Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 23/09/2022

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  University of Central Lancashire Cyprus (UCLan Cyprus)

- **Town:** Larnaca

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

  In Greek:

  Μεταπτυχιακό (Μάστερ) στην Εκπαιδευτική Ηγεσία

  (1 ακαδημαϊκό έτος, 90 ECTS, Master of Arts, Εξ αποστάσεως)

  In English:

  MA Educational Leadership (1 academic year, 90 ECTS, Master of Arts, Distance Learning)

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

- **Programme's status:** New

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: N/A
  In English: N/A

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 or 300.1.1/1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area. The answers' documentation should be brief and accurate and supported by the relevant documentation. Referral to annexes should be made only when necessary.*

- *In particular, under each assessment area and by using the 2ⁿᵈ column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:*

    - *the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
    - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*

- *The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report **without any interference** in the content.*

- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in *.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.*

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development
(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For offici al use Only
The response presented by the School of Business and Management shows varied attempts to address a number of issues that were raised by the EEC. The School of Business and Management justifies the double-degree award system in place and argues that the course has been designed by an "experienced academic UCLan UK team." Once again, our concern is that the team mentioned are not academically qualified in the area of educational leadership although they may hold leadership positions. At the same time, we appreciate the initiatives currently undertaken to recruit 3 new associate lecturers and another call published.	We would like to thank the EEC for their constructive comments and efforts to help us design a state-of-the art Master's Programme in Educational Leadership. We have taken the EEC's additional comments into consideration and our enhanced team of academics together with well-established academics from UCLan UK (Prof. Ebrahim Adia, Pro-Vice Chancellor - expert in Academic Leadership, Dr Paul Doherty - expert in Educational Research, and Dr Clare Louise Winder - expert in initial Teacher Education) have worked during the last summertime to upgrade the programme structure accordingly (see appendix I). The updated programme's provision is aligned with the new developments in the field which are reflected in adopting the following changes (see appendix I): i) introduction of new modules and areas that better capture the current Educational Leadership field, ii) refined programme syllabus and bibliographic resources iii) enhanced team of academic experts to ensure a mixture of both overseas and local expertise in Educational Leadership Specifically, we identified new developments in the field by reviewing available literature which reports on best practices and outcomes of empirical research projects. Further, we have not only considered existing educational leadership programmes offered by pioneering higher education institutions with state-of-the-art research in the field, but also have consulted our network of educational leadership stakeholders such as education employers, school heads and parents' associations (e.g. EFEE:	Choose an item.

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	European Federation of Education Employers, ESHA: the European School Heads Association and EPA: European Parents Association).	
We anticipate that these associate lecturers will address the identified lacunae. Visiting staff are also in the process of being invited to participate. Furthermore, the suggestion to introduce critical friends is being addressed through the setting-up of an Advisory Board. In conclusion, the EEC emphasizes the importance of further recruitment, also including more experienced researchers within the field of educational leadership, i.e. Associate Professors and Full Professors who can build profound structures for research, teaching and international collaborations.	We would like to thank the EEC for acknowledging the efforts, taken at the School and University levels, to recruit additional academic staff. It is worth noting at this point that aside of the associate lecturers recruited, we have also appointed Visiting Academics (see Appendix I) who have kindly agreed to actively participate, aside of the duties assigned as part of their formal appointment (i.e. teaching, research mentoring and research leadership in publications and funded research as well as knowledge transfer to the Cypriot educational community), in the process of designing, developing and continuously improving the programme, as part of an Advisory Board (at the programme level). To further reinforce our commitment to expand our pool of available expertise at the programme, we have further re-advertised for Visiting Professor positions, seeking specialisations that the EEC referred to in its last response letter, i.e. *Instructional Leadership, Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership and Leadership for School Improvemen*t. The related announcement is also available in Appendix I. To this end, we trust that our actions so far meet EEC's recommendations, as they showcase our commitment to attract more staff qualified in Educational Leadership and with an established repute.	
The concern raised by EEC that various modules in the proposed course are inappropriate has been addressed. A review of the Course Content shows that the recommendation to review and introduce other course modules has been undertaken and another study unit being developed (as noted on page 12 of the Response). However, we still have major concerns	The EEC elaborate review of updated content in our existing modules as well as of the new modules' content that we have introduced is highly appreciated. Further amendments have been included in the programme's study units in order to ensure the appropriate coherence of content. The updated descriptors of the study units (otherwise named as "modules") are comprehensive and falls within the boundaries of educational leadership, reflecting the current trends and knowledge requirements in the field. The programme's structure and the enhanced study units are available in Appendix I for your reference.	Choose an item.

about the content of these study units. Overall, the drafting of these study units shows a number of disjointed ideas that are brought together; an infinite list of references some of which are not directly related to the areas developed. For example, the newly-proposed study unit entitled Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership should be exploring issues such as diversity, inclusion, social justice, migration, entitlement, etc. These are completely left out! In that sense, the programme (still) does not reflect the field's latest research.

Our adopted approach has taken into consideration the valuable feedback of the EEC who has prompted us to consider the diversity of curriculum apparent in other available master programmes in Educational Leadership. For example, the Harvard School of Education offers a pathway in Education Leadership, Organisations and Entrepreneurship which is distinct from Education Policy and Analysis. A separate pathway focuses on Teaching and Teacher Leadership. In European masters' programmes, apart from the Dissertation and the Research Methods modules one can see modules on Education Policy and Leadership, Educational Leadership as Social Practice, Leading Educational Change and Models of Educational Leadership (University of Manchester, MA in Educational Leadership in Practice). The University of Malta MA in Educational Leadership and Management has two research methods modules and the following focusing on Educational Leadership: Leadership Coaching, Professional Development Models, Leadership and Management Issues for School Improvement, Teaching Learning and Assessment as a core module and then a number of elective units to follow separate paths. The University of Nottingham Educational Leadership and Management offers the following four core modules: Issues in Educational Leadership, Successful Leadership and Change in Education, Leading Learning, and Practice-based Inquiry.

