Doc. Number: 300.1.1

Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education

Republic of Cyprus

External Evaluation Report

Program of Study

Institution: University of Nicosia

Program of Study: Joint Master of Science in Environmental Management and Environmental Education (Concentrations: (a) Entrepreneurship and Innovation, (b) Education and Communication) – Distance Learning

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INSTRUCTIONS:

The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the "Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws of 2015 to 2016" [N. 136 (I)/2015].

The document is duly completed by the External Evaluation Committee for each program of study. The ANNEX (Doc. Number 300.1) constitutes an integral part of the external evaluation report for the external evaluation accreditation of a program of study.

EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE:

NAME	TITLE	UNIVERSITY / INSTITUTION
Konstantinos Kyprianidis	Professor	Mälardalen University
Michalis Angelidis	Professor	University of the Aegean
Tryfon Daras	Assistant Professor	Technical University of Crete
Antonis Lionarakis	Professor, Dean	Hellenic Open University
Irena Kyprianidou	Student	University of Cyprus

4

INTRODUCTION:

I. The External Evaluation procedure

The application for evaluation/accreditation was provided to the committee members in hard copy. During the site visit powerpoint presentations were delivered by the faculty of University of Nicosia, followed by extensive discussions with the university leadership, faculty and student representatives. The committee also visited the Distance Learning Unit facilities and discussed with administrative staff. Some material was also provided to the committee after the Site Visit through the representative of DI.P.A.E.

II. The Internal Evaluation procedure

The application was of reasonable quality and completeness albeit not fully prepared with the specific evaluation criteria in mind. Some elements were not covered in the application e.g., research, viability and resourcing. The evaluation committee drew some additional information through the internal evaluation report that was attached to the main application. This was further complemented with information provided during and post the Site Visit through the representative of DI.P.A.E.

The internal evaluation report prepared by the University of Nicosia did not raise any specific weakness or points of further improvements for the program. From a quality of assurance point of view, this casts a shadow on the institution's capacity for practicing reflection and continuously improving its educational and research activities and practices.

It should be noted that in several instances the justifications/descriptions in the internal evaluation report remained general and at the institution level, rather than being specific to the program under evaluation. This to some extend reflects the overall approach to quality assurance at the University of Nicosia, which seems to be present at the institution level, in accordance with national laws and guidelines, but less evident at the program level. Any judgment by the committee on quality assurance specific to the program is thus reserved until such procedures are fully defined, in place and/or implemented during the first year of implementation of such a programme.

FINDINGS:

1. EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING WORK – AVAILABLE RESOURCES

1.1.1 The specific admission requirements set are very broad and do not guarantee that the students will have the necessary background to follow the suggested program of study. This is further aggravated by the fact that each specialization requires in itself a different student background for meaningful participation in and completion of the program. An MSc specialization in Environmental Management needs an adequate undergraduate background in Environmental Science, while an MSc specialization in Environmental Education needs an adequate background also in the Science of Pedagogy.

1.1.2 Each class is expected to be limited to maximum of 30 students which is adequate.

1.1.3 The implementation is difficult to assess at this stage, as the program has not yet started. Some of the implementation material (teaching supplements, procedures, web pages) is not ready yet. There is some reasonable expectation that part of the expected material/procedures will be ready once the program starts. For coming academic years it would need to be finalized and "spiked" 9 months before the start of the academic year.

1.1.3.1 International best practices suggest this to be ready 9 months in advance – not 4 months as set in the proposal.

1.1.4, 1.1.5, 1.1.6, 1.1.7, 1.1.8, 1.1.9, 1.1.11 Such processes have not been tested yet as the program has not begun. A reasonable expectation of moderate effectiveness is present

1.1.10 and 1.1.12 There were no prospective processes presented for these aspects. We recommend that these are developed and implemented in the program.

Additional notes:

The external evaluation committee cannot determine an expected number of students, and country of origin. The University of Nicosia has made some suggestions in their respective proposal and internal evaluation form. International best practices suggest 30 as the maximum planned number of students per class.

1.2.1 Slides, supplementary material, assignments and a written examination are suitable but do not constitute alone an excellent solution. We would encourage faculty to check other complementary methods.

1.2.2 Distance learning is a suitable practice for adults who are in full-time regular employment.

1.2.3 The implementation is difficult to assess at this stage, as the program has not yet started. Based on intention alone moderate performance is expected.

1.2.4 This needs to be further clarified and concretized. It is unclear in the present program proposal and discussions held during the Site Visit. A generic 50% assignment and 50% written exam is suggested in most course plans, but during the Site Visit the faculty suggested a 40%/60% instead. In any case the exact grading criteria for each type of assignment is not clear.

1.2.5 No particular activities were suggested for enhancing active participation of students in the educational process. This is a weakness that should be addressed for a Distance Learning program. How about flip classroom activities, to involve the students in the learning process through the concept of "learning by doing"?

1.2.6 The electronic platform is present and there is good administrative support related to it. Dedicated academic support to the teacher is weak to not present and something that needs to be developed at the university level. The dedicated Distance Learning Unit at the University of Nicosia should have a number of academics experts in Distance Learning with a full-time operative role in actively mentoring/educating teaching staff.

1.2.7 The material should be adapted for Distance Learning requirements.

1.3.1 The budgeted academic time (accordingly to the financial details provided) for the program is approximately for 2 full-time faculty. This is considered very inadequate for a 90 ECTS program with 150 students. From the side of the University of Nicosia only 3 full-time permanent faculty will be supporting the program, all of whom are already fully involved in other educational and administrative activities at the university. Based on the instructions from DIPAE, the committee cannot take into consideration the intention of the university to hire more faculty should the program be approved. In any case such recruitments have not been budgeted and their likelihood is low, particularly with a September 2017 project start date.

The expertise of the faculty that will support the program cover adequately only some of the topics intended. They do not seem to cover the whole spectrum of environment science and education as reflected in the proposed curriculum. A larger number of dedicated faculty with appropriate professional or scientific profile that cover the whole range of the intended topics should be supporting this program. The support of faculty from the ATEI Thessaloniki covers adequately the aspects of agricultural management (agro-economics).

Combined with the need for more full-time permanent faculty supporting the program, the recommendation here is for the University of Nicosia to prioritise in new recruitments faculty with background on:

- The broader spectrum of environmental sciences such as heavy industry and energy policies and praxis, water, urban planning, smart cities etc.

- Environmental education

1.3.5 30% of the educational team will be Special Teaching Personnel and/or adjunct from other university environments (i.e., not University of Nicosia or ATEI Thessaloniki). Depending on resourcing constraints this may be higher during the actual implementation which raises concerns.

