

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: Date.

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Cyprus

- **Town:** Nicosia

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

In Greek:

Μάστερ στη Συντήρηση και Αποκατάσταση Ιστορικών Κτηρίων και Συνόλων

In English:

MSc in Conservation and Restoration of Historic Buildings and Sites (3-8 academic semesters, 94 ECTS)

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

- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating

- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations



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 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

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 official use Only
We suggest the distinctiveness and unique selling propositions of the programme are clearly articulated in order to present the merits of the programme to potential applicants and other stakeholders.	The website of the program (https://www.ucy.ac.cy/conservation/) has been updated to highlight the uniqueness of the program. Such changes will also be incorporated into other advertising media of the program (e.g. trifold)	Choose an item.
We understand that the programme is transitioning to English language delivery and that this has the potential to widen the pool of potential applicants. We encourage the programme team to consider ways in which this potential can be fully realised.	The University of Cyprus is undertaking active recruitment of potential English-speaking students for all graduate programs. We will be supporting these actions. In addition, an English version of the website will be uploaded before the call for graduate student admissions for Sep 2024.	Choose an item.
We suggest that, in future periodic programme reviews, the department fully engages with all stakeholders, including full and part-time staff, administrative staff, students and industry representatives.	An annual feedback session with all stakeholders, including full and part-time staff, administrative staff, students and industry representatives, shall be organized, starting from May 2024.	Choose an item.
We noted from the Departmental organisational charts, that administration appeared separate from governance (e.g. Departmental Board) with no direct connection. Administration is central to governance, so it is encouraged that these relationships are adjusted to give greater alignment, where appropriate, with administration representation on departmental boards. It is not clear whether that is currently the case or not.	The program coordinators are also members of each participating department's board. Two of the three coordinating staff members are also members of the Engineering School Council.	Choose an item.
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2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

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<p>We noted that the assessment of the Independent Study is a pass/fail assessment and therefore does not contribute to the classification of the final award. We understand that Independent Study together with the Advanced Group Project represent the elements of the programme considered to be equivalent to a dissertation. We understand the master’s dissertations are normally graded and therefore we suggest that the Independent Study could usefully also be graded. This would provide students with additional summative feedback for this item of work. This change may also support students wanting to progress to PhD research, where a good mark for the dissertation can be the determining factor in funding allocations.</p>	<p>We are in direct consultation with the University of Cyprus Graduate School in order to amend this, if permitted by the University Regulations.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>While we appreciate the value of the multidisciplinary group work carried out as part of the Advanced Group Project, it appears to operate most successfully when there is a good balance of students within each group offering backgrounds in Architecture, Archaeology and Civil Engineering. We recommend that every effort is made to ensure a balanced cohort so that the skills within each group for the group work are well balanced. We also noted that the survey work required in the second semester was also potentially demanding, given the limited time available in this</p>	<p>We hope that a balanced cohort will be secured with the transition of the program to English language. In any case, we are continuing our efforts to attract students from different disciplines to the program.</p> <p>The survey work will now be starting during the first semester of the Capstone Advanced Group Project. We will also be making an effort, in collaboration with the Cyprus Department of Antiquities, to select appropriately scaled monuments.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>



semester. We suggest the sites/buildings for the project are therefore suitable in their scale and complexity, or that additional time might be found to ensure the workload in this semester is consistent with the other semesters.		
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3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

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<p>Key to maintaining and enhancing any successful programme is the continued support of and investment from the University. The core teaching staff have permanent contracts, but the course also relies on numerous staff with key/critical skills whose contracts are only short-term. There were reports in the meeting that some of these short-term contract staff were not being fully remunerated for some key elements of the course. If these staff members are central to module delivery, this recruitment and employment strategy represents additional risk. Managers are encouraged to consider how sustainable the course would be without these individuals, should they take a permanent role elsewhere for example, and to create a strategy for mitigating the risk.</p>	<p>Remuneration for short-term contract staff is decided at University level. The Coordination Committee considers such staff instrumental to the program, and we are therefore continuously seeking to recruit and maintain contact (in the framework of a contingency and risk mitigation plan) with experienced practitioners. As such, in the event some of the present staff is recruited elsewhere, we will be seeking to replace them with other experienced practitioners from our list of contacts. This has indeed been the case in the past with Archaeologists and Civil Engineers.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>Equally, for a course like this, students would benefit from receiving teaching from professionals working across the heritage/conservation sectors, nationally and also perhaps internationally (especially if the net for student recruitment is to be cast more widely). However, we understand there is limited funding for the recruitment of external speakers to deliver teaching.</p>	<p>There is indeed limited funding for the recruitment of external speakers to deliver teaching. Should such an opportunity arise, rest assured we will be making the most of it!</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>Key to the delivery of vital practical skills is the availability of high-end and up-to-date technical equipment. Yet some/much of the current equipment is now aging and in</p>	<p>There is indeed lack of funds for new equipment. The Coordinating Committee is continuously looking for funding opportunities (either within the University of externally through national/international research projects) to renew equipment and add new infrastructure to our facilities. At the same time, we are liaising with</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>



need of replacement. There is seemingly a lack of funds to allow the replacement of this key equipment. A prioritised list of needs, and urgency, would be helpful in managing the risk of losing access to vital equipment, liaising with other departments who may wish to use/share the same items.	other departments with similar equipment and/or needs for collaborations and sharing of our infrastructure.	
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4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