In sum, we suggest that our updated programme structure is now enhanced by newly introduced modules based on the EEC feedback, which is congruent with current debates in the field as evidenced by the programmes in other exemplar universities presented above. Some differences in structure may of course always apply across different MA in Educational Leadership programmes since academics who design them are active interpreters of education leadership and they naturally exhibit variations in their understanding of the curriculum that constitutes the optimal mix of topics which enable the preparation and equipment of skilled

education leaders who can work across contexts and under changing circumstances. As observed from the presentation of the four programmes described above (of Harvard, Manchester, Malta and Nottingham universities), classifications of knowledge within the field of educational leadership in the form of modules or study units can take different forms which are valid as long as they serve the purpose of preparing efficiently students to lead within schools and learning organisations.

Further, and specifically on the EEC's comment regarding the content of the 'Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership' module, we wish to assure the Committee that the important topics mentioned in their feedback have been included in our curriculum as follows:

Social Justice has already been part of our programme's syllabus, and has been delivered by Dr Costantinos Michael, who is an expert in the field.

Please find the first page of the lecture slides that focus on social justice here:

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Inclusive Leadership – Leadership for Social Justice

EH4015- Strategic Leadership in Education

UCLAN (University of Central Lancashire), Cyprus
School of Business & Management

Constantinos Michael
cmichael@uclan.ac.uk, costam@cytanet.com.cy

The following publications on social justice were and still are part of our core readings:

- Theocharis G. (2007) Social Justice Educational Leaders and Resistance: Toward a Theory of Social Justice Leadership. Educational Administration Quarterly.43(2):221-258. doi:10.1177/0013161X06293717
- Ryan, J. (2006) 'Inclusive Leadership and Social Justice for Schools', Leadership and Policy in Schools,5:1,3 — 17, DOI: 10.1080/15700760500483995.
- Bush, T. (2008). Leadership and management development in education. SAGE Publications Ltd, https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446213605.

Diversity: Part of the module's syllabus is dedicated to the connection between diversity and social justice as stated by Bates (2008). Classroom discussions argued by literature references are taken place around the approach that race, age, disability and gender issues as well as sexual orientation are inseparable elements of social justice and need to be taken into consideration in its enaction by principals. Historical factors relate to social justice, like vision for example are also considered for discussion.

Inclusion: Leadership and Inclusion has already been covered as part of previous version of the programme and the concept now features in the new improved version of the module '*Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership*' (see module descriptor in Appendix I).

Migration: Migration has widely acknowledged implications for educational policy and strategy and in order to make this piece of knowledge more prominent in our curriculum we have further enhanced the students' learning experience by including the following publication as a core reading:
Norberg, K. (2017). Educational Leadership and Im/migration: Preparation, Practice and Policy – The Swedish Case. International Journal of Educational Management. 31. 10.1108/IJEM-08-2016-0162.

Entitlement: A key aim of the UK national curriculum for schools published in 2014 was to establish entitlement for all, and thus, a strong educational leadership development

	programme should take the school teachers' entitlement into consideration. In line with our commitment to consider all comments raised by the EEC, we have now amended the module descriptor (please refer to Appendix I) to ensure that entitlement is covered by reference to the work of *Bush (2008)* and other specialists who examine the concept from the perspective of those in the profession of education and in its relation to learning experiences and academic achievement *(Frazer, 2020; Tucker, 2019)*.	
So, whilst the introduction of three apparently new modules is welcome, as they appear to be relevant to educational lead they still do not address our major concern that the people designing these courses are not directly working in the field of education and their track record as seen through their c.v's justifies our concern. Arguable, this "gap" reduces teachers' possibilities to bridge teaching and research in general, but also to apply (their own) research in teaching practice in particular.	We would like to thank the EEC for their accurate and generous advice and suggestions on the content of the three newly introduced modules namely: "Instructional Leadership", "Leadership for School Improvement" and the "Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership". We have meticulously studied the new developments in the field and substituent areas, we edited the module content descriptions and we added new material under the bibliography to reflect the need to address the areas identified by EEC.

The Teaching Policy of the University points to the importance of research-informed teaching in the delivery of our programmes of study

Research-informed teaching is deployed throughout the curriculum delivery, in and out of the classroom, as well as through the co- and extra-curricular activities taking place in each School and/or programme or at University-level. Programme curriculum is frequently reviewed and updated according to the latest research findings in the field. Results of externally funded projects, outputs, publications, events (round tables, conferences, trainings, seminars, workshops, surveys), CPD and public outreach events are embedded directly and/or indirectly in the programme of teaching and learning, as learning activities and/or resources.

The enhanced academic team of the programme (see appendix I) is devoted to the implementation of the above- | Choose an item. |

	mentioned University's policy and it is experienced and relevant to deliver the programme.	

