

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 στις Επιστήμες της Αγωγής

In English: Master in Pedagogical Science

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

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

- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek:

- Παιδαγωγική της Φυσικής Αγωγής
- Πολυπολιτισμικότητα, Μετανάστευση και Αποαποικιακή εκπαίδευση
- Νηπιοσχολική Αγωγή

In English:

- Sports Pedagogy
- Multiculturalism, Migration and Decolonial Education
- Early Childhood Education



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

1. The main purpose and objectives of each master programme (Sports Pedagogy; Multiculturalism, Migration and Decolonial Education; and Early Childhood Education) are expressed quite differently. Whilst not seeking to homogenise the programmes, we suggest that the purpose and objectives of each clearly reflects the requirements of EQF level 8 descriptors (knowledge, skills and responsibility and autonomy). In master programmes knowledge should be “at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study”, skills should be “the most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice”, and the master should demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research”.

To this end, we suggest the Masters’ teaching teams work together to frame the main purpose and objectives of their programmes in ways that more explicitly reference and explicate the EQF level 8 objectives.

Having a clear general purpose, informed by European Frameworks as well as current research literature, will facilitate the selection of intended learning outcomes for each area. Currently, for instance, Sports Pedagogy has as its the main purpose is: “to offer comprehensive education for teachers-researchers concerning specialize knowledge, cognitive development, epistemology and learning in Pedagogical Sciences” whereas for Multiculturalism, Migration and Decolonial Education, the purpose also provides more specifically the areas to engage with (e.g., competence to engage in: ethics of hospitality, migrant and refugee reception and inclusion in educational and social milieu, addressing debates of difference vs. identity, etc.). The suggestion would be for all the programmes to have the same general purpose (e.g., to advance or contribute to knowledge of a field of work or study), then, include the specifics from each area as unique programme elements.

2. In relation to intended outcomes, we suggest being consistent with the wording (e.g., students will be able to...). General and specific learning outcomes might be considered. Current research findings, Cyprus society and students’ needs might inform the selection of the intended learning outcomes.
3. Another area that could be strengthened is formalising mechanisms for capturing and acting on ‘student voice’. The committee appreciates the embedded approach to evaluating subjects. However, there is scope to gather students’ input into the design and delivery of programmes (e.g., ask for content related feedback, and use it to refine the content of different modules, including potions for assessment). We would strongly suggest using student voice and feedback when planning in-service training for the teaching staff.

When conducting a self-evaluation for QYQAA accreditation, it would be useful for the team to provide text-based justifications for their answers as a stimulus for their reflection.

Actions Taken by the Institution

1 & 2- We worked together to frame the main purpose and objectives of our specialisations in ways that more explicitly reference and explicate the EQF level 8 objectives. See below

Programme purpose (Same for all specializations)

The programme offers comprehensive education for teachers and researchers concerning specialized knowledge fields, epistemologies, and research skills in the Pedagogical Sciences so that they are active agents in the production of knowledge, professional practices and social change. They are expected to develop advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including critical interpretation, synthesis and intervention with regards to the complexities of a changing world at the local and global level.

Specialisation is offered in the fields of physical education, early childhood education and multiculturalism, migration and decolonial education.

Sports Pedagogy

Profile of the Specialisation

The postgraduate programme in sport pedagogy aims to provide participants with knowledge and skills in the field of Physical Education (PE).

Key Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the program, it is expected that students will be able to:

knowledge

- acquire the basic knowledge of the epistemological theories of PE.
- demonstrate understanding of advanced pedagogical principles of physical education

Skills

- develop skills for reviewing and critically analysing the literature related to specific research questions in the field of PE.
- be acquainted with qualitative and quantitative research methods, and acquire experience in applying these methods to the collection and analysis of data in the field of PE.

Responsibility and Autonomy

- analyse and interpret the results of current studies in PE.
- propose future research directions in the field of PE.

Early Childhood Education

Profile of Programme

The Early Childhood Education programme responds to scientific, pedagogic and societal needs at the local and global level. The programme field of early childhood education supports practitioners, researchers and policy makers with contemporary research and theories about children, learning and development.

The programme fosters the development of teachers, researchers, program developers specialized in early years and equips them with the knowledge of early years pedagogies (education, sociology, anthropology, psychology) and research methodology.

Key Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of the program, it is expected that students will be able to:

Knowledge

- exhibit knowledge of the basic literature in early childhood education, contemporary curricular approaches and pedagogies.
- develop a well-rounded understanding of the field and children's needs through diverse range of courses

Skills

- use a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods, and utilize their newly acquired experience for effectively implementing these methods.
- develop skills for designing and running research in early childhood education.
- formulate research questions and choose the appropriate methodology for their study.