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<p>First, on a wider but nonetheless relevant issue: there will be additional challenges as the programme transitions to being taught entirely in English and aspires to recruit more widely, involving students with demands that may extend the course's current focus on local issues and materials. This may require staff to be given time for CPD, or the recruitment of additional staff to cover new areas of expertise to meet student expectations.</p>	<p>We are continuously seeking to recruit additional staff to cover new or existing areas of expertise to meet student expectations. We have fairly recently asked for a joint appointment to the Departments of Architecture and Civil & Environmental Engineering to cover the area of Rehabilitation and Strengthening of Structures. Since the University has not responded yet, we will be re-sending this request in view of the next round of staff openings.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>Second, the Committee felt that the programme would benefit from having a more coordinated and dedicated admin support, not least to cover recruitment and progression. This will become increasingly important if recruitment of students increases with the advertising of a course being delivered entirely in English. Admin support would also be essential for delivering an online or hybrid programme. This provision could also ensure better coordination of recruitment to consistent standards across departments, and therefore more likely to ensure a good balance in student numbers, this being a key factor in the success of this multidisciplinary programme.</p>	<p>We agree with the Committee. We shall be submitting a request for admin support (and/or independent budget submission) to the University Authorities for 2025.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>Third, there is a concern about the comparatively low number of students recruited to the programme: 40 over 6 years. This number is close to the margins in terms of sustainability. Offering</p>	<p>We agree with the Committee. However, we would like to stress that, even with these numbers of students, this program is considered to be amongst the most popular and sustainable ones in the University (according to a recent survey by the University's Graduate School). Furthermore, in terms of the local market, the number of</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>



the programme in English might lead to an increase in numbers, especially if the university were to invest in marketing. The Committee encourages the University management team to consider a small investment for this purpose.	students admitted is also satisfactory. In any case, we are continuously seeking to attract more students. We hope that the transition of the program to English language may indeed lead to an increase in numbers.	
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5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

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<p>The laboratories and workshops are under the supervision and guidance of a dedicated lab administrator who also has responsibilities in other areas. The programme could benefit with additional laboratory support to meet the demands of the role.</p>	<p>We agree with the Committee. We shall be submitting a request for additional lab support (and/or independent budget submission) to the University Authorities for 2025. This will also benefit the individual participating departments to the program.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>We suggest that the programme would benefit from the identification of an administrator who would act as the coordinating administrative support for the programme. We understand that given the size of the programme this may need to be a role undertaken in conjunction with other roles.</p>	<p>We agree with the Committee. We shall be submitting a request for admin support (and/or independent budget submission) to the University Authorities for 2025.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>In the digital age, incorporating technology into teaching and learning is essential. According to students, the use of interactive online platforms, and multimedia resources greatly enhanced understanding and engagement in theoretical modules, especially during the COVID pandemic. Following the pandemic, it will be useful for these resources to be easily accessible to students to complement traditional teaching methods.</p>	<p>Online teaching platforms and multimedia resources are already successfully used for teaching to complement traditional teaching methods.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
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6. Additional for doctoral programmes
 (ALL ESG)

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7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

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B. Conclusions and final remarks

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<p>Given the impressive attributes of the programme we wish to record our concern that any fall in recruitment could threaten the viability of the programme. The loss of this valuable programme would be highly regrettable and we therefore encourage the Coordination Committee to creatively consider all options for maintaining and ideally growing the intake to a more secure level. We hope the University offers the necessary institutional support to the Coordination Committee and the programme to guarantee its development and continued success. The various recommendations with the five sections of this report should be read in this context.</p>	<p>We will make everything possible to maintain and increase current numbers of students. This will be supported by the University through its marketing and graduate student recruitment campaign.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>We also wished to suggest that in order to provide greater clarity and transparency with regard to the allocation of income, costs and resources associated with the programme that it may be beneficial to allocate a separate designated budget for the programme against which costs could be drawn.</p>	<p>We agree with the Committee. We will be seeking to submit an independent/separate designated budget to the University Authorities for 2025.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>We would also like to suggest the benefits of active commitment towards intelligence gathering around competitor courses and programmes in Cyprus/Greece but also beyond, as a way of strategically targeting recruitment efforts.</p>	<p>We are continuously monitoring developments in the area both locally and internationally.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>In conclusion the Evaluation Committee wishes to thank all those associated with the preparations for the visit and all those who took part in the visit itself. The meetings were all</p>	<p>We thank the Committee for its positive feedback and support to our efforts.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>



<p>conducted in an open and constructive manner and greatly helped the Evaluation Committee in preparing this report. We enjoyed our meeting with the students and graduates of the programme who were highly articulate and appreciative of the programme. We are confident they will become valuable ambassadors for the programme in the years ahead. We observed a dedicated and expert team who collectively deliver an impressive programme of study and we wish it every success in the years ahead.</p>		
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C.



D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Maria Philokyprou	Associate Professor, Programme Coordinator	
Ioannis Ioannou	Professor, Programme Coordinator	
George Papasavvas	Associate Professor, Programme Coordinator	
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Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	

Date: 08/09/2023