What follows are our major concerns re the respective study units and the lecturer that co-ordinates the study unit: **1. Instructional Leadership:** The content description demonstrates that the course team does not understand what is meant by instructional leadership. Good modules on this topic address progress evaluations, monitoring, including classroom observation, modelling good progress, mentoring teachers, and CPD. These are not covered in this module. The named tutor (Maria Zeniou) has no background in educational leadership. **2. Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership:** The proposed content is acceptable. The named tutor (Maria Nicolaidou) has a Ph.D. in education but no connection to educational leadership. She has some publications, mostly focused on professional practice rather than school leadership. **3. Leadership for School Improvement:** The main foci of this module are school effectiveness and school improvement, with little attention to leadership. In order to bridge educational leadership and SE/SI the EEC recommends to take advantage of the profound work of Karen Seashore.	The first evaluation report received by the EEC stated that 'Instructional Leadership' should be addressed as a new study unit. In order to address this recommendation, Dr Maria Zeniou benefitting from the constructive feedback of the UCLan colleagues, has designed a module on this topic after considering relevant literature. From 1983 to 2005 there have been 106 research studies on instructional leadership published, as stated by Hallinger (2005, p.227), an author cited by approximately 50,000 researchers. The breadth of the area and the existence of a multitude of views and practices assigned to instructional leadership have been highlighted in the study. The research findings in this area until 2005 focus on leaders' personal characteristics and the school context on instructional leadership, as well as the effects of instructional leadership on the school including outcomes and student achievement (Hallinger, 2005). Results from a recent study conducted by Hallinger, Gümüş and Bellibaş (2022) which examined 1206 articles on instructional leadership published between 1940 and 2018, indicates an increase in size and geographical relevance of the field of educational leadership. In addition, emphasis is placed on the emergence of integrated models of school leadership, the leadership effects on teachers and students, contexts for practice and means of developing instructional leaders (Hallinger et al., 2022). The strong impact of leadership on student learning and achievement is reiterated by recent research (Day, Sammons, Leithwood, Hopkins, Qing, and Ahtaridou, 2021). The intellectual structure of the field of instructional leadership, local foci in our geographical region and the national agenda as well as influential publications in the field have influenced our selection of topics including the learning outcomes that give flesh to the content of this and our other modules. Drawing on the above, the learning outcomes of our module entitled: "*Instructional Leadership*" (see module descriptor in Appendix I), as cited below, fit to the realm of Instructional Leadership.	Choose an item.

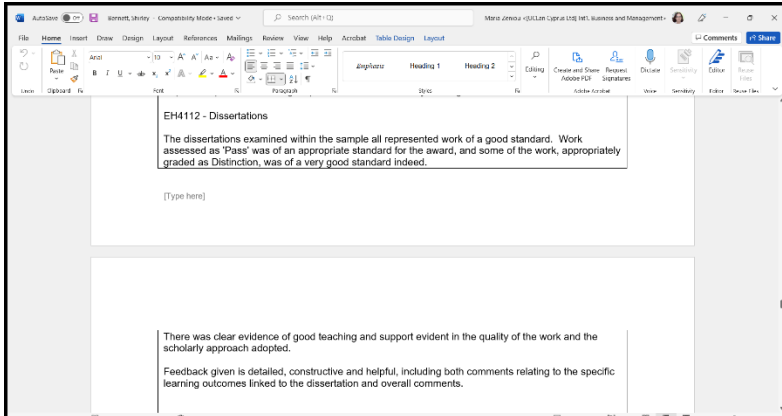| Regarding the field of SE/SI, the influential work of Hopkins, Stringfield, Harris, Stoll & McKay (2014) should also be considered. The named tutor (Michael Constantinos) has a Ph.D. on pedagogical practice and an interest in social justice, but little on educational leadership and no English language publications. | *1. Critically evaluate their own leadership skills with a focus on identifying the knowledge and insights acquired in developing effective learning environments*

2. Examine action learning processes within their context in order to supervise instruction, monitor assessment and enhance student progress.

3. Develop professional judgement and skills for the enhancement of the core business of schooling, i.e., teaching and learning as part of raising standards-based accountability

4. Formulate an action plan and reflect on progress against their own instructional leadership goals.

As far as progress evaluations, monitoring, including classroom observation, modelling good progress, mentoring teachers, and CPD are concerned, are all core parts of the learning outcomes above. They are closely linked to and fall under the learning outcomes of developing effective learning environments within their schools as leaders (LO1), monitoring assessment and progress (LO2), accountability (LO3) and action planning (LO4).

It is worth mentioning here that Dr Maria Nicolaidou, who will be the module leader for *"Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership"* holds a Master and a PhD in Educational Leadership from the University of Manchester. The academic profile of Dr. Nicolaidou has been attached in the Appendix I for your reference.

We would like to thank the Committee for their effort to help us enrich our pool of resources for this module. As such, we have updated the content of the module so that material bridging educational leadership with school effectiveness and school improvement in embedded in the module delivery.

As far as the relevance of Dr Constantinos Michael's expertise to teach this module is concerned, we would like to clarify that his PhD thesis is entitled: "Educational Leadership for social justice" and he has published in | |

Assessment Procedures Whilst a justification has been given as to a heavy reliance on examinations as per University regulations, we feel that each School/ Faculty has a right to have its own bye-laws and assessment criteria that allow for changes to be proposed and introduced. **Research Project.** The concern raised by EEC regarding the time needed to cover the project work has been addressed. **Admission Criteria.** The admission criteria have been revised to ensure that only those with an educational background are considered/admitted to the course.	We would like to thank the EEC for their observations and comments that allowed the programme team to enhance this provision.	Choose an item.

