

Decision of the Accreditation Commission of AQAS

on the bachelor degree programme:

“Pre-School Teacher Education” (Bachelor)

offered by Eastern Mediterranean University, Northern Cyprus

Based on the report of the expert panel and the discussions of the Accreditation Commission in its 73. meeting on 3./4. December 2018, the Accreditation Commission decides:

1. The study programme “**Pre-School Teacher Education**” (**Bachelor**) offered by **Eastern Mediterranean University (Northern Cyprus)** is accredited according to the AQAS criteria for Programme Accreditation.

The accreditation is **conditional**.

The study programme essentially complies with the requirements defined by the criteria and thus the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in their current version. The required adjustments can be implemented within a time period of nine months.

2. The conditions have to be fulfilled. The fulfilment of the conditions has to be documented and reported to AQAS no later than **30. September 2019**.
3. The accreditation is given for the period of **six years** and is valid until **30. September 2025**.

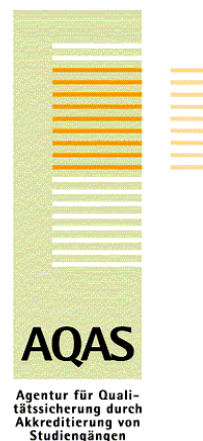
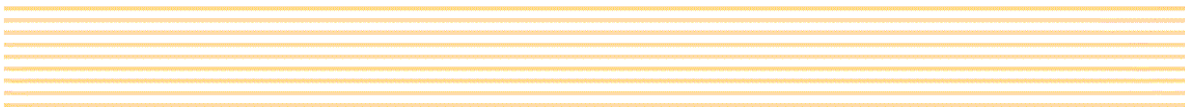
Conditions:

1. The course descriptions have to be updated in a way that the defined outcomes also align with the requirements of level 6 of the European Qualification Framework. The different competence/knowledge dimensions have to be reflected including matching assessment methods.
2. A diploma supplement has to be provided.
3. It has to be demonstrated how the increased student intake is addressed by an appropriate quantity of academic staff in order to maintain the quality of studies.

The following **recommendations** are given for further improvement of the programme:

1. The practical aspects of inclusion should be addressed more explicitly in the curriculum.
2. Exchange of opinions of teaching staff about the content and interdependencies of the courses should be increased and organized on a regular level.
3. The impacts of the UN-convention on the rights of the child and the UN-convention on the rights of persons with disabilities for pre-school teaching should find stronger reflection in the curriculum.
4. More courses covering the early years (0–3) of childhood and aspects of care should be provided.

With regard to the reasons for this decision the Accreditation Commission refers to the attached assessment report.



Experts' Report

on the bachelor degree programme:

“Pre-School Teacher Education” (Bachelor)

offered by Eastern Mediterranean University, Northern Cyprus

Site visit at university: 3rd/4th June 2018

Panel of Experts:

Associate Prof. Zeynep Alat	Ege University, Faculty of Education, Izmir, Turkey
Prof. Dr. Claudia Maier-Höfer	Evangelical University of Applied Sciences Darmstadt, Childhood Sciences, Darmstadt, Germany
Kira Otremba	Pre-school teacher, Munich, Germany (labour market representative)
Nadine Dohm	Pre-school teacher, Andover, United Kingdom (labour market representative)
Anne Schreiber	Student at Justus Liebig University Gießen, Germany (student representative)
Coordination:	
Ronny Heintze	AQAS, Cologne, Germany

Preamble

AQAS – Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes – is an independent non-profit organisation supported by more than 90 member institutions, both higher education institutions (HEIs) and academic associations. Since 2002, the agency has been accredited by the German Accreditation Council (GAC). It is therefore a notified body for accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes in Germany.

AQAS is a full member of ENQA and also listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) which confirms that our procedures comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), which all Bologna countries agreed upon as a basis for internal and external quality assurance.

AQAS is an institution founded by and working for higher education institutions and academic associations. The agency is devoted to quality assurance and quality development of both academic studies and teaching in higher education institutions. The activities of AQAS in accreditation are neither restrained to specific academic disciplines or degrees nor to a certain type of higher education institution

I. Accreditation procedure

This report results from the external review of the Bachelor programme in “Pre-school Teacher Education” offered by the Faculty of Education by Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), Northern Cyprus.

1. Criteria

The assessment of the programmes is in accordance with a set of criteria for programme accreditation developed by AQAS. The criteria are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) 2015 and feature a set of indicators used to demonstrate the fulfilment of each criterion. However, criteria are met even if single indicators are not fulfilled. The indicators need to be discussed in the context of the programme as not all indicators are necessarily applicable to a programme.

2. Approach and methodology

Initialisation

Eastern Mediterranean University mandated AQAS to perform the accreditation procedure in January 2017.

The university prepared a Self-Evaluation Report (SER). A draft of it was delivered to AQAS together with the relevant documentation of the study programmes and an appendix.

The appendix included e.g.:

- Overview over statistical data of the student body (e.g. number of applications, beginners, students, graduates, student drop outs).
- CVs of the teaching staff
- Information on student services
- Core information on the main library
- Undergraduate academic regulations

AQAS assessed the SER draft for completeness, comprehensiveness and transparency.

The accreditation procedure was officially initialised by a decision of the AQAS Accreditation Commission in December 2017. The final version of the SER was handed in in March 2018.

Nomination of the expert panel

Composing the expert panel follows the stakeholder principle. Involved are consequently representatives from the respective discipline/s, the labour market and students. Furthermore, AQAS follows the principles for the selection of experts by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA).

The Accreditation Commission nominated the expert panel in February 2018 with adjustments in May 2018. AQAS informed the university thereafter about the members of the expert panel and EMU did not raise any concerns against the composition of the panel.

Preparation of the site visit

Prior to the site visit, the experts reviewed the SER and submitted a short preliminary statement including open questions and potential points in need of additional information. AQAS forwarded these preliminary statements to the university as well as the panel members to increase transparency in the process and upcoming discussions during the site visit.

Site visit

After review of the Self Evaluation Report, the site visit to the university took place on 3./4. June 2018. On site, the experts interviewed in separate discussions different stakeholders, such as the management of the university, the programme management, teaching and other staff as well as students, and consulted additional documentation as well as examples of graded work from student's achievements. The visit concluded with presenting preliminary findings by the experts to the university's representatives.

Report writing

Following the site visit, the expert group drafted the following report assessing the fulfilment of the AQAS criteria for programme accreditation. The report included a recommendation to the Accreditation Commission. The report was sent to EMU for comments.

Decision

The experts' report together with the comments by EMU forms the basis for the AQAS Accreditation Commission to decide regarding the accreditation of the programme. Based on these documents, the Accreditation Commission decided on the accreditation on 3/4 December, 2018. AQAS forwarded the decision to EMU. The university had the right to appeal against the decision or any of the imposed conditions.