1.3.6, 1.3.7 Seems ok from the outset, but it is not evident that the faculty involved in the application will have the time to teach in the program, in relation to existing obligations.

1.3.8 According to the financial projections presented during the Site Visit, only 2 full-time faculty have been budgeted. For 150 students following in total 90 ECTS, this results in inadequate resourcing i.e., beyond the capacity of existing or budgeted staff. Therefore the ratio of students to faculty (and ECTS) does not ensure the quality of the program of study.

1.3.9 The teaching and administrative load of the involved faculty seems very high and does not provide opportunities for pursuing research.

1.3.10 No planning present.

1.3.11 The program coordinator capacity is adequate and has served in previous roles.

2. PROGRAM OF STUDY AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

2.1.1 This has been addressed in an adequate manner.

2.1.2 The learning outcomes are used as a guide of the design of the program Planning in the program.

2.1.4 The material provided in the proposal, and during the Site Visit, was not specific to Distance Learning. More comments on this are presented in Section 5.

2.1.5 Provided through the university on-line platforms.

2.1.6 The process presented in the proposal, and during the Site Visit, was not specific to Distance Learning. More comments on this are presented in Section 5.

2.1.7 Reasonable correspondence between the qualification awarded and the learning outcomes of the program was found.

2.2.1, 2.2.2 These are covered in a good manner.

2.2.3 The program progression is adequate for the Environmental Management direction. For the Environmental Education direction the purpose for the inclusion of certain modules is unclear. Depending on the admissions requirements a number of "bridge" elective courses would be appropriate

perhaps to have (Introduction to Pedagogics, Introduction to Environmental Technology etc.)

2.2.4 See response to question 2.1.7 (same question in principle)

2.2.5 A number of general courses are suggestion to enhance the program, particularly reflecting the current admissions requirements. See response to question 2.2.3

2.2.6 The technical content of courses is appropriate but not the Distance Learning techniques utilized (see detailed comments in Section 5).

2.2.7 The overarching learning outcomes of the program, specifically those related to business and education seem ambitious. It may be challenging to achieve them with the specific courses provided.

2.2.8 The link to research and current state of the art is weak to some extend.

2.2.9 This information was not present in the main body of the application. During the site visit we were informed that some flexibility is given in the timing of Webex sessions for those in employment. Existence of specific university policies related to speial needs is mentioned in the internal evaluation assessment report.

2.3.1 According to information provided during the Site Visit, the university has an overarching quality assurance structure that seems to follow the national law/guidelines. A quality assurance implementation specific to the program was not presented.

2.3.2 This is in place for the overarching structure. Nothing detailed was presented for the specific program. We expect that this will be implemented at program level.

2.3.3 This may be in place for the overarching structure. Nothing detailed was presented for the specific program. We expect that this will be implemented at program level.

2.3.4 The quality assurance process seems to follow at university level the national law and European guidelines. Nothing detailed was presented for the specific program. We expect that this will be implemented at program level. It was not possible for the committee to determine if there are restrictions set by non-academic factors.

2.4.1 Based on the quality assurance process, it is likely that some continuous improvement of the program will take place. A definitive process for the program was not discussed during the Site Visit, but some good ideas are discussed in the internal assessment report. The program coordinator has management experience and we expect that relevant processes can be implemented successfuly.

2.4.2 A specific process to ensure learning outcomes are achieved was not presented. It is expected that this will be part of the program coordinator's operative role.

2.4.3 Please see response to question 2.3.4

2.4.4 The academic hierarchy of the institution seems appropriate.

2.4.5, 2.4.6 This seems to be in-line according to information provided during the Site Visit.

2.4.7 This seems to be within reasonable standards.

2.4.8 The committee found this question as non-applicable.

2.5.1 The program is already a joint-MSc therefore the international dimension is already present.

2.5.2 Some participation from DUTH is presented.

2.5.3 Not applicable for a Distance Learning program.

2.5.4 The program of study merges two different specializations, which elsewhere would be usually presented as self-standing MScs by each self. This raises concerns on the compatibility of the program with corresponding programs of study elsewhere.

In relation to the degree the program compares positively or not with corresponding programs operating in Cyprus and abroad in higher education institutions of the same rank, the committee reserves judgment until the evaluation following the first year of the program implementation.

2.6.1, 2.6.2, 2.6.3 There was no clear information provided as evidence that the program covers specific labor market and/or societal needs. Graduates may be employable in different environmental jobs but there are no clear evidence that such profiles are demanded by the labor market. The committee would recommend that a survey is conducted from the relevant technical bodies, business sector and if appropriate the educational sector.

3. RESEARCH WORK AND SYNERGIES WITH TEACHING

3.1.1, 3.1.2 Most of the academic staff have an adequate research background, and some an active research activity, however not always in the subject-matter that they are expected to teach. Therefore it is not always possible to embody research results in the body of the educational program.

3.1.3 There is no explicit research component described in the program. Therefore the discussion on adequate and sufficient facilities and equipment is not applicable here.

3.1.4 Many of the publications are not directly relevant to the subject matter of the program.

3.1.5 External non-governmental research funding at the University of Nicosia on the subject matter of program was not compared positively to the funding of other institutions in Cyprus and abroad.

3.1.6, 3.1.7 No evidence or clear policy was provided of internal faculty funding being made available for the academic personnel at the University of Nicosia to carry out research specific to the subject-matter of the program.

3.1.8 Some of the teaching staff have satisfactory participation in research activities albeit these are not always relevant to the subject matter of the program.

3.1.9 According to the information provided the participation of students in potential research activities (thesis) is very limited (10-20%).

4. ADMINISTRATION SERVICES, STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT OF TEACHING WORK

4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3 There are some supportive administrative mechanisms present through the Distance Learning unit. Results of effectiveness of these mechanisms were not provided (satisfaction surveys from other Distance Learning programmes running) but are likely to be of adequate performance.

4.2.1 There is relevant material provided for each course. However, this material is not tuned specifically to the needs of students following a distance-learning program. Whereas books and journals might be fit for purpose for a traditional lecture-based program, distance-learning require interactive material as well as material in audio/visual format.

4.2.2 There is an appropriate internal communication platform being used.

4.2.3 The facilities at the Distance Learning unit are appropriate.

4.2.4 Not applicable for a Distance Learning program.

4.2.5 See response to section 4.2.1

4.2.6 See response to section 4.2.1

4.2.7 Although training opportunities are provided by the University of Nicosia according to oral information provided during the Site Visit, it also emerged that most faculty involved in the program have not taken advantage of these opportunities. The committee strongly encourages all faculty to take advantage of these opportunities, not limited to the use of specific tools, but on the pedagogy of distance learning and the special requirements of such practices.