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment
(ESG 1.3)

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For offici al use Only
As noted in Section 1, the admission criteria have been reviewed to attract only those pursuing a career in education. The clarifications made, especially in relation to the Research component and especially the Research Methods study units help EEC to appreciate the work covered. There is also clarification that students are provided with material through periodicals that are then discussed. However, whilst the comments refer to what is covered during the lectures the dissertations reviewed are not considered by the EEC to be of Masters degree level. We had noted that they lacked a critical and analytical stance and thus students pursuing this course would not be able to proceed to further studies given the level of attainment. The comment made regarding the presentation of the Research Project was, in the opinion of the EEC, not adequately addressed. Stating that the students follow the Harvard system when this is not always being followed cannot be justified. However, justification comes later (page 27) with the introduction of a Guide book to help the students address the format of their final submitted work (refer to Appendix 9). This is better work. Furthermore, when one looks at the projects reviewed the work does not justify or collaborate the points raised that such studies are	We would like to thank the EEC for their comments and willingness to support our Programme. When it comes to the quality of the dissertations submitted as part of this Programme, we would like to offer here a relevant extract from the External Examiner's report (p. 10-11). It is worth clarifying here that the External Examiner, Dr Shirley Bennett is a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and the Head of Academic Practice at the Institute of Learning and Teaching at the University of Northampton. Extract from the External Examiners' Report	Choos e an item.

leaving the desired impact on the graduates and that those wishing to pursue further studies at doctoral level can do so. This will have to be seen if the supervisory work is actually improved. Interaction between course participants and the educational environment is being addressed as a number of seminars have been organised. Others are in the pipeline.		

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3. Teaching staff
(ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
Points raised by EEC have been addressed through the introduction of 3 associate lecturers, and another call is out for another post. This is indeed a step in the right direction, expressing a clear commitment to enhance the course delivery. However, once we went through the credentials of the appointed staff we realised that they are not qualified in the field of educational leadership. Until this matter is addressed it will be difficult for the university to develop a programme that actually addresses the intentions behind this programme of studies. As also noted above, to develop into a "complete academic environment" the EEC identifies a need to engage Associate and Full Professors. As noted in Section 1 we feel that the University has not truly addressed our major concern that staff who teach or are being selected to teach this programme NEED to be qualified in the area of educational leadership.	We would like to thank the EEC for their valuable feedback and we would like to assure them that we have taken a series of actions to enhance the programme team with highly qualified experts in the field of educational leadership. Dr Marilena Antoniadou has been appointed as Visiting Associate Professor in Educational Leadership. Marilena is working as Reader in HRM and Educational Leadership at Manchester Metropolitan University (see her academic profile in Appendix I). Marilena will be supporting our Programme through teaching the *EH4116 'Leading People & Teams in Education'* module, dissertation supervision, research mentoring of early career researchers, and the delivery of CPDs. In addition to Dr. Antoniadou's appointment, the School of Business and Management has proceeded with the appointment of another Visiting Assistant Professor in Primary Education Leadership, Dr. Maria Karamanidou, who is working as Senior Lecturer in Primary Education - Science and Professional Studies at Middlesex University London (see her academic profile in Appendix I). However, we would like to inform the EEC that we have re-advertised for a position of Visiting Professor in Educational Leadership with a deadline for the submission of applications on 17th September, 2022. The programme's team comprises now valuable and well-established academics holding not only a PhD in Education or Educational Leadership or Research Education, but also actively involved in research topics	Choose an item.

	covered by our proposed programme structure.	
Furthermore, we cannot assess the credentials of the person appointed to the three-year advertised position (closing date 19 March), until we know who s/he is. At the same time, the University needs to ensure that existing staff currently involved are provided with opportunities for professional growth. No mention is made re this.	The culture of the University is to build around various foundations. These include research and research-informed teaching. All our full-time employed academics are research-active and increasingly publish in high quality, peer-reviewed outlets, targeting 2-4* outputs. The University and the School implement a Research, Innovation and Enterprise Mentoring Team (RIEMT) scheme, where senior academic members of staff join with junior staff offering their advice and support to help them develop their research portfolio, both formally and informally. Mentors have meetings at least twice a year with their mentees. Mentors also have a meeting with the RIEMT coordinator and discuss issues that come up from meetings with mentees. The RIEMT coordinator then brings those issues to the RIEMT, the Research and Innovation Committee (RIC) and/or the Senior Academic Management Team (SAMT) for further discussion. In addition, the RIEMT coordinator asks all RIEMT members at the beginning of the year to provide feedback on how the RIEMT could support their professional development. Several events were held, with HR, such as a workshop on "Motherhood in Academia" (for supporting work-family balance among mothers-academics, by inviting a professional psychologist) and workshops on grant writing by inviting various research organisations and agencies. A platform has also been used by the RIEMT (Yammer) for sharing information among staff members, yearlong, on professional development (e.g. interesting articles on productivity in academia), events and research-related matters. This is further enhanced at the School level as we engage our leading senior scholars to offer guidance and support to our more junior members of academic staff, at School and university level, as well as across campuses where we participate to similar initiatives at different career stages (ECR group, middle career group and professorial group) at UCLan UK, both University and School level. For early career researchers appointed to the University, we pay particular attention to their publication records and potential. Research	Choose an item.

mentorship workshops are therefore regularly organised within the School (these are reserved for academic members of staff and are run by a more experienced colleague). Examples of these workshops include: ''The importance, dos and don'ts of academic conferences', 'Writing Advice Workshop' and 'Publishing a monograph or articles stemming from the PhD'.