In January 2019 AQAS published the report and the accreditation result of the accreditation along with the names of the panel of experts.

II. General Information on the University

Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) is located in Famagusta, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (T.R.N.C.). The University traces its history back to the Higher Technological Institute established in 1979. In 1986, following the T.R.N.C. Assembly's approval of the Statute establishing the North Cyprus Education Foundation and Eastern Mediterranean University (18/86), the Institute of Higher Technology was converted into a state university, which is administrated by the Board of Trustees, receiving the name Eastern Mediterranean University. Starting with three fac-

ulties (Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Economics and Business, and Faculty of Arts and Sciences), new faculties have been added in subsequent years as e. g. Faculty of Law (1996), Faculty of Education (1999), Faculty of Medicine (2012) or Faculty of Tourism (2012). All degree programmes at EMU have received accreditation by the Council of Higher Education of Turkey, YÖK.

Currently, EMU with its eleven faculties and five schools offers 100 programmes in a range of undergraduate programmes leading to a Bachelor's degree. Most departments also offer programmes of advanced study leading to Master's (54 programmes) and PhD (19 programmes) degrees since the 1990s under the administration of the Institute for Graduate Studies and Research.

Following the Self Evaluation Report the Bachelor programme in "Pre-school Teacher Education" has been initiated in 2005 and is one of the degree programmes of the Elementary School Teacher Education Department of the Education Faculty at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU). The Education Faculty at EMU was established in 1999. Since then, it has become one of the biggest faculties at the campus in terms of student numbers. Currently, the Faculty of Education accommodates 1928 students including undergraduate and graduate programmes. The number of graduates sums up to around 4500.

III. Assessment of the study programme

1. Policy and Procedures for Quality Assurance

The programme is subject to the Higher Education Institution's policy and associated procedures for quality assurance, including procedures for the design, approval, monitoring, and revision of the programmes.

A quality-oriented culture, focusing on continuous quality enhancement, is in place. This includes regular feedback mechanisms involving both internal and external stakeholders.

The strategy, policies, and procedures have a formal status and are made available in published form to all those concerned. They also include roles for students and other stakeholders.

[ESG 1.1]

Description

As outlined by the university, the most important strategic goal of EMU is the institutionalization of the university's academic and scientific quality culture which is emphasized in EMU's strategic planning 2017–2022. To accomplish this, undergraduate and postgraduate students have an opportunity to evaluate courses and instructors on-line so that the academic staff can take their feedback into account for reassessment and further improvement of the education on offer. Additionally, every department/programme in the university is encouraged by the university administration to work towards external international accreditation so that departments/programmes will conduct a comprehensive self-assessment and see their strengths as well as the weaknesses to be minimized. Also, it is worth mentioning that in addition to the accreditations obtained from YODAK and YÖK, the Pre-School Teacher Education Programme aims to achieve recognition on international arena as well. Based on EMU's strategic plan and as stated by EMU, several quality policies, such as quality assurance by cooperating between institutions, focusing on the needs of its students to enhance a student-centred education system or the encouragement for research and to publish in internationally reputable journals, have been developed by the academic staff of the programme.

Following the Self Evaluation Report the internal quality assurance for the study programme has been initiated in July 2015 by forming an accreditation board lead by the Elementary Education

Department chair. For each course in the programme, course contents and learning outcomes are specified and updated every semester, and work load calculations take place with a consideration of the feedback and opinion of the students. At the beginning of each semester, students of the programme are informed about the objectives and content regarding each course's annual academic, social and cultural activities and requirements.

As part of the above-mentioned programme evaluation process, a self-assessment study was conducted beforehand during the Academic Year of 2016–2017. The study aimed at helping to understand in more detail to what extent the programme meets the general objectives of the programme with the learning outcomes and teaching/learning methods. Accordingly, each course in the study programme was evaluated by the teaching staff of the course in accordance with the developed framework for the learning outcomes of the programme. Subsequently all the individual course evaluations were examined by the full-time staff of the Programme to work up the Learning Outcomes Matrix (LOM).

Experts' Evaluation

The experts positively recognize that the responsibilities within the programme and programme elements are clearly defined, and the expectations towards the students are transparently communicated to them. Faculty members informed the expert panel that in the beginning of each semester they provide students with updated syllabi of the courses they teach in order to provide transparency and allow students to steer their expectations. Also it enables students to have an opinion whether their own targets as well as the course targets were reached upon completion.

Considering the results from quality assurance measures and the impact of evaluations, it is important to recognize that the curriculum follows the regulations of the Higher Education Institutions of Turkey and was put in effect in 2006. Since then the curriculum is offered without bigger changes that did not resolve from YÖK requirements. As teacher education is a highly regulated field, the flexibility of curricular adjustments based on internal quality assurance results is limited and some fundamental requirements cannot be neglected. This is suitable with the department's student population, considering that majority are Turkish citizens and placed in the programme via a university entrance exam centrally conducted in Turkey. Within this system the curriculum, titles of the courses/modules, content, and even the semesters of mandatory courses are defined and fixed. Whereas mandatory courses are prescribed by YÖK, electives can be offered freely by the department. Consequently, the programme will also be subject to future changes in the requirements in Turkey which have to be implemented in order to assure employability of the graduates. In fact, the standardized and rigid curriculum endorsed by YÖK, the central university entrance exam conducted in Turkey, and the fact that the majority of students in the programme are from Turkey and intend to find full time positions in public schools in Turkey do not leave room to additionally reflect on local culture or needs, universities' own resources, nor contextual or changing societal or generational needs. However, it is important to recognize that within these defined rules, the department still tries to use the flexibility that remains, to cater student's interest as well as upcoming societal needs.

At this point in time, the curriculum documentation is up to date with all necessary information given in detail for each course as required following the Bologna Process. A quality assurance system is in place which is appropriate for the programme. It is documented and comprehensive. It actually involves instruments with different scopes such as course and programme evaluations, as well as student workload evaluation, progression and completion rates, evaluation of changing societal needs and feedback on the development of learning environment and support services.

Course evaluations are carried out at the end of each semester. The information obtained is used to review the courses, and is even used in hiring/rehiring decisions.

Programme evaluations are designed in the faculty members' regular meetings and their meeting with the directors of private schools. Additional, through YODAK and YÖK accreditation procedures, an ongoing assessment of the programme is made on external level.

As required by the Bologna Process, student workload for each course is calculated and documented, and made accessible to all who are a part of the process. This information is used to determine credit hours of the courses and it is compared to the subjective impression of students regarding their workload experience in order to potentially adjust course intensity.