4.3.1 According to the financial projections provided during the Site Visit the budgeted teaching resources are inadequate and do not allow for the development of the program and academic/teaching personnel.

4.3.2 The required process is present with regard to the allocation of financial resources.

4.3.3 Some information was provided during the Site Visit. The suggested remuneration of 300Euro per 20 ECTS thesis, and 1500Euro for delivering a 30 student class worth 10 ECTS is considered below market standard and should be reconsidered.

4.3.4 Some information was provided during the Site Visit. The suggested tuition fees level of approximately 6000 Euro is considered up to par with current practice.

5. DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS

5.1 The processes of the teaching by the teaching personnel is very demanding and vital for their performance. The students do have to answer an anonymous questionnaire but the questions in order to be effective must be realistic and open-ended. Closed questions are good in order to have a picture of the situation, but not enough if we want a realistic picture of their performance.

5.2 A training programme for the academic and teaching personnel is more than necessary. This is an important support for the pedagogical procedures of the programme and its implementation. In this case, experience does not always include skills for teaching at a distance. For this reason the academic and teaching personnel must be very well prepared in order to have special skills and be ready for the particular conditions of the programme. That is the reason for the necessary training programme of the academic and teaching personnel.

5.3 There must be a systematic mechanism for the support of the teachers for best training, guidance and support. This training must be systematic and

ready to give practical solutions and guidance to all teaching personnel, particularly in relation to the pedagogy of distance learning. This is a precondition in order to have quality processes of teaching and learning,

5.4 The monitoring mechanisms must be flexible and give solutions to all the necessary infrastructure of the programme. The monitoring mechanisms include supporting the students and NOT just monitoring them.

5.5 The mentoring of this kind must be established for the support of the students in all kinds of their involvement. How they learn, how they can be more effective, how they can face different types of difficulties in their learning procedure. Therefore the mentoring must be more appropriate and focused on the students' needs.

5.6 The communication must be organized in order to give any kind of opportunity to the students and their support. This particular programme should be focused on even more effective ways of communication and student support. The time availability of the teaching personnel is not sufficient for a meaningful and effectiveness interaction with the students, be it with synchronous or asynchronous forms of communication and feedback.

5.7 This refers to the mechanism of assessment and the opportunity to create a full and flexible mechanism of assessment and support backup. Based on the information provided it can assumed that the assessment will be consistent.

5.8 The teaching material of the particular programme doesn't seem to be appropriate for distance learning and does not answer basic maters for the teaching / learning methodology. The ideas used for the teaching material methodology are not referring to pedagogical practices and theories. At the same time there is no method for updated material and the time period which is necessary. This material is the heart of the programme and the corner stone of the programme and its quality.

5.9 This is adequate in the particular programme.

5.10 This is realistic and can be applied

5.11 Sufficient support from the Distance Learning unit is expected.

5.12 Specific processes do not seem to be in place. Nonetheless the staff at the Distance Learning unit seemed positively motived during the Site Visit and prepared to support adequately faculty and students.

5.13 Somehow the infrastructure for distance education is comparable with some European institutions. This does not mean that the standards of the infrastructure meet the quality matters of the program.

5.14 Yes, the programme has all the necessary support for library services

5.15 Yes, the students and the teaching personnel have access to the data for the implementation of the programme.

5.16 Yes the ratio based on the proposed teaching team will be above 75%. This is on the provision that the courses are given by the staff presented in the application. Adequate financial resources should be provided in the program to ensure the effective and meaningful participation of the aforementioned faculty. In case additional teaching staff are employed they should have similar academic merits and experience, and relevance to the subject matter of the program and course to be delivered.

6. DOCTORAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY

NOT APPLICABLE

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE[1]

Overall and in light of the information provided in advance, during and post the Site Visit, the committee maintains reservations regarding this program. Several weaknesses and shortcomings were found which the committee believes cannot be addressed in the short term. These relate to matters of academic quality, training on theory of distance learning pedagogy, resourcing, collegial administration, and overall approach to quality assurance. The faculty is encouraged to review and revise its program and approach based on the findings presented in this external evaluation report.

Some key suggestions for improvement are presented below. Additional comments on weaknesses of the program are presented in the main body of the report, including further suggestions for improvement.

1. The specific admission requirements set are very broad and do not guarantee that the students will have the necessary background to follow the suggested program of study. This is further aggravated by the fact that each specialization requires in itself a different student background for meaningful participation in and completion of the program. An MSc specialization in Environmental Management needs an adequate undergraduate background in Environmental Science, while an MSc specialization in Environmental Education needs an adequate background also in the Science of Pedagogy.

2. Not all of the teaching staff that are developing and planning the teaching material for the students has appropriate training and academic expertise of pedagogical background and experience in distance learning. This is a serious drawback in the effectiveness of the program that must be addressed through appropriate training etc.

3. The feedback on the students' assignments is very important and a mechanism of realistic and flexible comments should be established. The programming of the feedback to student assignments has to be planned in details and become an effective instrument for the learning procedure.

4. A more detailed study guide is necessary which will include a continuous and interactive communication, explicit guidelines for addressing student queries that may arise, and in principle act as a supportive tool as the student interacts with intended teaching material.

5. The teaching / learning material must be evaluated before the beginning of the program by students and experts, and become more flexible by

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[1] It is highlighted, at this point, that the External Evaluation Committee is expected to justify its findings and its suggestions on the basis of the Document num.: 300.1. The External Evaluation Committee is not expected to submit a suggestion for the approval or the rejection of the program of study under evaluation. This decision falls under the competencies of the Council of the Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation of higher education.

using the whole spectrum of course delivery and instruments of explicit and easy to understand material. Within this material an interactive continuous methodology must be present (activities of applying the theory, group work, assessment questions and activities, methods of self-evaluation of the students, explicit bibliographical guidelines, teaching and learning outcomes, readers for more effective study).

6. The expertise of the faculty that will support the program cover adequately only some of the topics intended. They do not seem to cover the whole spectrum of environment science and education as reflected in the proposed curriculum. A larger number of dedicated faculty with appropriate professional or scientific profile that cover the whole range of the intended topics should be supporting this program. The support of faculty from the ATEI Thessaloniki covers adequately the aspects of agricultural management (agro-economics).

Combined with the need for more full-time permanent faculty supporting the program, the recommendation here is for the University of Nicosia to prioritize in coming recruitments faculty with background on:

   a. The broader spectrum of environmental sciences such as heavy industry and energy policies and praxis, water, urban planning, smart cities etc.
   b. Environmental education

7. According to the financial projections provided during the Site Visit the budgeted teaching resources are inadequate and do not allow for the development of the program and academic/teaching personnel. Some information was provided during the Site Visit. The suggested remuneration of 300Euro per 20 ECTS thesis, and 1500Euro for delivering a 30-student class worth 10 ECTS is considered below market standard and should be reconsidered. Overall, adequate financial resources should be provided in the program to ensure the effective and meaningful participation of the faculty presented in the application. In case additional teaching staff are employed they should have similar academic merits and experience, and relevance to the subject matter of the program and course to be delivered.