Responsibility and autonomy

- design and develop innovative curricula, evaluate and reform educational policy, and critically analyse recent trends and findings related to early childhood education.
- utilise available research evidence and engage in critical dialogue with top down educational policy changes, taking into consideration existing needs and constraints of the educational system.
- Establish scholarly and professional integrity of the field of early years toward preparing active citizens.

Multiculturalism, Migration and Decolonial Education

Profile of Programme

The Programme is addressed to teachers, artists, agents in cultural production and educational and social policy agents for both government and nongovernment organizations and agencies.

It promotes critical thinking and conceptual, pedagogical and research skill development needed for an analytical understanding and competence for engagement in: ethics of hospitality, migrant and refugee reception and inclusion in educational and social milieus, debates of difference vs. identity, addressing and combating systemic and structural xenophobia and racism, along with research tackling the intersecting axes of ethnicity, migration/refugee precarity status, gender and sexuality. Studies on multiculturalism and migration education are interplayed with postcolonial and queer theory critically to address identity reification and the recovery of race rationalities.

Key Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of the program, it is expected that students will be able to:

Knowledge

- enhance their knowledge base and theoretical foundations on migration studies, multicultural education paradigms and models, and decolonial education.

Skills

- map, diagnose and address multiple forms of marginalization in schools and society.
- demonstrate understanding of debates in the field (e.g. politics of identity/difference, postcolonial/decolonial)
- integrate epistemological pluralism with a variety of research methods
- apply intersectionality at the structural and policy level

Responsibility and autonomy

- transform programs, settings and policies towards better inclusion and respect of otherness and human rights.
- uphold the value of intersectionality towards intervention for politics of justice.

3. We have developed a practice which appoints one of the co-ordinators of the three specialisations as the Masters' program co-ordinator. The goal is for the specific person to meet with the Head of the Department, who has access to student evaluations for all courses, once a year, to discuss the outcomes of these evaluations. The outcome of such a meeting is to tune the distribution of work between the courses of each specialisation, as well as the provision of feedback to the different instructors to revise their readings and assignments if needed.

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC

1. Blended learning is a tool to develop the aims, content and methods of learner-centered approach. As an important element the policy on and the development of blended learning is central in changing from teacher-centered to learner-centered approach. The reference to Graduate School supporting blended learning could be strengthened in developing the next steps.
2. Students expressed a desire for recorded lectures and more intensive collaboration between peers as a means of catching up and broaden the learning possibilities. Too heavy weighting of the exam may be directing students learning toward the exam, rather than learning throughout the programme and should be carefully considered throughout the assessment of the study programmes, goals, and methods used.
3. Mapping the assessments across the programme is recommended.

Actions Taken by the Institution

1. The University law and regulations do not allow for blended learning unless the program is accredited as a long-distance program. We are working on proposing new long-distance programs which will give us the opportunity for blended learning.
2. The university has a specific policy for every course and we are obliged to have a final exam. For different courses the weight on the final exam is different but it is always a small percentage of the overall grade (up to 30% of the grade). In addition, it is the case that in some programs the final exam is another assignment or a take home exam ensuring that it focuses on specific learning skills and not content memorization.
3. The assessment methods for all specializations are mapped to cover class preparation and participation, research assignment, presentations, and final exam.

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC

1. The courses do not appear to utilise Visiting Professors. Attention should be given to increasing the contribution of Visiting Professors to the programmes. The engagement of international collaborators could be especially beneficial to post-graduates – though we acknowledge that the language of instruction is Greek, and this in itself will limit the scope of international collaborations.

2. Peer observation of teaching can enhance the teaching strategies of both the observed and the observer. This may be a developmental opportunity that the team wish to take advantage of

Actions Taken by the Institution

1. Due to budget restrictions, we mainly utilise visiting professors during our Seminars which are shorter in course and focus on one area of our discipline.
Nevertheless, we provide opportunities for our masters' students to attend different conferences in our field as a way to explore and learn from our international collaborations. For such opportunities we have the funds to provide for the students as a professional development experience.
2. At the University we have the Centre for Teaching and Learning which aims to support teaching and learning, so that these may correspond to modern needs and internationally compatible and competitive quality criteria. It offers workshops and seminars for newly appointed and other staff, as well as students. Among these, in order to ensure quality assurance in teaching, they a peer observation policy has been developed, which was approved by the Senate (16/2019/ΣΥΓΚΛΗΤΟΣ) to be applied on a voluntary basis.

