevertheless, the issue remains crucial thus a meeting with the Rector has been scheduled and a road map has been revised so as to ensure and secure 100% administrative support across the board.*

### 4. Learning and Teaching

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Clearer documentation in future accreditation, particularly with regard to providing examples of assessment topics, a sample of marked student work and feedback. Ideally this would be



translated to English to make information accessible to all members of the review panel, but it would be sufficient if Greek-speaking members of the panel were able to evaluate this information.

*The Department Faculty is aware of the situation and has been focusing on translation of all documents relevant to clinical, research and academic domains in order to ensure clarity and information reciprocity when encountering non-Greek speaking faculty, Erasmus students and short-term visiting professors to name a few. All the documents that the evaluators have noticed appear in the folder we sent in Greek.*

## 5. Teaching Staff

### *No comments*

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## 6. Research

*As the quality of the research thematically connected to BSc in rehabilitation Sciences-speechlanguage therapy/speech pathology are promising, the committee encourage the teaching staff to aim for journals with high impact factor for increased visibility internationally.*

*Faculty is aware of this issue and have this as the top priority when it comes to publishing. Recently, a number of papers have been submitted to high tier (impact factor) journals including Clinical Linguistics & Phonetics (Petinou & Armostis), International Journal of Speech and Language Pathology (Petinou, 2021), Journal of Psycholinguistic Research (Petinou, Taxitari, Finikettos & Theodorou, 2020), Child Language Teaching and Therapy (Pampoulou, Theodorou & Petinou, 2018), Communication Disorders Quarterly (Theodorou & Pampoulou, 2020), Aphasiology (Georgiou, Lada, & Kambanaros, 2020), Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research (Fyndanis, Arcara, Christidou & Caplan, 2018), Frontiers in Neurology (Konstantinou, Pettemeridou, Stamatakis, Seimenis & Constantinidou, 2019)*

## 7. Resources

*The EEC finds room for improvement in increasing the effort of facilitating more funding for PhD- candidates and the possibly coming postdoctoral candidates.*

*PhD candidates have always been a priority. The Senate has recently approved processes which will allow doctoral students to teach upon payment in the form of stipend. In addition, department ow revenue funds and state budget moneys are delegated and used for Teacher Assistants and research scientist. Lastly, during 2020 the University announced calls for Post-Doctoral stipends for the amount of 20,000 each.*




**Date:** 18/01/2021