16

Doc. Number: 300.1

Quality Standards and Indicators

External Evaluation of a Program of Study

Institution: ....

Program of Study: ....

Duration of the Program of Study: ....

Evaluation Date:.............................

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The document describes the quality standards and indicators, which will be applied for the external evaluation of programs of study of institutions of higher education, by the External Evaluation Committee.

DIRECTIONS: Note what is applicable for each quality standard/indicator.

1. Applicable to a minimum degree
2. Applicable to a non satisfactory degree
3. Applicable to a satisfactory degree
4. Applicable to a very satisfactory degree
5. It applies and it constitutes a good practice

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

35

Members of the External Evaluation Committee

NAME	TITLE	UNIVERSITY / INSTITUTION
Konstantinos Kyprianidis	Professor	Mälardalen University
Michalis Angelidis	Professor	University of the Aegean
Tryfon Daras	Assistant Professor	Technical University of Crete
Antonis Lionarakis	Professor, Dean	Hellenic Open University
Irena Kyprianidou	Student	University of Cyprus

Date and Time of the On-Site Visit: 22 May 2017

Duration of the On-Site Visit: 9.30 – 18.00

ΔΙ.Π.Α.Ε.
DI.P.A.E.

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

1. EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING WORK – AVAILABLE RESOURCES							
1.1	**Organization of teaching work**		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1.1.1	The student admission requirements to the program of study, are based on specific regulations which are adhered to in a consistent manner.			+			
1.1.2	The number of students in each class allows for constructive teaching and communication, and it compares positively to the current international standards and/or practices.				+		
1.1.3	The organization of the educational process safeguards the quality implementation of the program's purpose and objectives and the achievement of the learning outcomes. Particularly, the following are taken into consideration:						
	1.1.3.1	The implementation of a specific academic calendar and its timely publication.		+			
	1.1.3.2	The disclosure of the program's curricula to the students, and their implementation by the teaching personnel			+		
	1.1.3.3	The course web-pages, updated with the relevant supplementary material			+		
	1.1.3.4	The procedures for the fulfillment of undergraduate and postgraduate assignments / practical training			+		
	1.1.3.5	The procedures for the conduct and the format of the examinations and for student assessment			+		
	1.1.3.6	The effective provision of information to the students and the enhancement of their participation in the procedures for the improvement of the educational process.	N/A				
1.1.4	Adequate and modern learning resources, are available to the students, including the following:						
	1.1.4.1	facilities			+		
	1.1.4.2	library			+		
	1.1.4.3	infrastructure			+		
	1.1.4.4	student welfare			+		

33

					+		
	1.1.4.5	academic mentoring			+		
1.1.5		A policy for regular and effective communication, between the teaching personnel and the students, is applied.			+		
1.1.6		The teaching personnel, for each course, provide timely and effective feedback to the students.			+		
1.1.7		Statutory mechanisms, for the support of students and the communication with the teaching personnel, are effective.			+		
1.1.8		Control mechanisms for student performance are effective.			+		
1.1.9		Support mechanisms for students with problematic academic performance are effective.			+		
1.1.10		Academic mentoring processes are transparent and effective for undergraduate and postgraduate programs and are taken into consideration for the calculation of academic work load.	+				
1.1.11		The program of study applies an effective policy for the prevention and detection of plagiarism.			+		
1.1.12		The program of study provides satisfactory mechanisms for complaint management and for dispute resolution.	+				

1.1.1 The specific admission requirements set are very broad and do not guarantee that the students will have the necessary background to follow the suggested program of study. This is further aggravated by the fact that each specialization requires in itself a different student background for meaningful participation in and completion of the program. An MSc specialization in Environmental Management needs an adequate undergraduate background in Environmental Science, while an MSc specialization in Environmental Education needs an adequate background also in the Science of Pedagogy.

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1.2	Teaching	1	2	3	4	5
1.2.1	The methodology utilized in each course is suitable for achieving the course's purpose and objectives and those of the individual modules.			+		
1.2.2	The methodology of each course is suitable for adults.				+	
1.2.3	Continuous-formative assessment and feedback are provided to the students regularly.			+		
1.2.4	The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance, are clear, adequate, and known to the students.		+			
1.2.5	Educational activities which encourage students' active participation in the learning process, are implemented.		+			
1.2.6	Teaching incorporates the use of modern educational technologies that are consistent with international standards, including a platform for the electronic support of learning.				+	
1.2.7	Teaching materials (books, manuals, journals, databases, and teaching notes) meet the requirements set by the methodology of the program's individual courses, and are updated regularly.			+		

1.2.1 Slides, supplementary material, assignments and a written examination are suitable but do not constitute alone an excellent solution. We would encourage faculty to check other complementary methods.

1.2.2 Distance learning is a suitable practice for adults who are in full-time regular employment.

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1.2.6 The electronic platform is present and there is good administrative support related to it. Dedicated academic support to the teacher is weak to not present and something that needs to be developed at the university level. The dedicated Distance Learning Unit at the University of Nicosia should have a number of academics experts in Distance Learning with a full-time operative role in actively mentoring/educating teaching staff.

1.2.7 The material should be adapted for Distance Learning requirements.

1.3	Teaching Personnel	1	2	3	4	5
1.3.1	The number of full-time academic personnel, occupied exclusively at the institution, and their fields of expertise, adequately support the program of study.		+			
1.3.2	The members of teaching personnel for each course have the relevant formal and fundamental qualifications for teaching the course, as described by the legislation, including the following:		+			
1.3.2.1	Subject specialization, preferably with a doctorate, in the discipline.		+			

	1.3.2.2	Publications within the discipline.		+			
1.3.3		The specializations of Visiting Professors adequately support the program of study.	N/A				
1.3.4		Special Teaching Personnel and Special Scientists have the necessary qualifications, adequate work experience and specialization to teach a limited number of courses in the program of study.		+			
1.3.5		In every program of study the Special Teaching Personnel does not exceed 30% of the Teaching Research Personnel.		+			
1.3.6		The teaching personnel of each private institution of tertiary education, to a percentage of at least 70%, has recognized academic qualification, by one level higher than that of the program of study in which he/she teaches.			+		
1.3.7		In the program of study, the ratio of the number of courses taught by full-time personnel, occupied exclusively at the institution, to the number of courses taught by part-time personnel, ensures the quality of the program of study.			+		
1.3.8		The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching personnel is adequate for the support and safeguarding of the program's quality.		+			
1.3.9		The academic personnel's teaching load does not limit the conduct of research, writing, and contribution to the society.		+			
1.3.10		Future redundancies / retirements, expected recruitment and promotions of academic personnel safeguard the unimpeded implementation of the program of study within a five-year span.	+				
1.3.11		The program's Coordinator has the qualifications and experience to efficiently coordinate the program of study.				+	