During the interviews it has been demonstrated that the faculty members closely monitor the progression and completion rates of students. Being asked during the interviews, professors could provide exact numbers of students who did not pass classes or failed. Several reasons including financial burdens and transfer to universities in Turkey have been given for the documented drop-out rate.

The panel is of the opinion that the evaluation of changing societal needs could need some more attention while at the same time recognizing that the faculty members do not have much flexibility in making desired changes in the curriculum or in the programme. However, by taking advantage of their diverse body of faculty members, offering electives that focus on issues deemed important (even by the faculty), the staff could create opportunities to make sure their students are equipped with tools necessary to deal with changes in society. The panel believes that the challenge is not so much to identify the recommendable adjustments but much more to find a way to put them into practice recognizing the limitations due to external regulations.

EMU has a large campus with a lot to offer to its students. The Faculty of Education just moved into a newly renovated building with many facilities that make delivery of courses more effective in teacher education. Also, as it could be easily seen in the university strategic plan, it is a regular process in the institution to collect information from the departments about their evaluation of physical environment support service needs that are later put into strategic plans for the future.

It can also be recognized that students and the labour market are involved in the quality assurance procedure for the programme. One example of collaboration with the labour market in quality management system was a "Together We are Stronger" workshop oriented to bring together potential employers, teacher educators, and pre-school teachers to give them a platform to discuss issues related to pre-school teacher education. Another example is the panel titled "Administrator-Prospective Teacher Meeting on the Career Path" which offered an opportunity for students and the faculty members to hear first-hand what the leaders of the labour market expect from job candidates. Information obtained through those collaborative events are cherished and used to make necessary changes in the delivery of the courses. Also, the strict adherence to the curriculum required by the Turkish Higher Education Council indicates in a way a close connection with the Ministry of Education of Turkey, which is the major player and the regulator in the employment sector for the majority of students in the department.

The results of evaluations are shared amongst the teaching staff to enable them to implement adaptations based on those results. A close interaction between teachers and learners however also allows direct exchange. Beyond being heard as part of evaluations there is also a students' council that consists of elected representatives from all faculties and actively represents students' interests in the university senate meetings.

Keeping close ties with alumni is given extra prominence in the university's five-year-strategic plan. For that purpose, the following measures are foreseen: an Alumni Foundation is to be established; an Alumni Magazine is to be started; and collaboration with the alumni to open up internship opportunities for current students shall be enforced. On the level of the department there is a

clear idea and experience about where graduates find employment, and many contacts exist on personal level of the staff.

In parallel with those measures, the expert panel welcomes the activities of the “Alumni Communication and Career Research Directorate” (known as ‘MIKA’) that organizes activities and events in order to strengthen the relationship amongst the University, the alumni and the community. The Directorate also provides supportive services related to current students’ prospective career plans. It administers regular alumni surveys and shares the feedback obtained from graduates with the relevant departments/units of the University. MIKA also works towards the enhancement of the communication amongst EMU graduates by organizing regular social events.

Before they leave, graduates are asked to fill out a survey form asking about their EMU experience and contact information. The Pre-school Education Department also seems to have close ties with their alumni as it could be seen in the statements of their graduates given in the department’s self-evaluation report. During the meeting with the representatives of current students, the members of the expert panel were all impressed by the students’ enthusiasm, devotion, and dedication to their field as well their deep gratitude to the faculty members of the programme.

The faculty members stated that they follow the career progression of their graduates who are mostly employed by the private sector.

The faculty members have a solid background in the field they teach and are open to changes which new scientific evidence require. The students, graduates, and the administrators from the sector all pinpointed the inadequacy of the duration of student teaching practice which is in total only 28 days and offered in two consecutive semesters one day a week. The need to extend the student teaching practice to an entire semester spent in the field is emphasized by all the parties. However, as mentioned above, the requirement to follow a rigid curriculum makes it almost impossible for the staff to reflect on that feedback.

However, the administrative body of the university and department tries to take into consideration the data on alumni experiences by collaborating with the local and international business and institutions as well as with the alumni to create internship opportunities for the students. The university administration is proud of its multicultural student body and takes measures to create a safe and respectful environment for all by, for example, offering a mandatory course on multiculturalism and ethic, and organizing multicultural events for the students. This practice reflects very well the statement in the EMU five-year-strategic plan.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled. The Student Handbook, the way course evaluations are handled, and the requirements of YÖK are met in order to guarantee that the students, who are mainly citizens of Turkey, will not face any obstacle when they apply for a public school position, are the programmes strong points. Nonetheless, the necessity to follow a standard curriculum also weakens the flexibility of the programme as its heavy course-work leaves no room for change. This however, is a contextual requirement and cannot be changed even with the best internal quality management.

2. Quality of the Curriculum

The intended learning outcomes of the programme are defined and available in published form. They reflect both academic and labour-market requirements and are up-to-date with relation to the relevant field. The design of the programme supports achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

The academic level of graduates corresponds to the requirements of the appropriate level of the European Qualifications Framework.

The curriculum's design is readily available and transparently formulated.

[ESG1.2]

Description

Study programme objectives

As stated in the Self Evaluation Report, the department aims at educating students to become pre-school teachers who can work in public and private child care facilities, public school kindergarten classrooms (all supervised by the Turkish Ministry of National Education) and other child care facilities (Crèches and Preschools) governed by public and private organizations. Based on the report, graduates that are T.R.N.C. citizens, however, can be employed as teachers only at private educational institutions in North Cyprus, due to the regulations of T.R.N.C.. Graduates who want to pursue their education may apply to the graduate programmes which offer Master's and doctoral degrees. According to the regulations, only the graduates of Atatürk Teacher Academy (in Nicosia) can be employed at state-owned (public) pre-schools and elementary schools in North Cyprus. The graduates can also hold administrative positions in private schools. Besides this, they can work as teachers in private educational institutions providing education to children with special needs.

Graduates holding a Bachelor's Degree and who want to pursue their education may apply for Master's Degree programmes at national level and/or international level both in the same and in related disciplines.

The Pre-School Teacher Education Bachelor Programme is a four-year programme that follows, according to the university, the national curriculum which was established regarding the requirements by the Turkish Council of Higher Education's (YÖK) 'Turkish Higher Education Competencies' Framework. As stated in the report, the said framework and the European Qualification Framework (EQF) were considered and compared in determining the learning outcomes of the study programme. Teaching and learning based on the main features of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) of the course outcomes were expressed in terms of learning outcomes. The learning outcome from the Pre-School Teacher Education programme ought to fulfil the criteria based on the main criteria *Knowledge* (a), *Skill* (b) and *Competence* (c) such as "knowing about and understanding pedagogical theories in early childhood education", "prioritizing language and communication skills in order to improve children's understanding and naming things", "be able to use the education methods widely practiced in early childhood education" or "taking initiative in emphatic and social communication and respects children and families".