All of the above activities enhance the University's research environment and are regularly fed into the reporting mechanisms of the Research and Innovation Committee, RIC, three times a year. The RIC is responsible to set, monitor and report on quality assurance in research and innovation. The UCLan Cyprus RIC is an independent university committee which also communicates with the UCLan RIC in the UK. In accordance with the University Charter, the RIC is also responsible to design, implement and monitor research and innovation policies at UCLan Cyprus which complement other policies, schemes, guidelines, handbooks and other documents ensuring quality in research, management and support services. Generally speaking, UCLan Cyprus abides to research integrity and ethics policies/regulation/practices as contained in multiple University Manuals/Policies/Handbooks/Codes/others, including the University Charter, the Academic Regulations, the Data Protection Policy, the Employee Handbook with relevant Codes, the Health and Safety Procedures, the Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy as well as all the already mentioned research and innovation related policies.

As such and as part of the research culture of the School of Business and Management, its academics are encouraged to engage in an array of knowledge transfer activities and to publicise their research via the media.

Pedagogical methods

Flexible pedagogical methods are encouraged across the three Schools of UCLan Cyprus, not least via the activities and outputs of the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Committee (TLEC) of UCLan Cyprus and equivalent bodies of UCLan in Preston. On the one hand, TLEC occasionally organizes seminars, webinars and other events for the benefit of academics. For example, on 6 March 2019, TLEC hosted a seminar

delivered by Dr Klearchos A. Kyriakides of the School of Law; it was entitled 'The Socratic Method in the electronic age: The enduring value of ancient Greek pedagogy'. On the other hand, TLEC occasionally circulates a bulletin entitled 'Best practices in teaching and learning'. The last example is Issue 5, which was circulated by email by Dr Nearchos Paspallis, the Chair of TLEC. The Student Engagement and Enhancement Committee of the University (SEEC) is also responsible to design, implement and monitor the student-centred teaching policy and support mechanisms. Throughout Schools and pedagogical methods, the following principles inter alia apply, aimed to enhance teaching and learning: (i) students are trained to become problem solvers; (ii) the programmes aim to develop students' professional skills, such as teamwork and coping in a modern workplace, as well as ethical considerations specific to their programme of study; (iii) use of appropriate teaching and learning methods throughout University programmes, while placing emphasis on contextualising learning with real-world examples and objectives; (iv) where possible, students are immersed in conditions simulating the real-world to maximize engagement and interest in the field; (v) teaching and learning are industry/profession-informed where industrial partners are involved throughout the delivery, e.g. with guest talks, and by offering problem-sets, case studies and real-world data for student projects; (vi) the University organises research talks, seminars, and conferences, and engages students as attendants, volunteers and participants, to inspire them to delve deeper into their field of study; (vii) students develop real-world skills by participating in industrial placements or summer internships; (viii) field studies are used to enable students to experience real-world employment environments, in Cyprus and abroad; (ix) students are challenged and motivated by engaging in national and international student competitions in their field of studies and beyond.

Academic staff are the facilitators of learning. The following principles inter alia aim at developing the full potential of academic staff, while also enhancing their skills and keeping them up-to-date: (i) display expert knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, their discipline; (ii) teaching and learning are research-informed as

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	academic staff is encouraged - and where applicable - enabled to engage with research and use research outputs to inform their teaching; (iii) teaching and learning are also industry-informed as academic staff are encouraged to engage with the industry; (iv) peer-observations are part of the University culture, serving as a mechanism for reflection and self-improvement for academic staff; (v) staff induction and mentoring support newly appointed staff with familiarising themselves with the University procedures and standards, including teaching and learning aspects; (vi) senior fellows from other institutions, as well as industry experts are utilized in teaching and learning, adding an expert perspective and international outlook to our programmes; (vii) yearly appraisals ensure academic staff are sufficiently supported in their roles and they are enabled to deliver an exceptional learning experience; (viii) academic staff are continuously informed of current and best practices in teaching and learning. They engage with a rigorous Teaching Toolkit programme, which enables them to reflect on their practice and stay up-to-date with best practices in teaching and learning. The use of research in feeding into teaching and facilitating the learning of students is an indispensable part of the Teaching Toolkit curriculum. Through the Teaching Toolkit, academic staff become Associate Fellows, and then Fellows of the Higher Education Academy (AFHEA/FHEA) following a competitive review and evaluation of their professional development submission documents based on struct criteria set by the UK Professional Standards Framework.	

## 4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
(ESG 1.4)

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
It is argued on page 32 of the Response that the concerns raised by EEC will all be addressed once the course is re-accredited.	We would like, once again to that the EEC committee for their valuable recommendations and feedback. In line to suggested approach, the admission criteria have been amended to include only participants aiming to obtain a career in education and aspiring to become educational leaders.	Choose an item.