<https://www.ucy.ac.cy/ctl/peer-observation/?lang=en>

Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

(ESG 1.4)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC

Consider written requirements specifically for student progression, for example, what subjects must be completed, or what grade averages must be achieved, before students' progress to the next stage of their studies.

4.2 is rated as only partially compliant because of the lack of specification re ECTS requirements for progression in 10.3.1 of the Postgraduate Studies Rules. We also recommend more explicit guidelines regarding subject requirements (i.e., pre-requisites) for the Masters.

Actions Taken by the Institution

1. It is important to note that structurally the masters' program doesn't have pre-requisites; however courses are structured in a way that the students take each semester a compulsory course and an elective. We verbally advice our students to take the research course during their second semester. See the written requirements of each specialisation as described at the department's website.

Sports Pedagogy

<https://www.ucy.ac.cy/edu/programmes-of-study/postgraduate-programmes/pedagogical-sciences-with-specializations/master-in-pedagogical-science-sports-pedagogy/?lang=en>

Early Childhood Education

<https://www.ucy.ac.cy/edu/programmes-of-study/postgraduate-programmes/pedagogical-sciences-with-specializations/master-in-pedagogical-sciences-preschool-education/?lang=en>

Multiculturalism, Migration and Decolonial Education

<https://www.ucy.ac.cy/edu/programmes-of-study/postgraduate-programmes/pedagogical-sciences-with-specializations/master-in-pedagogical-sciences-multiculturalism-migration-and-docolonial-education/?lang=en>

4. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC

1. There is considerable variation in the length of readings lists for each subject. Consider reducing the reading list by providing a selection of essential readings and complementary. We would suggest that students are encouraged to search and create reading list based on their needs and research topic of interest.
2. • Consider flexible or hybrid modes of teaching and learning to embrace current higher education trends in the European Higher Education.
3. • Promote students' mobility within and across higher education systems.

Consider students with different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, and how they can achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Actions Taken by the Institution

1. Evidently, each discipline and each instructor work with different readings and can provide students with essential readings for each week and every theme tackled. The literature provided for the course in general can be considered as complementary. Nevertheless, we will ask all the instructors to ensure that they make this differentiation clearer in their syllabi.
2. Student mobility across higher institutions is something we promote; nevertheless, due to language barriers this is hard for our students.
3. We have a specific Social Support Office, at the Academic Affairs and Student Welfare Service which is responsible for the assessment of the needs and the provision of support for all students to ensure that they achieve the intended learning outcomes. Please check the following website

<https://ucyweb.ucy.ac.cy/fmweb/en/organizational-structure/welfare-sector-2/social-support-office>

Also, our department has an academic from the programme of Inclusive Education who acts as a liaison between the students, the Social Support Office and each instructor, supporting every student to receive all they need to be able to perform to their fullest and achieve the intended learning outcomes (e.g. some students are given the opportunity to audiotape every lecture, they are provided with extra time during the final exam or other options of doing the final exam).

5. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

IN OTHER REPORT

7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

NOT AVAILABLE

B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC

- Firstly, we recommend the teaching team work together to revise the programmes purposes and objectives to more explicitly align with standards pertaining to master's study. Following we suggest a more consistent approach to the expression of programme objectives (without detracting from their uniqueness).
- Following, we suggest that there is scope to have an explicit programme evaluation process that sits in between the course evaluations undertaken by students, and the CYQAA evaluation. A mapping process for example, could occur both within and across programmes. Within programmes such mapping could, for example, ensure the avoidance of duplication (content and assessment). Across programmes, such mapping could ensure consistency of expectations for students with regard to level of study and performance.
- • This process should take into account students' perspectives on areas such as assessment, and course content (for example, students did express a desire for a greater emphasis on creativity).
- • Relatedly, we suggest that it would be useful for staff to have a moderation process whereby some assessments were second marked by a staff member external to the course teacher, to generate discussion about parity and fairness of marking within and across courses. This need not be for every subject nevertheless have some regularity
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Please refer to individual points as answered above, as these reflect our actions to the remarks made by the committee.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Eleni Loizou	Professor of Early Childhood Education	
Niki Tsangaridou	Professor of Physical Education	
Zelia Gregoriou	Associate Professor of Theory of Education	
Elia Iliada	Associate Professor in Mathematics Pedagogy in Early Childhood	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	

Date: 14.3.23