Curricular structure

The curriculum has a credit point volume of 241 credit points and duration of study of 8 semesters (each academic semester covers 16 weeks). Like in other departments of the Faculty of Education, the courses offered in the Elementary Education Department are obtained from three tracks (as regulated by Turkish Higher Education Council since 2006): field-specific courses (50% of the curriculum), education/pedagogy courses (30%), and general knowledge courses (20%). Accordingly, every department has a package of core field-specific and technical courses offered by the

department's own teaching staff, and other courses offered by other departments within the Faculty of Education or by other Faculties of the university.

The programme requires the completion of 57 courses to fulfil the credit point criterion according to the EMU regulations. Credits for courses vary from 2 to 5 credit points according to EMU's credit point system. The key elements of the programme are 32 Area Core courses (Area Core Elective courses), 16 General Education and Professional Development courses, and 9 University/Faculty Core courses. The last category covers university electives such as Special Education in Early Childhood. In addition to the core courses on child development care and education, the programme also offers professional (teacher education) and general education courses. Also, School Experience and Teaching Practice courses are offered in the graduating year for two semesters, provide teacher candidates with valuable opportunities to apply the acquired professional knowledge and skills in real classrooms.

The Pre-school curriculum offers, according to the university, a logical progression between and across courses, from one semester to the next semester, both on the horizontal and vertical axes in order to ensure that of the alumni have acquired the required academic and professional knowledge and skills to become competent pre-school education teachers. Area Core courses and General Education courses are both interrelated and interdependent. According to EMU a typical programme shows that most of the courses will be completed within the first 6 semesters (Academic Year 1-3), since the graduating year includes 2 courses related to a Research project and 2 courses with Teaching Practice.

The department explains that the workload of the students in the programme is calculated at the beginning of each semester by the academic staff members offering the course with a consideration of the qualities of the course. The academic staff offering the course also compares the envisaged student workload with the findings of the Student Workload survey conducted in the semester, and applies revisions, if necessary, during the following course process.

Module descriptions

A student handbook is provided by the university to the students with the aim to ensure that they start the academic year well-informed.

Experts' Evaluation

Recognizing that the curriculum is fully and transparently documented in the course descriptions it can be stated that generally the curriculum as documented enables the achievement of the Intended Learning Outcomes. It became obvious to the panel of experts that the majority of the Intended Learning Outcomes that are presented in the printed version of the submitted curriculum are subject-specific. Hence in the majority of cases the modules/courses are not interdisciplinary in nature. The domains of knowledge and the domains of skills and competences are widely separated. Furthermore, practical implications are rarely linked to the theoretical, disciplinary based modules and vice versa. Due to the nature of the theoretical foundations that are chosen as references and that are introduced in the early semesters as a base, modules do not fully represent interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary dimensions of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). Especially learning structures are missing that lead to a theory-practice/practice-theory-transfer-discourse. Contemporary discourses of knowledge, skills and competences that are oriented towards a reform of ECEC are referring pedagogically and methodologically to an agency of children, especially children called handicapped and children as subjects of rights. The internationally acknowledged discourses of ECEC which do not depend on philosophy, psychology, or sociology (the base introduced in the printed curriculum here) are not mentioned in the printed form.

The experts recognize with great appreciation that the discussions during the site visit showed that within the faculty there is good awareness of the above-mentioned challenges and that in teaching practice the connection between theory and practice is more obvious than in the documentation. The necessity to fulfil the requirements largely defined in the YÖK regulations with

specific requirements of courses and semesters leads to a curricular design that is well fixed and to a very large extent prescribed by an external actor. Hence the inclusion of internationally recognized trends and new academic reflection is challenging for the institution as long as the Turkish national regulations are not updated. While this is true for many countries with strong regulations for teacher education in this case it seems worth to strongly consider the outcomes of the oral presentations of the faculty during interviews on site. Although the structure and the content of the modules is not obviously linked to international standards, the interviewed staff explained their methods, teaching practices and topics they usually present in their lessons in a way that it became evident that their lectures are obviously connected to the international standards as well as to the national aspects of the needs of people of Northern Cyprus. Ethical concern and responsibility about children's lives and their upbringing is performed by the lecturers, especially referring to practical projects. The lecturers described that they implement research findings that are important in the context of changes and challenges in the society.

The panel also used the site visit to discuss the practice of exams with staff as well as students. The lecturers and professors described their practices and intentions in a way that can be understood and shared by the expert panel as it intends to assess the learning progress of students. The exams are deliberately chosen, as lecturers and professors explained. However, they are not consistently documented in the written curriculum (course descriptions) (**Finding 1**). The quizzes are open ended questions (no mere reproduction), as the lecturers stated. The evaluation of the progresses of students' progression is the aim of the exams. In Mathematics multiple-choice tests are used while in other subjects there are also book-reports and portfolios which speak for a rich variety of examination forms.

With regard to the content of the curriculum – as already stated above – the documentation explains and proves the fulfilment of national standards. However, at the same time the documentation does not imply a clear orientation towards the EQF level six. As understood during the interviews, teaching practice manages to fulfil both requirements as they are not excluding each other. This balance however is not visible in the course descriptions yet and will require an update reflection of all above mentioned dimensions (**Finding 1**).

The curricular structure of the study programme generally supports the achievement of the learning outcomes. Understanding practice and understanding the relevance of discourses in relation to each other, analysing, comparing, discussing backdrops of paradigms could be implemented stronger in the qualification process. It should be considered that universal truth and disciplines of reference could be a base of knowing and acting in the field. Historical and socio-political dimensions, especially of social change and political agency towards solidarity, justice and equality are currently not covered. They are represented only via elective modules. Students can choose either Children's Rights or Disability Rights. In the current structure these dimensions are not connected to methodological questions within the theoretical and practical modules, especially not in the modules concerning development in ECEC as a political dimension. Inclusion and children's agency as learners are not represented in didactics, literacy or arts and they are not represented in research methodology (not in the written part of the curriculum). At least the practical aspects of inclusion should be addressed more explicitly in the curriculum. (**Finding 2**). This aspect was also confirmed when interviewing students and graduates who explained that they do not feel very well prepared when being confronted with children with special needs, as this area of teaching remains theoretical while in practice special needs have consequences on many other levels in which graduates feel the need for a better preparation.

The curriculum (printed and explained during the interviews) is oriented towards specific outcomes that are referring to modules that comprise a "package" of disciplinary or isolated task-related outcomes. It could be observed that the high number of small courses (as prescribed by the national regulations for teacher education) does not necessarily support interdisciplinary reflection. They might not support understanding and acting in complex and new situations. Recog-

nizing the limited freedom to implement changes on a structural level the experts recognize that these challenges can also be addressed by implementing coordinative measures. The connection of teaching practices and teaching subjects between the modules and lecturers should be strengthened by an increased and regular exchange amongst the teaching staff regarding content and interdependencies of their courses (**Finding 3**). This very complex curriculum requires constant coordination in order to enable students also to develop the generic and non-subject-specific competencies. The risk of fragmentation of knowledge, skills and competences which is inherent in the submitted curriculum contradicts e. g. responsiveness to challenges and unforeseen and new situations in the practice. Hence a good substantial coordination is required.