1.3.1 The budgeted academic time (accordingly to the financial details provided) for the program is approximately for 2 full-time faculty. This is considered very inadequate for a 90 ECTS program with 150 students. From the side of the University of Nicosia only 3 full-time permanent faculty will be supporting the program, all of whom are already fully involved in other educational and administrative activities at the university. Based on the instructions from DIPAE, the committee cannot take into consideration the intention of the university to hire more faculty should the program be approved. In any case such recruitments have not been budgeted and their

likelihood is low, particularly with a September 2017 project start date.

The expertise of the faculty that will support the program cover adequately only some of the topics intended. They do not seem to cover the whole spectrum of environment science and education as reflected in the proposed curriculum. A larger number of dedicated faculty with appropriate professional or scientific profile that cover the whole range of the intended topics should be supporting this program. The support of faculty from the ATEI Thessaloniki covers adequately the aspects of agricultural management (agro-economics).

Combined with the need for more full-time permanent faculty supporting the program, the recommendation here is for the University of Nicosia to prioritise in new recruitments faculty with background on:

- The broader spectrum of environmental sciences such as heavy industry and energy policies and praxis, water, urban planning, smart cities etc.
- Environmental education

1.3.5 30% of the educational team will be Special Teaching Personnel and/or adjunct from other university environments (i.e., not University of Nicosia or ATEI Thessaloniki). Depending on resourcing constraints this may be higher during the actual implementation which raises concerns.

1.3.6, 1.3.7 Seems ok from the outset, but it is not evident that the faculty involved in the application will have the time to teach in the program, in relation to existing obligations.

1.3.8 According to the financial projections presented during the Site Visit, only 2 full-time faculty have been budgeted. For 150 students following in total 90 ECTS, this results in inadequate resourcing i.e., beyond the capacity of existing or budgeted staff. Therefore the ratio of students to faculty (and ECTS) does not ensure the quality of the program of study.

1.3.9 The teaching and administrative load of the involved faculty seems very high and does not provide opportunities for pursuing research.

1.3.10 No planning presented.

1.3.11 The program coordinator capacity is adequate and has served in previous roles.

2. PROGRAM OF STUDY AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS							
2.1	**Purpose and Objectives and learning outcomes of the Program of Study**	1	2	3	4	5	
2.1.1	The purpose and objectives of the program of study are formulated in terms of expected learning outcomes and are consistent with the mission and the strategy of the institution.			+			
2.1.2	The purpose and objectives of the program and the learning outcomes are utilized as a guide for the design of the program of study.			+			
2.1.3	The higher education qualification and the program of study, conform to the provisions of their corresponding Professional and Vocational Bodies for the purpose of registration to these bodies.	N/A					
2.1.4	The program's content, the methods of assessment, the teaching materials and the equipment, lead to the achievement of the program's purpose and objectives and ensure the expected learning outcomes.		+				
2.1.5	The expected learning outcomes of the program are known to the students and to the members of the academic and teaching personnel.			+			
2.1.6	The learning process is properly designed to achieve the expected learning outcomes.		+				
2.1.7	The higher education qualification awarded to the students, corresponds to the purpose and objectives and the learning outcomes of the program.			+			

2.1.1 This has been addressed in an adequate manner.

2.1.2 The learning outcomes are used as a guide of the design of the program Planning in the program.

2.1.4 The material provided in the proposal, and during the Site Visit, was not specific to Distance Learning. More comments on this are presented in Section 5.

2.1.5 Provided through the university on-line platforms.

2.1.6 The process presented in the proposal, and during the Site Visit, was not specific to Distance Learning. More comments on this are presented in Section 5.

2.1.7 Reasonable correspondence between the qualification awarded and the

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AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

learning outcomes of the program was found.

2.2	Structure and Content of the Program of Study	1	2	3	4	5
2.2.1	The course curricula clearly define the expected learning outcomes, the content, the teaching and learning approaches and the method of assessing student performance.				+	
2.2.2	The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is applied and there is true correspondence between credits and workload per course and per semester for the student either he / she studies in a specific program or he/she is registered and studies simultaneously in additional programs of studies according to the European practice in higher education institutions.				+	
2.2.3	The program of study is structured in a consistent manner and in sequence, so that concepts operating as preconditions precede the teaching of other, more complex and cognitively more demanding, concepts.			+		
2.2.4	The higher education qualification awarded, the learning outcomes and the content of the program are consistent.			+		
2.2.5	The program, in addition to the courses focusing on the specific discipline, includes an adequate number of general education courses.		+			
2.2.6	The content of courses and modules, and the corresponding educational activities are suitable for achieving the desired learning outcomes with regards to the knowledge, skills, and abilities which should be acquired by students.		+			
2.2.7	The number and the content of the program's courses are sufficient for the achievement of learning outcomes.			+		
2.2.8	The content of the program's courses reflects the latest achievements / developments in science, arts, research		+			

					+		
2.2.9	Flexible options / adaptable to the personal needs or to the needs of students with special needs, are provided.				+		

2.2.1, 2.2.2 These are covered in a good manner.

2.2.3 The program progression is adequate for the Environmental Management direction. For the Environmental Education direction the purpose for the inclusion of certain modules is unclear. Depending on the admissions requirements a number of "bridge" elective courses would be appropriate perhaps to have (Introduction to Pedagogics, Introduction to Environmental Technology etc.)

2.2.4 See response to question 2.1.7 (same question in principle)

2.2.5 A number of general courses are suggestion to enhance the program, particularly reflecting the current admissions requirements. See response to question 2.2.3

2.2.6 The technical content of courses is appropriate but not the Distance Learning techniques utilized (see detailed comments in Section 5).

2.2.7 The overarching learning outcomes of the program, specifically those related to business and education seem ambitious. It may be challenging to achieve them with the specific courses provided.

2.2.8 The link to research and current state of the art is weak to some extend.

2.2.9 This information was not present in the main body of the application. During the site visit we were informed that some flexibility is given in the timing of Webex sessions for those in employment. Existence of specific university policies related to speial needs is mentioned in the internal evaluation assessment report.

