Doc. 300.1.2

Higher Education Institution's Response

Date: 12.03.

- **Higher Education Institution:** University of Cyprus
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **Programme of study**

  In Greek:

  Μάστερ στις Σπουδές Ειρήνης, Συγκρούσεων και Δημοκρατίας

  In English:

  MA Peace, Conflict and Democracy
- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):** N/A

  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)

Compliance Summary: In this section, the External Committee found the programme of study fully COMPLIANT in all sub-areas. Below are our responses to all comments, which we do our best to address.

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The programme recruits locally, regionally, and internationally. That said, recruitment and marketing need to be developed further, so that this exceptional programme can capture a larger student body, as such providing stability. For example, there are some fairly easy steps that could be taken, such as website development and social media presence—including using student testimonies to advertise the merits of the programme. Though it is important that the programme recruits well locally, attention should be devoted to recruitment beyond Cyprus and Greece, extending social media strategies internationally.	The programme has initiated a more strategic and proactive approach to recruitment and marketing. The website is being updated to foreground key selling points—Negotiation Skills Workshop, Short Documentary-Making Workshop, scholarships, and a working-friendly schedule (student testimonials already included). Recruitment efforts are being extended beyond Cyprus and Greece, in coordination with central university services, targeting markets including Turkey, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the UK, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Lebanon, and Israel.	Choose level of compliance:
The faculty are considering the expansion of the curriculum along the lines of courses on reconciliation, post-conflict governance, and peace education. Another possibility reflecting the conditions in Cyprus would be to entertain the idea of offering a course on frozen conflicts and de-facto states. While we realise that this is important given staff departures and retirements, we also recognize that recruitment requires going after the most highly qualified candidates, which may present problems in covering all courses in all	The department is reviewing curriculum development in these thematic areas in a strategic, phased manner, taking into account staff departures, retirements, and recruitment constraints. We view the suggestion to offer the proposed courses very positively, and we indeed welcome it. However, we are not in a position to incorporate these courses at this stage, until we can determine—given that six positions are currently open for hiring—whether we will have staff with the required specialisations. As a	Choose level of compliance:

suggested areas. Moreover, gender should serve as a key consideration in recruitment.	matter of policy, we do not include courses in the curriculum unless we have a qualified colleague in place to teach them. At this stage we are revising the optional course offerings by removing the following modules: SPS 626 Human Rights, Gender & Conflict Transformation (7.5 ECTS) and SPS 623 Elections & Democracy after Conflict (7.5 ECTS) This change reflects recent staffing developments—one colleague has departed and another has retired—meaning we no longer have the necessary in-house expertise to deliver these courses as currently listed. However, we plan to add another gender-related optional course and to introduce a course on PCD in the Global South, drawing on the expertise of existing and soon-to-be hired faculty members. The course on the Global South will engage with theories of "development" and international political economy to help students understand the historical roots of contemporary conflicts, the limits of existing models of peace and development, and the prospects for more just and democratic futures in the Global South. The course on gender will examine how gender shapes conflict, peacebuilding, democracy, and power relations across local, national, and international contexts. It introduces students to key	

	feminist approaches in Peace and Conflict Studies and International Relations, with particular attention to war, militarism, displacement, political participation, and struggles for justice and inclusion. Future academic recruitment will prioritise excellence, while also taking gender balance into account as an important consideration. In parallel, curricular coverage will be aligned with the expertise available in the department. All appointments will, of course, be made in line with the University's equal opportunities policy.	
Regarding the visual dissertation, a full module that features technical production as well as visual theory and literacy would be desirable. In this regard, some students would appreciate further representation of visual materials in other modules to provide coherence across the curriculum. Students need more extensive guidelines to the visual thesis option in order to demystify the process.	The programme is considering ways to strengthen training in documentary-making, technical production, and visual literacy. Additional guidance for the visual thesis option is being developed. We will also consider, in light of the upcoming hires, whether we can offer a full optional course on Documentary Theory and Production in Peace, Conflict and Democracy, subject to the relevant expertise being available within the department.	Choose level of compliance:
We highly recommend hiring administrative staff and consideration of staff numbers to FTEs and European guidelines. This is especially important for a department that seems to have a staff-student ratio of 1 to 25.	The Department of Social and Political Sciences (SPS) is currently in the process of hiring six new colleagues. The application deadline passed on 1 December 2025, and the new hires are expected to begin work in September 2026.The programme expects to draw on the teaching and research expertise of two of these colleagues to support curricular needs, especially in light of	Choose level of compliance:

	retirements. The programme will also consider further recruitment, subject to institutional planning and the programme's ability to increase student numbers. Administrative staffing needs remain under consideration given their importance for programme sustainability and student support.	
We know that six students are represented on the relevant department committee. Nonetheless, it was brought to our attention that there was no MA or PhD representation.	Historically, student representatives elected to the Department Council have always been undergraduates. We can certainly encourage student organisations to also nominate postgraduate candidates in future elections, but this ultimately depends on the student body. In the meantime, the MA PCD Coordinator remains in regular contact with MA students and is readily available to discuss any issues related to the programme. We receive valuable feedback through these channels and, where possible, we work to implement it.	Choose level of compliance:
An important aspect of the programme is the availability to work with NGOs and IOs directly involved with the Cyprus conflict. Preserving the relationships with existing partners and possibly expanding to other partners such as the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus (CMP) would enrich these opportunities.	We are also in contact with the Committee on Missing Persons regarding potential internship opportunities for our students, and we expect to hear back from them in April.	
Consideration should be given to the distribution of supervision of dissertations. Some faculty in the department carry a much higher burden than others. One option would be a central allocation	The department is currently reviewing dissertation supervision practices and is considering a more centralized allocation process, with the aim of ensuring a fairer and more equitable distribution of	

process at the level of the department.	supervision responsibilities. This matter has been discussed in a series of departmental meetings, and the new system of thesis allocation was formally approved by vote at the department meeting held on 11 March 2026.	