It can be positively acknowledged that the curriculum defines which elements are compulsory and which are electives. A typical course plan is available. The experts found that the common standard in the field of qualification of preschool teachers is to include the UN-convention on the rights of the child and the UN-convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. These social, political and humanitarian dimensions are (or should be) cross-cutting issues in all modules. Especially theories of development of the child, philosophy of education, and teaching and didactics are linked to a structure of evaluation of good practice (best practice) that is supported by international conventions and international exchange of scholars in ECEC because this is a pedagogical as well as a humanitarian project of practice, theory and qualification. The current situation in the curriculum reflects that firstly students should choose either the one or the other, and secondly these dimensions are excluded from other parts of the curriculum. The internationalization of ECEC refers to common acknowledgement of children, girls and boys as equal and as agents who take an active part in their development and learning. This reference point is usually established in academic qualification in all sub-disciplines and in the development of disciplinary self-concept of ECEC teachers. Consequently – as already discussed with the department, when updating the programme documentation, it should be considered to appropriately reflect these topics in the curriculum while respecting the national regulations (**Finding 4**).

Taking a broader view on the curriculum the experts agree with the department that it intends to cover the ages 0–6 years but is currently focused on the age 3–6 years. It was explained by the department that currently institutions for 0–3-year-old children are rather rare in Cyprus, however, that there is a growing demand in this sector. Consequently – and in line with the thoughts of the department – the experts believe that in the future more courses covering the early years and care should be provided (**Finding 5**).

As explained by the teaching staff the inclusion of practical experience is realized via research and so called “scenarios”, action research and in practice projects (e. g. SOS Kinderdorf). Academic research was described as a step towards a reflective practice and self-awareness of the students. The panel learned that the biographical background of students is reflected in reference to the topics students are interested in and that they are therefore examining these topics in their research projects. According to the choice of research questions and research methods practice as a “Scenario” is analyzed. Consequently, in the curriculum the intention of the research-project is the ability of critical thinking. This learning situation is very attractive.

The experts also believe that the community work-module and the modules that convey competences in counselling and parent education are important elements of the curriculum that are well places and established. They gain particular importance recognizing current developments in culture and structure of life in Northern Cyprus and Turkey. The specific position of the Early Education Teacher is adequately reflected.

Conclusion

The criterion is partly fulfilled. The curriculum refers to local conditions and national standards. At the same time the orientation towards level six of the EQF needs not only to be presented in the discussions on site but much more in the documentation of the curriculum in the course descrip-

tions. This includes transparency on assessments as well as the integration of non-subject-specific competencies. While acknowledging the structural limitations due to national regulations, an institutionalized coordination of curricular elements should be implemented in order to strengthen interdependencies of the courses.

3. Learning, Teaching and Assessment of Students

The delivery of material encourages students to take an active role in the learning process.

Students are assessed using accessible criteria, regulations, and procedures, which are made readily available to all participants and which are applied consistently.

Assessment procedures are designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

[ESG 1.3]

Description

Learning, Teaching

As stated in the Self Evaluation Report, EMU counts on a balance between theoretical and practical aspects throughout the Bachelor programme. Commencing with the first year of field and mostly sub-field work, and culminating in school experience and teaching practice at the end of the studies, students are supposed to have opportunities to relate theory to practice and to explore career options.

Assessment

The assessment methods applied to guarantee the acquirement of the above-mentioned learning outcomes differ between theoretical and practical courses such as Teaching Practice or School Experience. The assessments for theoretical courses are quizzes (without prior notice), homework, projects, workshops, or laboratory reports. Examinations take place mid-term (with a minimum of one and a maximum of three each course) and final-term. Examinations can have a written or oral format. Final examinations are administered on the dates specified in the academic calendar. Letter grades are announced by the Registrar's Office at a date determined by the Rector Office. Resit examinations are administered at the end of each academic semester and can be taken by the students under certain circumstance and are considered as final exams.

Regarding the courses School Experience and Teaching Practice I and II, special criteria are applied as an assessment technique. The evaluation criteria for the School Experience course consist of a grade of the school tutor (20%), a reflective journal (30%), play observation reports (20%), a portfolio covering a scope of photos, activity samples, reflective journals and observation reports in chronological order (20%), and the participation in theory courses (10%).

The evaluation criteria of Teaching Practice course I and II consist of a file covering information on the institution where the internship takes place, activity plans or self-evaluating reports (40%), a school tutor evaluation (30%), and homework assigned throughout the semester by the academic staff member who undertakes the responsibility of the course (30%).

According to the SER measures or revisions for the evaluation process for students with special needs are applied. Such measures could be e. g. extra choices in the form of homework. It is mentionable that EMU states that it strictly protects the rights of handicapped students and provides every means possible to ensure a barrier free environment (e. g. organisation of the class room environment or the re-construction of pavements and roads within the campus considering the needs of handicapped students).

After having successfully completed 57 courses of the Pre-school Teacher Education Programme with a minimum Cumulative Grade-Point Average of 2.00, a student gains the right for graduation. The alumni receive their diploma with the designated title of “Eastern Mediterranean University Education Faculty Elementary Education Department Pre-school Teacher (Bachelor of Arts)”.

Experts' Evaluation

From the experts' point of view the methods of teaching and learning seem appropriate and correspond with the Intended Learning Outcomes. However, it is recommended to extend internships and include more practical skill teaching (see chapter 1 & 2), as students, staff and experts suggest. Recognizing the limitations of the national regulations with regard to the internships the experts believe that it might be helpful for the students to organize at least some parts of the practical experience in a way that students do not repeatedly spend three/four hours in an institution but much more have the chance to stay a whole work day at their internship place. This would allow a much more realistic experience for students and increase their development of relevant practical competencies.

Methods of teaching and learning do respect and take into account the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths, by including transfer students and individual students with special needs. For this purpose, the good relation between students and teaching staff should be clearly recognized as an important success factor which can be seen as a success factor for the whole study programme.

As the panel observed the didactic methods stimulate student motivation, self-reflection, and engagement in the learning process as the students explained that they very much enjoy studying and doing research individually and in groups. Assessment/Grading regulations and procedures are defined at the beginning of each term after consulting with the students. Therefore, assessment methods are well defined for each course/module and are suitable for the achievement of the Intended Learning Outcomes as defined in the course/module descriptions. As mentioned above it should be recognized that in some descriptions the documentation of the assessment method could be specified. Globally the programme design ensures that every student is familiarised with an appropriate spectrum of examination types over the course of the studies. The timing of exams is organised appropriately and examination dates are announced in a timely manner.