2.3	Quality Assurance of the Program of Study		1	2	3	4	5
2.3.1	The arrangements regarding the program's quality assurance define clear competencies and procedures.				+		
2.3.2	Participation in the processes of the system of quality assurance of the program, is ensured for				+		
	2.3.2.1	the members of the academic personnel			+		
	2.3.2.2	the members of the administrative personnel			+		
	2.3.2.3	the students.			+		

		1	2	3	4	5
2.3.3	The guide and / or the regulations for quality assurance, provide detailed information and data for the support and management of the program of study.			+		
2.3.4	The quality assurance process constitutes an academic process and it is not restricted by non-academic factors.			+		

2.3.1 According to information provided during the Site Visit, the university has an overarching quality assurance structure that seems to follow the national law/guidelines. A quality assurance implementation specific to the program was not presented.

2.3.2 This is in place for the overarching structure. Nothing detailed was presented for the specific program. We expect that this will be implemented at program level.

2.3.3 This may be in place for the overarching structure. Nothing detailed was presented for the specific program. We expect that this will be implemented at program level.

2.3.4 The quality assurance process seems to follow at university level the national law and European guidelines. Nothing detailed was presented for the specific program. We expect that this will be implemented at program level. It was not possible for the committee to determine if there are restrictions set by non-academic factors.

2.4	Management of the Program of Study	1	2	3	4	5
2.4.1	Effective management of the program of study with regard to its design, its approval, its monitoring and its review, is in place.			+		
2.4.2	It is ensured that learning outcomes may be achieved within the specified timeframe.			+		
2.4.3	It is ensured that the program's management and development process is an academic process which operates without any non-academic interventions.			+		
2.4.4	The academic hierarchy of the institution, (Rector, Vice-			+		

No.	Criterion					
	Rectors, Deans, Chairs and Programs' Coordinators, academic personnel) have the sole responsibility for academic excellence and the development of the programs of study.					
2.4.5	Information relating to the program of study are posted publicly and include:				+	
2.4.5.1	The provisions regarding unit credits				+	
2.4.5.2	The expected learning outcomes				+	
2.4.5.3	The methodology				+	
2.4.5.4	Course descriptions				+	
2.4.5.5	The program's structure				+	
2.4.5.6	The admission requirements				+	
2.4.5.7	The format and the procedures for student assessment				+	
2.4.6	The award of the higher education qualification is accompanied by the Diploma Supplement which is in line with the European and international standards.				+	
2.4.7	The effectiveness of the program's evaluation mechanism, by the students, is ensured.			+		
2.4.8	The recognition and transfer of credit units from previous studies is regulated by procedures and regulations which ensure that the majority of credit units is awarded by the institution which awards the higher education qualification.	N/A				

2.4.1 Based on the quality assurance process, it is likely that some continuous improvement of the program will take place. A definitive process for the program was not discussed during the Site Visit, but some good ideas are discussed in the internal assessment report. The program coordinator has management experience and we expect that relevant processes can be implemented successfully.

2.4.2 A specific process to ensure learning outcomes are achieved was not presented. It is expected that this will be part of the program coordinator's operative role.

2.4.3 Please see response to question 2.3.4

2.4.4 The academic hierarchy of the institution seems appropriate.

2.4.5, 2.4.6 This seems to be in-line according to information provided during the Site Visit.

2.4.7 This seems to be within reasonable standards.

23

2.4.8 The committee found this question as non-applicable.

2.5	International Dimension of the Program of Study	1	2	3	4	5
2.5.1	The program's collaborations with other institutions are compared positively with corresponding collaborations of other departments / programs of study in Europe and internationally.			+		
2.5.2	The program attracts Visiting professors of recognized academic standing.			+		
2.5.3	Students participate in exchange programs.	N/A				
2.5.4	The academic profile of the program of study is compatible with corresponding programs of study in Cyprus and internationally.		+			

2.5.1 The program is already a joint-MSc therefore the international dimension is already present.

2.5.2 Some participation from DUTH is presented.

2.5.3 Not applicable for a Distance Learning program.

2.5.4 The program of study merges two different specializations, which elsewhere would be usually presented as self-standing MScs by each self. This raises concerns on the compatibility of the program with corresponding programs of study elsewhere.

In relation to the degree the program compares positively or not with corresponding programs operating in Cyprus and abroad in higher education institutions of the same rank, the committee reserves judgment until the evaluation following the first year of the program implementation.

2.6	Connection with the labor market and the society	1	2	3	4	5
2.6.1	The procedures applied, so that the program conforms to the scientific and professional activities of the graduates, are adequate and effective.		+			
2.6.2	According to the feasibility study, indicators for the employability of graduates are satisfactory.		+			

2.6.3	Benefits, for the society, deriving from the program are significant.		+			

2.6.1, 2.6.2, 2.6.3 There was no clear information provided as evidence that the program covers specific labor market and/or societal needs. Graduates may be employable in different environmental jobs but there are no clear evidence that such profiles are demanded by the labor market. The committee would recommend that a survey is conducted from the relevant technical bodies, business sector and if appropriate the educational sector.

3. RESEARCH WORK AND SYNERGIES WITH TEACHING						
3.1	**Research - Teaching Synergies**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3.1.1	It is ensured that teaching and learning have been adequately enlightened by research.		+			
3.1.2	New research results are embodied in the content of the program of study.		+			
3.1.3	Adequate and sufficient facilities and equipment are provided to support the research component of the program of study, which are available and accessible to the personnel and the students.	N/A				
3.1.4	The results of the academic personnel's research activity are published in international journals with the peer-reviewing system, in international conferences, conference minutes, publications etc.			+		
3.1.5	External, non-governmental, funding for the academic personnel's research activities, is compared positively to the funding of other institutions in Cyprus and abroad.		+			
3.1.6	Internal funding, of the academic personnel's research activities, is compared positively to the funding of other institutions in Cyprus and abroad.		+			
3.1.7	The policy for, indirect or direct, internal funding of the academic personnel's research activity is satisfactory.		+			
3.1.8	The participation of students, academic, teaching and administrative personnel of the program in research		+			

		1	2	3	4	5
	activities and projects is satisfactory.					
3.1.9	Student training in the research process is sufficient.	+				

3.1.1, 3.1.2 Most of the academic staff have an adequate research background, and some an active research activity, however not always in the subject-matter that they are expected to teach. Therefore it is not always possible to embody research results in the body of the educational program.

3.1.3 There is no explicit research component described in the program. Therefore the discussion on adequate and sufficient facilities and equipment is not applicable here.

3.1.4 Many of the publications are not directly relevant to the subject matter of the program.

3.1.5 External non-governmental research funding at the University of Nicosia on the subject matter of program was not compared positively to the funding of other institutions in Cyprus and abroad.