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

Compliance Summary: In this section, the External Committee found the programme of study fully COMPLIANT in all sub-areas. Below are our responses to all comments, which we do our best to address.

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Some students report some variation in assessment expectations and explicit criteria… all modules may want to have syllabi with expectations clearly spelled out up-front.	The programme has begun strengthening coordination among teaching staff to enhance clarity and consistency in assessment expectations, marking criteria, and feedback. All modules are being required to provide syllabi with assessment expectations clearly articulated in advance at the start of each term.	Choose level of compliance:
Regarding the visual dissertation, a full module that features technical production as well as visual theory and literacy would be desirable… Students need more extensive guidelines to the visual thesis option in order to demystify the process.	The programme is considering ways to strengthen training in documentary-making, technical production, and visual literacy. Additional guidance for the visual thesis option is currently being developed, but has not yet been finalized.	Choose level of compliance:
Because many students have employed work obligations, they would appreciate more advance notice of exam dates. They recognize that these are centrally set, but early publication would be welcome.	There is little the department can do in this regard. Students are informed well in advance of the two-week examination period, and are expected to make the necessary arrangements accordingly. That said, on an ad hoc basis, and in our experience, academic staff do try to accommodate serious and well-documented requests for an alternative date—even where this entails a considerable amount of additional work for course convenors.	Choose level of compliance:

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3. Teaching staff

(ESG 1.5)

Compliance Summary: In this section, the External Committee found the programme of study fully COMPLIANT in all sub-areas. Below are our responses to all comments, which we do our best to address.

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The panel recognizes the importance of recruitment of additional academic staff to consolidate and expand the programme, especially in light of retirements and the need to address certain areas of study. In that regard, while the programme FTEs are improving, the FTE of the department is significant. Please also see the admin staffing point as noted above—which is a crucial issue.	The Department of Social and Political Sciences (SPS) is in the process of hiring six new colleagues. The programme expects to draw on the teaching and research expertise of two of these colleagues to support curricular needs, especially in light of retirements. The programme will also consider further recruitment, subject to institutional planning and the programme's ability to increase student numbers. Administrative staffing needs remain under active consideration, given their importance for programme sustainability and effective student support. Efforts are currently underway to secure additional staff capacity and/or extra administrative support within the department.	Choose level of compliance:
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4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
(ESG 1.4)

Compliance Summary: In this section, the External Committee found the programme of study fully COMPLIANT in all sub-areas. Below are our responses to all comments, which we do our best to address.

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Develop a more proactive, structured international recruitment strategy. While admissions criteria are appropriate, the programme continues to face challenges in attracting a sufficiently large and diverse applicant pool. Strengthening international marketing and outreach remains essential and responds directly to recommendations from the 2021 evaluation.	The programme has initiated a more strategic and proactive approach to recruitment and marketing. The website is currently being updated to foreground key selling points, including the Negotiation Skills Workshop, the Short Documentary-Making Workshop, available scholarships, and a working-friendly schedule (with student testimonials already included). Recruitment efforts are also being expanded beyond Cyprus and Greece, in coordination with central university services, targeting markets including Turkey, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the UK, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Lebanon, and Israel. With respect to attracting more students, we also take on board the final point discussed in the Committee's last meeting—an option the Committee supported—namely increasing ECTS per module from 7.5 to 10. This would allow us to offer fewer modules while going into greater depth. A shift from 7.5 to	Choose level of compliance:

	10 ECTS could improve programme sustainability by lowering costs, and it could also benefit working students by reducing the number of afternoons they need to be on campus each week and enabling them to complete the MA in a shorter timeframe—thereby making the programme more attractive overall.	
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5. Learning resources and student support

(ESG 1.6)

Compliance Summary: In this section, the External Committee found the programme of study fully COMPLIANT in all sub-areas. Below are our responses to all comments, which we do our best to address.

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
We would like to reiterate the staffing points raised above. The 2021 evaluation already highlighted that the department may require additional administrative staff.	The Department of Social and Political Sciences (SPS) is in the process of hiring six new colleagues. The programme expects to draw on the teaching and research expertise of two of these colleagues to support curricular needs, especially in light of retirements. The programme will also consider further recruitment, subject to institutional planning and the programme's ability to increase student numbers. Administrative staffing needs remain under active consideration, given their importance for programme sustainability and effective student support. Efforts are currently underway to secure additional staff capacity and/or extra administrative support within the department.	Choose level of compliance:
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6. Additional for doctoral programmes

(ALL ESG)

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)

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B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
a more strategic and proactive recruitment effort is needed to attract a larger and more diverse student body.	The programme has initiated a more strategic recruitment and marketing approach. The website is being updated to foreground key selling points—Negotiation Skills Workshop, Short Documentary-Making Workshop, scholarships, and a working-friendly schedule (student testimonials already included). Recruitment is expanding beyond Cyprus and Greece, in coordination with central university services, targeting selected European and Eastern Mediterranean markets.	Choose level of compliance:
Administrative staffing at departmental level requires reinforcement, particularly given the size of the department.	Administrative staffing needs remain under consideration given their importance for programme sustainability and student support. Efforts are currently underway to secure additional staff capacity and/or extra administrative support within the department.	Choose level of compliance:
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C.

On a final note, we would like to sincerely thank the Committee for their constructive feedback and continued engagement in this process of improving our MA programme.

D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	***Position***	***Signature***
Dr. Eren Duzgun	Programme Coordinator	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
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Date: 12.03.2026

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