Suitable opportunities to resit an exam are offered in a standardised manner according to the university's regulations: one resit per exam. There are transparent and published regulations to compensate for disadvantages, illness, absence, or other mitigating circumstances that may affect a student: Make-up exams as defined by the universities standardised regulations, though individual circumstances are considered. During the site visit the differentiation between resit and make-up exams was discussed independently with teachers and students, and the expert panel concludes that there is general satisfaction with not only the regulation but also the practice.

Data regarding the number of failed course/module examinations in the study programme are used for evaluation and to improve the programme by the teaching staff. Consequently they could also be discussed during the interviews on site. The experts also found the grading as presented in the available grading scale to be appropriate and without any anomalies. To the expectable extent, the programme enables students to transfer their knowledge to situations outside the university context on a national level, though more transfer of practical knowledge is recommended as mentioned above, for methods of teaching, learning, and assessment do not fully support an interlacing of theoretical and practical aspects.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled. Students highlight that the programme exceeds their expectations towards their study outcomes and that they are highly motivated towards the programme which

encourages students to take an active role in the learning process. The teaching staff is also highly motivated to transfer their knowledge adequately by engaging themselves personally in the programme and with the students while preserving a professional relationship.

4. Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

Consistently applied, pre-defined, published regulations are in place which cover student admission, progression, recognition, and certification.

[ESG 1.4]

Description

Admittance to the study programme

As stated in the Self Evaluation Report, EMU differs in terms of admission between T.R.N.C. citizens and T.R. citizens.

T.R.N.C. citizens are admitted due to the choices they have made in the University Entrance Exam which are held once a year at EMU on announced dates. Applicants have to hand in a certified copy of a Secondary School Diploma or an equivalent. To be pre-registered for a programme, students should become successful at a minimum of 5 General Certificate of Education (GCE) A-level exams at relevant fields or any other equivalent exams according to the English educational system. T.R.N.C. citizens who have graduated from a high school in a country other than the T.R.N.C. or Turkey are entitled to apply for admission based on the set quota for students from third countries. If such students gain admission to EMU, they are entitled to pay the tuition fees specified for students from third countries.

T.R. citizens can be admitted to EMU according to a set quota and other criteria such as results of the Student Selection Exam (ÖSYS) prepared by the Turkish Republic Higher Educational Student Selection and Placement Board (ÖSYM). A second option are applicants as "Extra Quota" students. The conditions and application dates are announced by the Turkish Republic Higher Educational Student Selection and Placement Board (ÖSYM).

Credits and Recognition

As exemplified in the Self Evaluation Report, the work load is calculated at the beginning of each semester by the academic staff members offering the course with a consideration of the qualities of the course. EMU has its own credit point system which consists of the lecture hours, lab hours and the tutorial hours. Through a calculating key it hereby indicates the student's contact hours and credit for the course.

Experts' Evaluation

The formal requirements for admission are clearly defined and for each candidate, interested in the preschool programme and the Central University Entrance Exam, is used to sort the applicants. On top, there is a survey including questions about the personal situation as well as a self-assessment with questions on qualities that a preschool teacher should present, and also on personal qualities. The survey gives a good overview of the applicants. The selection procedure follows defined criteria. As the programme is taught in Turkish language, non-Turkish speakers are not admitted in the programme. However, this is in line with the qualification goal of the programme, as it is clearly oriented towards the preschool teacher market in North Cyprus and Turkey.

The students get a wide range of hands on practice in subjects like arts, music, and drama. They are encouraged to be creative and try new things and implement their own ideas. Progress in all

these areas is observed and credited following the university regulations using the local credit system that can be transferred to the ECTS.

Upon graduation successful candidates receive appropriate documentation to take up a qualified position in a preschool in North Cyprus or Turkey. The labour market shows great interest in graduates from EMU, as they find graduates to be very confident and able to transfer theoretical skills into practice. EMU shows very careful attentiveness to the specific skills and needs to become a well-trained teacher. The experts recognized that in reality of teaching there is a high responsibility in teaching the students to become self-reflected, open minded and empathic teachers. The personal qualities are as well trained as the knowledge, research, and practical skills.

The information provided about learning progress and respective statistics show 592 graduates and 316 drop outs since 2005. While on the first look the number of drop outs might seem high it should be recognized that the majority of them are actually horizontal transfers to other universities in Turkey. To avoid real student drop outs, there are academic advisors and options to support students with financial problems. When interviewing students it became obvious to the panel members that the perceived drop out is very low. Cohorts get to know each other very well and every drop out is easily recognized by other students. Graduates recalled 5 out of 90 students who didn't finish their studies in their respective years.

Regulations regarding recognition of prior learning are in place on the level of the university. However, due to the strong regulations for teacher education the practical application remains almost irrelevant for the programme when it comes to transfers from/to other programmes. On the other hand – also due to the strong regulations – horizontal transfers between universities of the same system are facilitated as all programmes have to follow the same rule. The diploma handed over at the end of the four years explains the qualifications gained. A supplement explaining the position in the academic system is not provided (**Finding 6**).

Conclusion

The criterion is partly fulfilled. With the addition of a Diploma Supplement full compliance can be reached.

5. Teaching Staff

The composition (quantity, qualifications, professional and international experience, etc.) of the staff is appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

Staff involved with teaching is qualified and competent to do so.

Transparent procedures are in place for the recruitment and development of the staff.

[ESG 1.5]

Description

As outlined, the teaching staff at EMU's Education Faculty consists of 56 full time instructors. EMU as well uses 50 so called "flying instructors" who come from Turkish universities every week to teach and are experts in specific courses. Among the full time instructors there are 10 professors, 11 associate professors, 20 assistant professors, 5 senior instructors (M.A. holders), 14 research assistants and 2 student assistants. The staff who teaches in the Pre-school Teacher education programme can be grouped according to the nature of the courses they teach. Due to the discipline mixture the Pre-School Teacher education programme staff can be grouped as followed:

- Teaching staff of the Pre-School Teacher education programme: three full time academic staff members, and two research assistants,
- teaching staff for Pedagogical Formation Courses,
- full-time academic staff of the Education Faculty, Health Sciences Faculty, and Arts and Sciences Faculty.

In addition to these courses, some courses of the Pre-school Teacher Education Programme are delivered by part-time academic staff. The Pre-school Teacher Education Department accommodates 9 part-time academic staff members. The programme also receives academic staff support from some other external institutions as well as the universities in the Republic of Turkey. Every academic year two academic staff members from the TRNC Atatürk Teacher Training Academy and an academic staff member who have gained the right for retirement from the Gazi University, Education Faculty, Pre-school Education Department undertake duties at the Pre-school Teacher Education Programme courses.