## 5. Learning resources and student support
(ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
The HEI reported that they worked on the restructuring of the digital learning environment to ensure it is learning-centered and allowing further academic skills development. In response HEI mentioned a long list of tools that they added to the distance learning environment, without a clear analysis why these tools are needed to increase the effectiveness and attractiveness of the learning environment for the students and teachers. It is very unlikely that this combination of tools is a) really needed and b) pedagogically seen effective. Also, some examples (screenshots) are provided to show the interactivity of the materials. Although we welcome this effort, it is still far	We would like to thank the EEC for their additional feedback on the learning environment to be used in the distance learning education. The programme's team has seriously taken into consideration the EEC comments and during the summertime has worked in collaboration with the UCLan Cyprus Teaching and Learning Enhancement Committee's experts in areas related to the creation of attractive environments for distance learning (Karpasitis C, Paspallis N, Stavrou E, Polycarpou I, Xerou E, Yiatrou P: Karpasitis et al., (2019); Paspallis et al., (2018); Stavrou and Polycarpou (2020); Xerou and Angeli (2022); Yiatrou et al. (2016); Zenios (2020)). The team is also building on its expertise in the development of technological environments, specifically for the development of primary and secondary education teachers and the promotion of their professional development through online discussion and as part of distance learning. The development of online communities of practice among teachers and the sustainment of learning communities and collaborative practices across other professionals is a key element of our course design. We aim to maintain inclusion, belongingness and encourage the lived experience and full engagement and participation of professionals within online platforms for the advancement of their leadership skills through engagement into collaborative learning activities. Online discussions are being utilised with success in educational leadership preparation contexts (Canelon, 2015; Harris-John, 2006; Matos and Kasztelnik 2021). Therefore, we intend to use online discussion tools and collaborative spaces within Blackboard, a well-respected and widely used online platform (Yeh and Lahman, 2015). The use of BLackboard and MS Teams have functionalities that enable collaborative learning and	Choose an item.

from the type of interactivity that we currently seek in distance learning programmes. The examples given are all examples of instructions given to students in terms of 'do this or do that'. Including posting something to the discussion board and react to others. This is very artificial and students can easily ignore these activities. It is unclear what they add to the actual learning process, for example, discussions about theoretical stances, practical or ethical implications of approaches, critical reflections, etc. All of this with clearly stated learning objectives and direct relations with the assessments of the course objectives. To conclude, the EEC gets the impression that the HEI misses experience and knowledge in designing and delivering a good quality distance learning programme. It	teamwork (i.e. through the creation of special groups within distinct separate online spaces) and thus will enable the sustainment of a learning community within our DL programme in which leadership skills will be developed. Our tutors have built structured activities to enhance communication and participation in the online class. Within the online spaces students explore a concept collaboratively, through posing questions e.g. What do we mean by transformational Leadership? In this way the use of Blackboard for asynchronous discussion and the use of MS Teams (for synchronous discussions in real time) will allow to co-author ideas and engage in learning as a group, thus promoting stimulation and engagement in DL.

Students' participation will be further enhanced with a series of collaborative activities:

Example 1: discussion of key articles and/or specific quotes from literature based on distinct responsibilities and allocated roles (chairperson, summariser, reviewer, observer).

Example 2: joint development of project. Task: "Identify actions to implement and lead upon with your staff for student inclusion in line with national policy requirements. Explain how you will implement these actions into your school context".

As evidenced by study guides there is structured organisation of material and relevant activities, per teaching week with key aims, keywords and readings per week which are uploaded on blackboard spaces along with built discussion groups, blog and journal entries. The inclusion of activities and spaces such as the ones shown on screenshots below will enhance participation. | |

would be advised to employ/hire experienced DL experts who collaborate with the teachers to design an effective programme optimizing content related, pedagogical, technical and organisational design requirements. On page 27 (repeated on page 34) it is asked whether the teaching staff is using new technology to make the teaching process more effective. The answer repeats the long list of tools, again without motivation why these are added, but the most important part of the question is not answered at all: 'to make the teaching process more effective'.
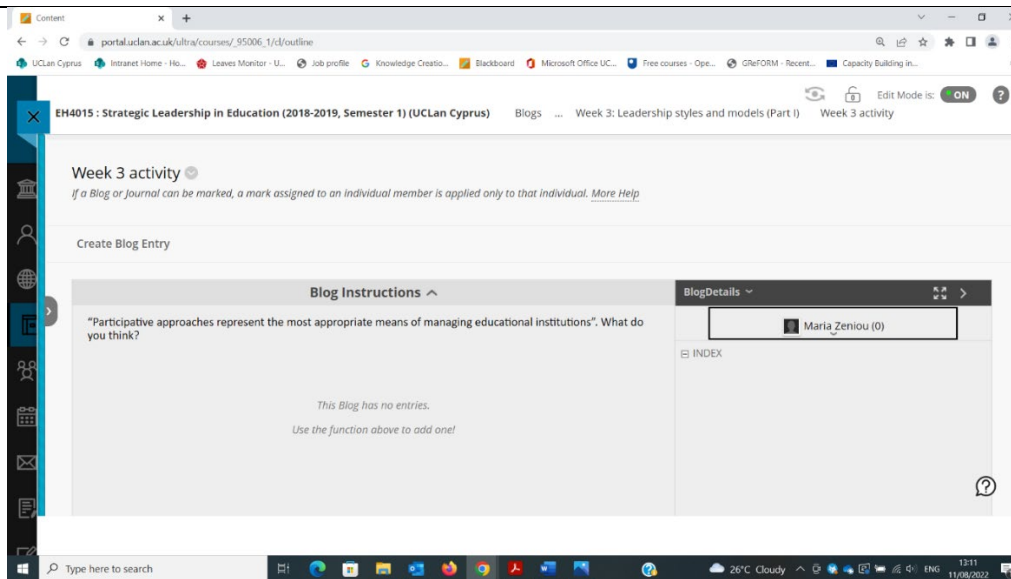
Screenshot 1
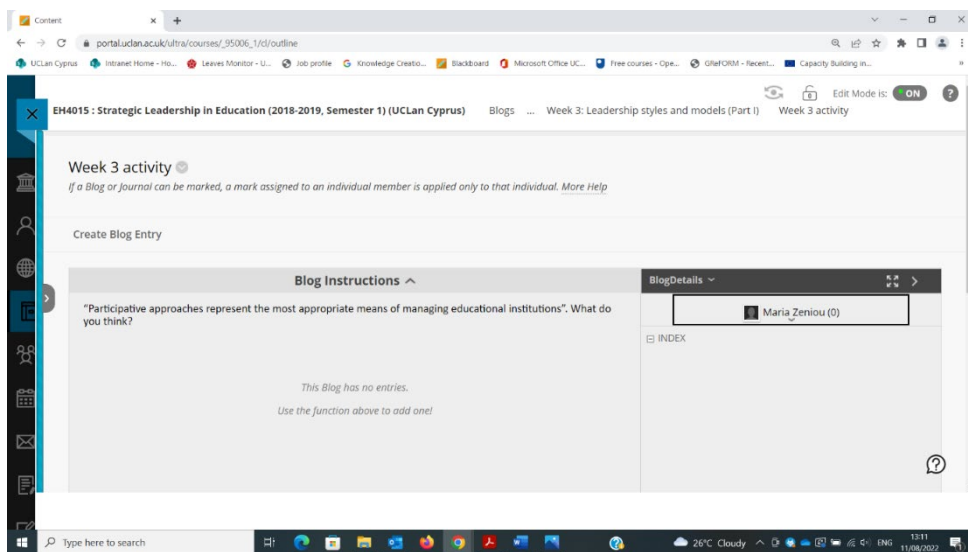
Screenshot 2