3.1.6, 3.1.7 No evidence or clear policy was provided of internal faculty funding being made available for the academic personnel at the University of Nicosia to carry out research specific to the subject-matter of the program.

3.1.8 Some of the teaching staff have satisfactory participation in research activities albeit these are not always relevant to the subject matter of the program.

3.1.9 According to the information provided the participation of students in potential research activities (thesis) is very limited (10-20%).

4. ADMINISTRATION SERVICES, STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT OF TEACHING WORK

4.1	Administrative Mechanisms	1	2	3	4	5
4.1.1	There is a Student Welfare Service that supports students with regards to academic and personal problems and difficulties.			+		
4.1.2	Statutory administrative mechanisms for monitoring and supporting students are sufficient.			+		

4.1.3	The efficiency of these mechanisms is assessed on the basis of specific criteria.			+	

4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3 There are some supportive administrative mechanisms present through the Distance Learning unit. Results of effectiveness of these mechanisms were not provided (satisfaction surveys from other Distance Learning programmes running) but are likely to be of adequate performance.

4.2	Infrastructure / Support	1	2	3	4	5
4.2.1	There are suitable books and reputable journals supporting the program.		+			
4.2.2	There is a supportive internal communication platform.				+	
4.2.3	The facilities are adequate in number and size.				+	
4.2.4	The equipment used in teaching and learning (laboratory and electronic equipment, consumables etc) are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate.	N/A				
4.2.5	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are adequate and accessible to students.		+			
4.2.6	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are updated regularly with the most recent publications.		+			
4.2.7	The teaching personnel are provided with training opportunities in teaching method, in adult education, and in new technologies on the basis of a structured learning framework.		+			

4.2.1 There is relevant material provided for each course. However, this material is not tuned specifically to the needs of students following a distance-learning program. Whereas books and journals might be fit for purpose for a traditional lecture-based program, distance-learning require interactive material as well as material in audio/visual format.

4.2.2 There is an appropriate internal communication platform being used.

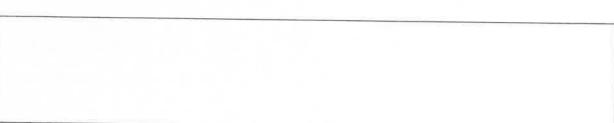**4.2.3 The facilities at the Distance Learning unit are appropriate.**

4.2.4 Not applicable for a Distance Learning program.

4.2.5 See response to section 4.2.1

4.2.6 See response to section 4.2.1

4.2.7 Although training opportunities are provided by the University of Nicosia according to oral information provided during the Site Visit, it also emerged that most faculty involved in the program have not taken advantage of these opportunities. The committee strongly encourages all faculty to take advantage of these opportunities, not limited to the use of specific tools, but on the pedagogy of distance learning and the special requirements of such practices.

4.3	Financial Resources	1	2	3	4	5
4.3.1	The management and allocation of the financial resources of the program of study, allow for the development of the program and of the academic / teaching personnel.		+			
4.3.2	The allocation of financial resources as regards to academic matters, is the responsibility of the relevant academic departments.			+		
4.3.3	The remuneration of academic and other personnel is analogous to the remuneration of academic and other personnel of the respective institutions in Cyprus.		+			
4.3.4	Student tuition and fees are consistent to the tuition and fees of other respective institutions.			+		

4.3.1 According to the financial projections provided during the Site Visit the budgeted teaching resources are inadequate and do not allow for the development of the program and academic/teaching personnel.

4.3.2 The required process is present with regard to the allocation of financial resources.

4.3.3 Some information was provided during the Site Visit. The suggested remuneration of 300Euro per 20 ECTS thesis, and 1500Euro for delivering a 30 student class worth 10 ECTS is considered below market standard and should be reconsidered.

4.3.4 Some information was provided during the Site Visit. The suggested tuition fees level of approximately 6000 Euro is considered up to par with current practice.

The following criterion applies additionally for distance learning programs of study.

5.	DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS	1	2	3	4	5
5.1	Feedback processes for teaching personnel with regards to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.		+			
5.2	The process and the conditions for the recruitment of academic / teaching personnel, ensure that candidates have the necessary skills and experience for long distance education.		+			
5.3	Through established procedures, appropriate training, guidance and support, are provided to teaching personnel, to enable it to efficiently support the educational process.		+			
5.4	Student performance monitoring mechanisms are satisfactory.		+			
5.5	Adequate mentoring by the teaching personnel, is provided to students, through established procedures.		+			
5.6	The unimpeded long distance communication between the teaching personnel and the students, is ensured to a satisfactory degree.			+		
5.7	Assessment consistency, its equivalent application to all students, and the compliance with predefined procedures, are ensured.			+		
5.8	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) comply with the requirements provided by the long distance education methodology and are updated regularly.		+			

5.9	The program of study has the appropriate and adequate infrastructure for the support of learning.				+	
5.10	The supporting infrastructures are easily accessible.				+	
5.11	Students are informed and trained with regards to the available educational infrastructure.				+	
5.12	The procedures for systematic control and improvement of the supportive services are regular and effective.			+		
5.13	Infrastructure for distance education is comparable to university infrastructure in the European Union and internationally.			+		
5.14	Electronic library services are provided according to international practice in order to support the needs of the students and of the teaching personnel.				+	
5.15	The students and the teaching personnel have access to the necessary electronic sources of information, relevant to the program, the level, and the method of teaching.				+	
5.16	The percentage of teaching personnel who holds a doctorate, in a program of study which is offered long distance, is not less than 75%.				+	

5.1 The processes of the teaching by the teaching personnel is very demanding and vital for their performance. The students do have to answer an anonymous questionnaire but the questions in order to be effective must be realistic and open-ended. Closed questions are good in order to have a picture of the situation, but not enough if we want a realistic picture of their performance.

5.2 A training programme for the academic and teaching personnel is more than necessary. This is an important support for the pedagogical procedures of the programme and its implementation. In this case, experience does not always include skills for teaching at a distance. For this reason the academic and teaching personnel must be very well prepared in order to have special skills and be ready for the particular conditions of the programme. That is the reason for the necessary training programme of the academic and teaching personnel.

5.3 There must be a systematic mechanism for the support of the teachers for best training, guidance and support. This training must be systematic and ready to give practical solutions and guidance to all teaching personnel, particularly in relation to the pedagogy of distance learning. This is a precondition in order to have quality processes of teaching and learning,

_5.4_ The monitoring mechanisms must be flexible and give solutions to all the necessary infrastructure of the programme. The monitoring mechanisms include supporting the students and NOT just monitoring them.