The compulsory teaching load for senior instructors has been specified as 16 hours/week per semester, for professorial staff 12 hours/week per semester, and for those with administrative duties 8 hours/week per semester. The maximum teaching load to be assigned to a part-time academic staff member is limited to 15 hours/week.

Experts' Evaluation

The experts appreciate the diversity of qualifications found in the teaching staff of the department. It was actually impressive to see that regarding most of the concerns the expert panel raised, appropriate answers could be given to contextualise the situation and show that teaching reality covers a greater complexity than only the documented elements of the curriculum (see chapter 2). Hence staff qualification is appropriate to reach the Intended Learning Outcomes.

The return of the department to a newly renovated building will also support intra staff cooperation and exchange which will help the staff to further strengthen the department's performance by increased coordination and cooperation. Transparent and defined regulations for hiring and promotions are in place and also put in practice.

The experts also recognize an increase in student intake in the last years. While this can be seen as a positive aspect, speaking for an increased interest of students in the field as well as the positive public perception of the department, it also puts the focus on the question of capacity. The didactic model of the department relies on intense interaction between teachers and learners. The feedback on the learning progress requires a respective time budget of the teacher per student. The experts are sceptical, that any further increase in student intake could be handled by the staff available without (unintentionally) lowering the standards of student support. A further increase in intake could also create the necessity to adjust the didactic methods towards less interaction, which clearly would not be helpful to remain the high quality of the programme. The high workload of the teaching staff shall not be raised by a further increase in student intake. However, of course an appropriate solution would be the increase in staff capacity of the department (**Finding 7**).

Conclusion

The criterion is partly fulfilled. The department should demonstrate how they will address the increased student intake with regards to quantity of staff.

6. Learning Resources and Student Support

Appropriate facilities and resources are available for learning and teaching activities.

Guidance and support is available for students to advise on achieving successful completion of their studies.

[ESG 1.6]

Description

Facilities and resources

Following the information provided, EMU's campus university extends on a land of 2,200,00 m² with several buildings for education, sport and cultural activities, dormitories, meal and shopping facilities. The material resources regarding educational buildings have been indicated as e. g. 14 class rooms, 1 material lab, 1 art room, 1 accreditation room, and 1 multi functional class.

Students of the Pre-School Teacher Education Programme can use the EMU Library with 6,600 m² of space, 900 seats, an additional multi-purpose auditorium with 240 seats and an audio-visual room with a 60-seat capacity. The library houses contain a collection of more than 150,000 books, thousands of audio-visuals and around 300 periodical subscriptions. The library has membership in over 50 online databases that allow access to full-text journals, reports, abstracts, e-books, e-theses reviews, indicators, statistical data, working papers, and standards as well as bibliographical information resources.

Based on a by-law and its articles, the departmental budget is prepared taken into account the previous year's budget and the objectives and the activities in the strategic plan. Based on the departmental budget, the Faculty prepares the consolidated Faculty budget. Moreover, all faculty budgets create the base for the core budget of the university which then has to be approved by the Executive Board of the University and the Board of Trustees. In the Eastern Mediterranean University, every academic unit forms their own budget in conjunction with the Rectorate. Financial resources are provided by the higher administration. As stated in the SER, every year the Rector's Office asks the faculties to prepare their annual budget for the upcoming year. For this purpose, the Dean's Office asks the departments (including the Elementary School Education Department) to list their needs, investments, objectives, plans, and activities that they envisage the following year. After collecting this data, the Dean's Office prepares the consolidated Faculty budget based on its departments' needs as well as taking into account the previous year's budget, and forwards it to the Rector's Office. When the university's central budget is prepared, it first goes to the University Executive Board to be discussed and then to the Board of Trustees for approval.

EMU outlines that the financial resources rely on student fees to a large extent. The tuition fees are calculated on the basis of programme types and nationality of students.

Information, consultation and guidance

As stated by EMU's, freshman year students participate in both the university's orientation programme organized for the university's preparatory school and first year students as well as the Elementary Education Department's annual orientation activities during the first weeks of the students' arrival at the university. The target is to give the students the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the campus and its facilities, classrooms, etc. EMU also organizes social events such as open-air cinema, tours in Northern Cyprus and seminars about "Life in Northern Cyprus" or "Studying in a Multicultural Environment" to complete the acclimatisation of the new students.

At the beginning of the academic term, students are informed about their academic advisor's name and important details regarding the academic advisor (e.g. office number, e-mail, or visiting

hours) via their student portals by the department. During the course registration period, students are expected to meet their advisors in person and receive their approval for registration even if they have already carried out their online registration. The students are informed about the advisor meeting dates and times in advance via their student portal and the academic calendar. The Elementary Education Department Chair's Office keeps a record of each student's contact information.

Along with having the opportunity to meet regularly with their advisors, students may also meet with the instructor of each course during office hours. For each course, the academic staff member indicates the date, time and place of the office hour on the Course Outline to be distributed to students. At the same time, the office and the telephone number as well as the e-mail address of the academic staff members' teaching the course are also specified on the course outline. At the beginning of each semester, the course instructors distribute the Course Outline, explain it in detail and may apply revisions such as revising course assessment percentages or adding new topics into the course, based on the needs of the students, if deemed necessary.

Newly registered students and all other formerly registered students at the Department of Elementary Education are also required to attend the department's annual orientation meeting in which the Dean of Education Faculty, Department Chair, academic staff members and administrative staff are introduced to the students.

Experts' Evaluation

Regarding the learning resources and support mechanisms the first thing that should be stated, when looking at EMU's pre-school department, is the excellent student-teacher-relationship that results in a very personal but professional support for the students. This relationship is also extremely helpful when it comes to the involvement of students in decision making processes. Students do not have to rely on formal involvement only as they exchange their views in everyday interactions with their teachers. The experts conclude that this is probably also one of the diverse reasons for the high level of motivation and devotion the panel could experience during the site visit, not only in students but also in teachers.

Course/module descriptions are available to students in Turkish language. These documents contain the Intended Learning Outcomes, methods of learning and teaching, assessment methods, and the expected workload (self-study and in-class hours) which are also discussed with the students at the beginning of each term.

On content level, the offered courses are mainly coordinated by Turkish regulations for higher education and are therefore not adjustable by the university. As already discussed above, it seems wise to further implement organisational and substantial exchange between the teaching staff to avoid content overlap and to exchange teaching experiences between the staff (**see Finding 3**).

The experts also positively recognize that possible to fulfil all requirements in the foreseen time. The panel learned during the interviews that in cases of individual problems solutions could be established in order to allow the student to complete without losing time.