The tutors will be monitoring activities online and comment upon threads as means to encourage participants. Different kinds of groupings will be used as to enhance participation (e.g. competitive teams: team A vs team B to embark on an online debate), pairs, triads, goldfish bowl with inner actors and outer audience, allocated mixed groups and self-chosen interest groups. In case of participants being unresponsive, open questions and invitations will be initiated by tutors. These questions will be exploratory and directed to specific individuals and they will be

relevant with the individual's skills and expertise, hence inviting them to offer their perspective and insight in order to enlighten the rest of the class. Such practices require prior knowledge of our Master students' needs, backgrounds and experiences which is a core element of our teaching practice at UCLan Cyprus as part of the University key aims in promoting participation and inclusion and responding to the needs of diverse learning communities.

As demonstrated by ongoing research (Zenios, 2008; Ghadirian, Fauzi Mohd Ayub, and Salehi, 2018; Robins, 2021) the moderator's role is crucial in sustaining online discussions conferences through the structuring of the learning resources inherent in the conferences. Our teaching staff, in line with the UK Professional Standards framework undergoes training and develops strategies tailored to the needs of the students which are employed in teaching via distance as to enhance the learning experience and to avoid problems encountered by students. These include:

a) knowing the students including their professional background, interests and learning needs

b) setting clear aims for the use of the online forums and communicating these to the students effectively

c) setting clear roles and responsibilities for all participants, establish ground rules and netiquette

d) carefully choosing topics of discussion that are congruent to the needs of the students

e) linking online discussion to students' assessment and progression

f) integrating students professional interests into the discussion to promote interaction

d) use the following strategies to avoid the discussion becoming stagnant e.g. by encouraging and rewarding students by summarising and commenting, inviting guest speakers to spark discussion, opening new spaces to start separate discussions and generally being ready to resolve issues in case they emerge.

The online discussion spaces will also serve as a forum to clear queries on students' assessment. We see assessment as an inseparable part of teaching and learning and all our assessment

tasks are designed to promote students' learning. For example, while students prepare a research project on educational leadership as part of their assessment they will post their original research idea, their topic and proposed methodology and then being probed by questions from peers and tutors, they will refine and expand the original idea. In that way the use of online forums will be very much meaningful and profitable for learning.

As evidenced, our DL environment in Blackboard comprises of learning resources, module information and activity spaces with clear tasks. It also provides access to expert professionals in the field, tutors, professors and practitioners in educational leadership. Through embedded links, Blackboard may provide access to other applications which are used in school governance and leadership and will add to the repertoire of skills needed for successful educational leadership.

The DL programme would be offered in a combination of synchronous and asynchronous sessions. The sessions delivered in a synchronous mode would be using a student-centred "flipped classroom" approach. The academic team will be able to effectively assess the students' learning experience and their involvement and performance during the asynchronous sessions.

During the synchronous sessions we will use backchanneling & polling tools (i.e. Socrative https://www.socrative.com) specifically built for teachers and students so that learning interactions can go online with ease. It allows use of quiz-based questions and answers that keeps the whole process streamlined and user-friendly. It uses multiple-choice quiz as well as question-and-answer poll and it provides teachers with instant feedback from a live student response that is clearly laid out. Therefore, it offers a lot of powerful assessment uses on distance learning courses. This tool is expected to promote engagement into the DL classroom. It is also expected that the programme participants could later capitalise on its usefulness to engage their staff in continuous professional development activities while undertaking leadership duties in their schools.

UCLan Cyprus infrastructure in terms of offering an attractive and engaging learning environment for students studying in distance learning programme, benefits from strong foundations already implemented from the early years of operation of the University. UCLan Cyprus has won the Europe's top audio visual innovation award (2013) and is proud to be the "Most InAVative Education Facility" at the prestigious Europe, Middle East and Afrca (EMEA) InAvation Awards. This demonstrates evidence of a well-developed system design which brings together technologies that are innovative functional and usable, as well as a base for further development. It also proves recognition for the creation of the best IT/AV and on-line resources on the island to support the learning needs of the students and staff, from distance learning facilities to high end presentation solutions and innovative spaces. Please see further details here: https://www.uclancyprus.ac.cy/uclan-cyprus-wins-inavation-award/ and http://www.alacyprus.com/ala-cyprus-uclan-campus-cyprus-most-inavative-education-facility-2/

Finally, it is also worth mentioning our strong and fruitful collaboration with the Centre for Collaborative Learning at the University of Centre Lancashire that offers training, mentoring, a large database of resources on the technical teaching and learning methodology and a collaborative forum to share good practice, influence strategy and evolve provision through active communities and bespoke pedagogical and technological initiatives (https://ccl.uclan.ac.uk).