_5.5_ The mentoring of this kind must be established for the support of the students in all kinds of their involvement. How they learn, how they can be more effective, how they can face different types of difficulties in their learning procedure. Therefore the mentoring must be more appropriate and focused on the students' needs.

_5.6_ The communication must be organized in order to give any kind of opportunity to the students and their support. This particular programme should be focused on even more effective ways of communication and student support. The time availability of the teaching personnel is not sufficient for a meaningful and effectiveness interaction with the students, be it with synchronous or asynchronous forms of communication and feedback.

_5.7_ This refers to the mechanism of assessment and the opportunity to create a full and flexible mechanism of assessment and support backup. Based on the information provided it can assumed that the assessment will be consistent.

_5.8_ The teaching material of the particular programme doesn't seem to be appropriate for distance learning and does not answer basic maters for the teaching / learning methodology. The ideas used for the teaching material methodology are not referring to pedagogical practices and theories. At the same time there is no method for updated material and the time period which is necessary. This material is the heart of the programme and the corner stone of the programme and its quality.

_5.9_ This is adequate in the particular programme.

_5.10_ This is realistic and can be applied

_5.11_ Sufficient support from the Distance Learning unit is expected.

5.12 Specific processes do not seem to be in place. Nonetheless the staff at the Distance Learning unit seemed positively motived during the Site Visit and prepared to support adequately faculty and students.

_5.13_ Somehow the infrastructure for distance education is comparable with some European institutions. This does not mean that the standards of the

infrastructure meet the quality matters of the program.

5.14 Yes, the programme has all the necessary support for library services

5.15 Yes, the students and the teaching personnel have access to the data for the implementation of the programme.

5.16 Yes the ratio based on the proposed teaching team will be above 75%. This is on the provision that the courses are given by the staff presented in the application. Adequate financial resources should be provided in the program to ensure the effective and meaningful participation of the aforementioned faculty. In case additional teaching staff are employed they should have similar academic merits and experience, and relevance to the subject matter of the program and course to be delivered.

The maximum number of students per class-section, should not exceed 30 students.	√
The conduct of written examinations with the physical presence of the students, under the supervision of the institution or under the supervision of reliable agencies which operate in the countries of the students, is compulsory.	√
The number of long distance classes taught by the academic personnel does not exceed the number of courses taught by the teaching personnel in conventional programs of study.	Not possible to answer

For the last statement no information was provided with regard to the % participation of each faculty in specific educational, administrative and research activities.

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The following criterion applies additionally for doctoral programs of study.

6.	DOCTORAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY	1	2	3	4	5
6.1	The provision of quality doctoral studies is ensured through Doctoral Studies Regulations.					
6.2	The structure and the content of a doctoral program of study are satisfactory and they ensure the quality provision of doctoral studies.					
6.3	The number of academic personnel, which is going to support the doctoral program of study, is adequate.					
6.4	The doctoral studies' supervisors have the necessary academic qualifications and experience for the supervision of the specific dissertations.					
6.5	The degree of accessibility of all interested parties to the Doctoral Studies Regulations is satisfactory.					
6.6	The number of doctoral students, under the supervision of a member of the academic personnel, is apt for the continuous and effective feedback provided to the students and it complies with the European and international standards.					
6.7	The research interests of academic advisors and supervisors are satisfactory and they adequately cover the thematic areas of research conducted by the doctoral students of the program.					

NOT APPLICABLE

FINAL REMARKS – SUGGESTIONS

Overall and in light of the information provided in advance, during and post the Site Visit, the committee maintains reservations regarding this program. Several weaknesses and shortcomings were found which the committee believes cannot be addressed in the short term. These relate to matters of academic quality, training on theory of distance learning pedagogy,

resourcing, collegial administration, and overall approach to quality assurance. The faculty is encouraged to review and revise its program and approach based on the findings presented in this external evaluation report.

Some key suggestions for improvement are presented below. Additional comments on weaknesses of the program are presented in the main body of the report, including further suggestions for improvement.

1. The specific admission requirements set are very broad and do not guarantee that the students will have the necessary background to follow the suggested program of study. This is further aggravated by the fact that each specialization requires in itself a different student background for meaningful participation in and completion of the program. An MSc specialization in Environmental Management needs an adequate undergraduate background in Environmental Science, while an MSc specialization in Environmental Education needs an adequate background also in the Science of Pedagogy.

2. Not all of the teaching staff that are developing and planning the teaching material for the students has appropriate training and academic expertise of pedagogical background and experience in distance learning. This is a serious drawback in the effectiveness of the program that must be addressed through appropriate training etc.

3. The feedback on the students' assignments is very important and a mechanism of realistic and flexible comments should be established. The programming of the feedback to student assignments has to be planned in details and become an effective instrument for the learning procedure.

4. A more detailed study guide is necessary which will include a continuous and interactive communication, explicit guidelines for addressing student queries that may arise, and in principle act as a supportive tool as the student interacts with intended teaching material.

5. The teaching / learning material must be evaluated before the beginning of the program by students and experts, and become more flexible by using the whole spectrum of course delivery and instruments of explicit and easy to understand material. Within this material an interactive continuous methodology must be present (activities of applying the theory, group work, assessment questions and activities, methods of self-evaluation of the students, explicit bibliographical guidelines, teaching and learning outcomes, readers for more effective study).

6. The expertise of the faculty that will support the program cover adequately only some of the topics intended. They do not seem to cover the whole spectrum of environment science and education as reflected in the proposed curriculum. A larger number of dedicated faculty with appropriate professional or scientific profile that cover the whole range of the intended topics should be supporting this program. The support of faculty from the ATEI Thessaloniki covers adequately the aspects of

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AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

agricultural management (agro-economics).

Combined with the need for more full-time permanent faculty supporting the program, the recommendation here is for the University of Nicosia to prioritize in coming recruitments faculty with background on:

a. The broader spectrum of environmental sciences such as heavy industry and energy policies and praxis, water, urban planning, smart cities etc.

b. Environmental education

7. According to the financial projections provided during the Site Visit the budgeted teaching resources are inadequate and do not allow for the development of the program and academic/teaching personnel. Some information was provided during the Site Visit. The suggested remuneration of 300Euro per 20 ECTS thesis, and 1500Euro for delivering a 30-student class worth 10 ECTS is considered below market standard and should be reconsidered. Overall, adequate financial resources should be provided in the program to ensure the effective and meaningful participation of the faculty presented in the application. In case additional teaching staff are employed they should have similar academic merits and experience, and relevance to the subject matter of the program and course to be delivered.

Names and Signatures of the Chair and the Members of the External Evaluation Committee:

Name:	Signature:
Konstantinos Kyprianidis	
Michalis Angelidis	