Necessary and appropriate material resources are available for the study programme to achieve the Intended Learning Outcomes. Particularly the opportunities of the new building will further support the education in the field of creativity, drama and music. Access is provided to an appropriate amount of literature, journals, and academic sources to enable the achievement of the learning outcomes at bachelor level.

The experts support the approach of EMU regarding introductory offerings that are available for new and potential students. During their studies student advisory services are available on a constant level and information on these services is available to students in an adequate way. Individ-

ualised advising for specific programmes/programme content is provided. Teaching staff members offer frequent consultation hours and are available to students. Credits are awarded for internships and students are given support in finding practical placements, though longer internships are desirable (see chapter 3). Student diversity is considered when allocating, planning, and providing learning resources and student support, though there is not much diversity to consider, for only Turkish and TRNC students apply to the programme.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

The students highlight that they are highly satisfied with the university's support and the leaning facilities and resources.

7. Information

Data is collected from relevant sources and stakeholders, analysed, and used for the effective management and continuous enhancement of the programme. [ESG 1.7]

Impartial and objective, up-to-date information regarding the programme and its qualifications is published regularly. This published information is appropriate for and available to relevant stakeholders. [ESG 1.8]

Description

EMU states that they apply several methods in order to analyse the different pathways after the students have graduated. To evaluate some issues related to the students' development as pre-school teachers, the effectiveness of the educational programme in preparing them to the field, employability of the graduates, and strengths and limitations of the programme in preparing competent teacher candidates, a workshop was organized under the title of "Together we are Stronger". The participants of this half-day workshop were the directors and teachers from selected public and private schools (six in number), part-time and full-time instructors with professional experience from other departments and institutions that offer related courses to the students for at least three years (six in number), and the full-time staff of the Pre-school Teacher Education Programme (six instructors). The audience was mainly the students of the Pre-school Teacher Education Programme. The SER states as well that there are several alumni follow-up groups to keep up to date with the graduates by questionnaires or social media groups.

Experts' Evaluation

During the site visit the experts learned about the "Together we are Stronger" workshop. This workshop was organised by EMU and lead by 15 professionals, including staff from EMU's Pre-school Teacher Education Programme; instructors from related courses across the EMU faculty; and Directors and Teachers from selected public and private schools. It was one of the aims of the workshop to discuss the employability of future graduates. Staff that had attended the workshop informed the panel that it was a "positive and motivating experience" and that it was a "great opportunity to discuss feedback from students and other professionals and a fantastic opportunity for students to find out what employment is available in the field". The outcomes were also discussed during classes in order to provide students an even clearer picture of the expectations of the labour market.

There is clear information regarding the labour market in the field of pre-school teaching. Recognizing the focus of the programme it might however also be wise to consider employment opportunities within neighbouring career fields, such as within the tourism & leisure sector and

healthcare industries, preschool teaching for organisations working with refugees, or teaching in special educational needs institutions. Potential additional employment fields could easily be identified that could be of interest for the students.

In order to collate information on which sectors graduates are employed in, the Faculty of Elementary Education Department has conducted an alumni survey. This is of course reliant on alumni participation and it is good to note that the department intends to administer an enhanced alumni questionnaire in the forthcoming period in order to reach a greater volume.

The experts also appreciate the several other information gathering sources used by EMU, namely an Alumni Office (Mika) carrying out questionnaire surveys and career days, as well as a social media driven graduate follow-up undertaken by the Department of Elementary Education.

One key element in order to inform students about the programme and resources available at the school is the student handbook written in Turkish language. The handbook starts with an introductory chapter that gives a general description of the Elementary Education Department with its goals and mission statement. Students are informed realistically about resulting job opportunities. This section is followed by a description of the Preschool Education Programme, resources offered, teaching and learning environment, career opportunities for graduates, names of the faculty members working in the department and their contact information. In the following chapters, the Bachelor's degree "Bologna course package" is introduced.

With a university-wide goal to become integrated in the Bologna process, the Pre-school Education Department developed its own course plan which includes overall goals of the programme, the course list that students need to take each semester, course details with aims and objectives and hours and ECTS, instructors' names and contact information, course contents, calculated student workloads, evaluation methods, and how each course is linked to the programme goals. It is explained in a comprehensible way that the programme goals are aligned with those defined by the Ministry of Education and the Higher Education Institution of Turkey.

The student's handbook also explains in a separate chapter relevant regulatory rules and procedures on evaluation and assessment. The aim of the document clearly is to help students understand how evaluations are made, and what their rights are. The last chapters in the handbook cover activities taken place in the department and web links students might need.

As part of the two-way information it is noteworthy that each semester the department holds meetings including student body representatives. These meetings do not take into account the quality assurance of the programme, course content, and activity calendars. They rather serve as an information platform and lead to revisions of the programme as documented in the Self Evaluation Report.

Statistics on the composition of the student body of the programme were presented as part of the student survey report. Beyond this and as a part of the Self Evaluation Report, information on the duration of studies was available for the panel of experts. It is documented how many students do not complete their studies. However, statistics show the reasons for drop outs are not clear. While the panel concordantly learned that most of the students drop out because they changed to Turkish universities, financial issues can be seen as another typical drop out reason. In order to improve the monitoring mechanisms, it might be wise to have a closer look at drop outs also statistically and further differentiate drop out reasons in order to identify trends and create a better platform for enhancement.

Public information is available on the EMU website including details of the programme, intended learning outcomes, selection procedure, qualifications awarded and teaching, learning and assessment procedures.

Based on the presented documents and interviews during the site visit the experts conclude that qualitative data is collected from relevant sources and stakeholders and is analysed. It is used for the effective management and continuous enhancement of the programme. Further to this efforts have been made to collate quantitative data which should be continued to highlight trends that may further inform the department.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

IV. Recommendations of the panel of experts

The panel of experts recommends to accredit the study programme “**Pre-School Teacher Education**” (Bachelor) offered by **Eastern Mediterranean University** with conditions.

Findings:

1. The course descriptions need to be updated in a way that the defined outcomes (besides meeting the YÖK regulations) also align with the requirements of level 6 of the European Qualification Framework. The different competence/knowledge dimensions have to be reflected including matching assessment methods.
2. The practical aspects of inclusion should be addressed more explicitly in the curriculum.
3. The exchange of opinions of the teaching staff about the content and interdependencies of the courses should be increased and organized on a regular level.
4. The impacts of the UN-convention on the rights of the child and the UN-convention on the rights of persons with disabilities for pre-school teaching should find stronger reflection in the curriculum.
5. More courses covering the early years (0–3) of childhood and aspects of care should be provided.
6. A diploma supplement has to be provided.
7. It has to be demonstrated how the increased student intake is addressed by an appropriate quantity of academic staff in order to maintain the quality of studies.