Based on our dedicated course team online tutoring and reliable technical infrastructure, we will take all the practical steps indicated above for ensuring the development of a learning community among our course participants and we trust that we will be able to cope efficiently with all the demands of DL provision including student engagement and active participation.

We would like to thank the EEC committee for their sharp comments and recommendations, that we have seriously taken into consideration. The approach that the team will use in the delivery of the distance learning programme is based on the

principle that the actual pedagogy behind the technology sparks participation in distance learning environments rather than the integration of a plethora of tools. We trust that the pedagogy described here and the evidence we have provided demonstrates our commitment to build participatory, interactive and facilitative learning spaces on Blackboard and MS TEAMs which will provide our students with the necessary skills to build their professional development trajectory in educational leadership.

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6. Additional for doctoral programmes
   (ALL ESG)

NOT APPLICABLE

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
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7. Eligibility (Joint programme)
(ALL ESG)

NOT APPLICABLE

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
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B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For official use Only
Overall, the EEC agrees that it is too early to approve this resubmission. While some of the issues have been addressed, there remain problematic issues concerning course content, digital learning environment, pedagogical design and staffing. There has been an attempt to address a number of issues and it is evidently clear that they have made the necessary procedural changes that we noted. For example, the Admission Criteria has been addressed. However, EEC feels that the matter to review the course content of this Masters programme has been rushed and not enough time has been allowed for the new academic personnel to settle in and develop the new study units that have been introduced. The development of new study units takes time. This becomes evident when we examine designs, content, choice of literature, and so on. Furthermore, the chosen associate lecturers do not have the appropriate background to develop courses that address the areas that EEC had identified in the first report. As a result, one of the main points highlighted in the evaluation report back in November 2021 that, and we quote, "The current teaching staff, whilst having the expertise in various professional areas, do not have the right credentials to	The Head of School of Business and Management and the programme's team are thankful to the EEC for their honest feedback, comments and suggestions which we have carefully taken into consideration and shared with the newly enhanced academic team and the advisory course panel. We have worked based on constructive and valuable feedback received to improve our programme by introducing new modules and paying attention to important new emerging topics (e.g. entitlement, gender issues, diversity and social justice). The structure has been further developed and enhanced as it has been presented in section 1 above and it is available in Appendix I. The programme team has been considerably enhanced with valuable experts in Educational Leadership and related areas (see Appendix I). Moreover, the University has robust mechanisms in place to allow further academic professional development either towards the teaching skills, or the research engagement or knowledge transfer to society. (See section 3, pages 18-21). We would like to express, one more time, our thanks to the EEC for pointing us to the right direction and giving us the impetus to improve our programme. We trust that we will be able to build and sustain a professional learning community through our programme, which will be dedicated in educational leadership agenda and its development for the	Choose an item.

develop an engaging and cutting-edge programme that would be able to compete with other courses offered in other Cypriot institutions and compete in the international arena. This is especially so given the desire of the University to attract foreign students" (p.40) has not been adequately addressed. Unless the University/ School of Management and Business attracts lecturers in the field of educational leadership the issues highlighted will not be resolved.

Furthermore, linked to this is the concern of the Committee that the new staff members still lack the research and teaching expertise that would help design a programme that would entice and provide prospective students with an in-depth postgraduate engagement with a wide range of challenging and interesting subject specialism. The lack of focus in the programme in both the application of theory to practice, and the provision of high-quality teaching and research experiences in contextually appropriate areas of studies is still of major concern. Even if a holistic perspective on (educational) leadership is important, as also stressed in the Institution's reply and improvements have been made, there are essential components of educational leadership that should be focused much more in detail.

The EEC concludes that the same concern is true for the adaptations made by HEI to comply with our comments about the design of the distance learning programme. The | improvement of schools and the life of students and staff.

In terms of the Distance Learning programme's design, the academic team has adopted the approach based on the principle that the actual pedagogy behind the technology is the one that sparks participation in distance learning environments rather than the integration of a plethora of tools. In section 5 the team has described in detail the philosophy followed for the design and provision of the DL programme and would like to assure the EEC on its commitment to build participatory, interactive and facilitative learning spaces on Blackboard and MS TEAMs which will provide the students with the necessary skills to build their professional development trajectory in educational leadership.

Moreover, after the first year of operation, as we do with all our programmes, the programme team will evaluate the delivery of the programme, taking into consideration students' feedback, and update the teaching and learning approach and material as necessary. Student engagement and motivation is always at the centre of the annual monitoring of our programmes. | |

addition of the long lists of tools to the digital learning environment, without a strong pedagogical motivation, a good embedding of the tools in the overall design of the programme objectives and with no evidence of teaching staff experience with these tools, is not sufficient to cope with the comments made. Given these serious shortcoming the Committee cannot support or recommend that it is approved.		

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Dr Loukas Glyptis	Head of School of Business and Management, UCLan Cyprus and Chair of the School Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee	
Dr Maria Zeniou	Course Leader of MA Educational Leadership, UCLan Cyprus	
Dr Cosmina Theodoulou	Director of Academic Quality and Compliance and Chair of the University Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee	

Date: 23/09/2022