

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 04/02/2025

Higher Education Institution's Response

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

- **Town:** Nicosia

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

Modern Greek Studies (3-8 years / 240 ECTS, Ph.D,
Conventional)

In Greek:

Μεταπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα στις Νεοελληνικές
Σπουδές Διδακτορικού Επιπέδου

In English:

Modern Greek Studies (3-8 years / 240 ECTS, Ph.D,
Conventional)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **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
The EEC suggests a maximum-word limit for Ph.D. theses of 100,000 words, including footnotes, Bibliography, and Appendices.	The Department agrees with the EEC and has approved the following recommendation in its most recent Departmental meeting (29/1): The implementation of a maximum of 100,000 words for a Ph.D. dissertation, including footnotes, bibliography, notes and appendices. With the approval of the dissertation advisor, the student can exceed the word limit.	Choose level of compliance:
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2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Word limit for MA and PhD theses: The rough guideline for the length of MA theses is currently 60 pages, but the length can deviate. For the PhD there is no word limit. We suggest setting a word limit for both MA and PhD theses (for MA: ca. 15.000 words / for PhD: maximum of 100.000 words including references and notes), so that students have a clearer idea of what is expected of them and, most importantly, to stimulate the efficient completion of MA and PhD theses within the allotted time. This would help avoid lengthy theses that take years to complete and are not easy to publish in today's academic publication cultures, in which publishers strongly prefer concise studies.	The Department agrees with the EEC and has approved the following recommendations in its most recent Departmental meeting (29/1): a) A maximum of 15,000 words for an M.A. thesis, bibliography included. With the approval of the thesis advisor, the student can exceed the word limit. b) A maximum of 100,000 words for a Ph.D dissertation, including references and notes. With the approval of the dissertation advisor, the student can exceed the word limit.	Choose level of compliance:
- The EEC was happy to find that the recommendation of the previous EEC to give PhD students the possibility to teach is being implemented (1 PhD is currently employed for tutoring undergraduates). We recommend that this practice is continued and expanded. We also recommend to explore options for offering PhDs the opportunity to gain training in teaching, especially for those who wish to have a career in secondary education.	The Department has already agreed in its most recent council meeting (29/1) to make every effort to employ graduate students as teaching assistants (as long as funds for this purpose are secured). It agrees with the EEC that it is important for doctorate students to gain training in teaching.	Choose level of compliance:
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3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
We recommend measures to alleviate the logistical burdens that currently fall upon the teaching staff, such as: organizing the semester teaching programmes in the currently dispersed venues. Logistical support for drafting and implementing grants and especially grant budgets	<p>The Department will forward these recommendations to the appropriate University offices. The University has offered its assistance in identifying grants, but it will work closely with the Research and Innovation Support Services to explore other ways it can support researchers.</p> <p>The logistical burdens that relate to the organization of the teaching programmes are more difficult to alleviate. Our secretaries work hard in collaboration with the scheduling office and with the coordinator of the Programme to ensure that there are no conflicts between the courses offered and that rooms are secured for these courses. The schedule of classes often needs to be adjusted several times. The EEC correctly notes that these duties are increasingly taken over by the faculty and they constitute a tremendous burden. As stated, the Department will communicate the problem to the Administration before the end of the spring semester.</p> <p>The Department notes once again that it is in full agreement with the EEC. The only action it can take, however, is to inform the University administration.</p>	Choose level of compliance:
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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>We recommend that the University prioritise concentration of teaching and (faculty and administration) office facilities of the Department in one adequately equipped location and make provisions for a faculty-meeting room. We also recommend further negotiations of the University with the transportation authorities of the municipality for better and more frequent bus services from the city to the campus and vice versa.</p>	<p>We are in full agreement with the EEC on both points:</p> <p>a) An adequate location needs to be secured for the department as soon as possible. The Department has repeatedly informed the administration of this problem. It has also repeatedly informed the appropriate university committees of this unacceptable infrastructural problem and its many health hazards. The Department agrees that the University needs to take urgent action to resolve the problem, and it will inform the administration once again, before the end of the semester.</p> <p>The Department notes once again that it is in full agreement with the EEC. The only action it can take, however, is to inform the University administration and hope for a speedy resolution of this issue.</p> <p>b) The Department has communicated with the university's transportation office and has been informed that, since January 27, additional bus-routes are offered to students by both the municipality and the transportation office. The transportation office has one bus at its disposal, but it coordinates with students' representatives to use it when most needed. The director of transportation</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	services has expressed an emphatic willingness to help students, and his office recently met with student representatives to address their concerns.	
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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
-Scholarship schemes for MA and PhD students have been significantly reduced recently, which is a point of concern.	<p>The issue has been discussed at the Graduate School council and, since this is a university wide policy, there is little the Department can do to alleviate this problem. However, the Department would like to note the following:</p> <p>A) Several faculty members support students (mostly for research purposes) through their research grants. They will continue to do so.</p> <p>B) The Department supports PhD students who wish to present their work at conferences (by covering travel and accommodation expenses).</p> <p>C) It will explore more ways to secure external scholarships to support students.</p> <p>The Department notes once again that it is in full agreement with the EEC. The only action it can take, however, is to inform the University administration, since the cessation of scholarships is a university wide policy. At the same time, it already helps students in the above mentioned ways.</p>	Choose level of compliance:
-(see 'findings' above): We highly recommend that the diagnostic procedure on a candidates suitability for writing a PhD thesis is introduced much earlier in the process.	<p>The Department first assesses graduate students' writing during the application process, since it requests an extensive writing sample. At the same time, it understands the need to additionally diagnose a doctoral student's suitability <i>after</i> they are admitted to the Program. Currently, Graduate School regulations stipulate that the first comprehensive exam takes place between the third and the seventh semester. The</p>	Choose level of compliance:

	<p>regulations further state that the dissertation proposal is presented by doctoral students two to four semesters after the comprehensive exam. If students take the maximum of time allocated to them, the department will not be able to ascertain their suitability until their fifth year. Since this time frame is governed by university regulations, a possible way to diagnose their suitability earlier would be to modify the comprehensive exams to include a written component (in addition to a bibliography). This and other possible ways to diagnose doctoral students' suitability will be discussed by the Department and implemented through internal regulations, if needed. We expect to complete discussions on this issue before the end of the semester. Any changes will take effect in the Fall 2025 semester.</p>	
-For the PhD, the entry requirement of 3 recommendation letters, 2 of which should be from professors outside the University of Cyprus, may be handled more flexibly as it may pose an unnecessary obstacle for many students (especially if they haven't studied outside of Cyprus).	The Department agrees with the EEC and has decided, during its recent council meeting (29/1), to cancel the requirement that recommendation letters should be "outside the University of Cyprus." The recommendation has been implemented. From this point onwards, it will simply require three letters of recommendation from any academic or research institute.	Choose level of compliance:
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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
Shorten the “diagnostic” period of the doctoral programme.	<p>As stated above:</p> <p>The Department first assesses graduate students’ writing during the application process, since it requests an extensive writing sample. At the same time, it understands the need to additionally diagnose a doctoral student’s suitability <i>after</i> they are admitted to the Program. Currently, Graduate School regulations stipulate that the first comprehensive exam takes place between the third and the seventh semester. The regulations further state that the dissertation proposal is presented by doctoral students two to four semesters after the comprehensive exam. If students take the maximum of time allocated to them, the department will not be able to ascertain their suitability until their fifth year. Since this time frame is governed by university regulations, a possible way to diagnose their suitability earlier would be to modify the comprehensive exams to include a written component (in addition to a bibliography). This and other possible ways to diagnose doctoral students’ suitability will be discussed by the Department and implemented through internal regulations, if needed. We expect to complete discussions on this issue before the end of the semester. Any changes will take effect in the Fall 2025 semester.</p>	Choose level of compliance:
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D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Marinos Pourgouris	Assistant Professor, Chair of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies	
Marilena Karyolaimou	Professor, Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies (Chair during the evaluation process)	
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