Doc. 300.1.2

Date: Date

- **Higher Education Institution: Frederick University**
- **Campus: Nicosia / Limassol**
- **School: Business and Law**
- **Department / Sector: Maritime Transport and Commerce (In Collaboration with the Department of Law**
- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

Programme

In Greek:

Ναυτικό Δίκαιο και Ναυτιλιακή Διοίκηση (3 ακαδημαϊκά εξάμηνα, 90 ECTS, Master of Laws (LLM), Εξ Αποστάσεως)

In English:

Maritime Law and Shipping Business (3 academic semesters, 90 ECTS, Master of Laws (LLM), Distance Learning)

Language(s) of instruction: English
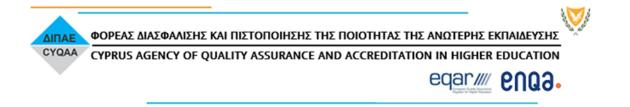
- **Specializations (if any):**

    In Greek:

    In English:

Programme's Status: Currently Operating

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.300.3.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the department in each assessment area.*

- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*

    - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*

    - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*

    - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*

- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.3.1).*

- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

1. **Study programme and study programme's design and development**

   (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

   <u>All areas COMPLIANT</u>

Areas of improvement and recommendations

> a. The EEC requested and was provided with the Policy and Process of Preventing and Dealing with Plagiarism. The text was reviewed and while there is a policy in place on how an assessor can detect what amounts to plagiarism, there are no specific rules in ascertaining the type and gravity of an act of plagiarism and how it will be sanctioned (i.e. the percentage of mark deduction according to the committed act). The same should be introduced in the Student Handbook

Response:

We would like to apologize if the matter was not clearly clarified during the face-to-face visit. The University adopts a University's Academic Integrity Policy and is committed to promoting a culture of academic integrity. Among the issues addressed in academic integrity is plagiarism. To this end, the University applies procedures for the prevention, detection and disciplinary control of student and academic staff misconduct and plagiarism.

Prevention of Plagiarism: A number of mechanisms are applied for the prevention of plagiarism. Students are informed on the forms of plagiarism, the commitment of the University, Departments and the course instructors on preventing plagiarism, as well as on the consequences of plagiarism. This information is provided to the students through the relevant policy published in the Department's website, the Course Outline given to the students at the beginning of the semester, the course's page on the e-learning platform, and on the instructions given in relevant assignment documents, where the commitment and consequences of plagiarism are explicitly stated. Furthermore, Departments ensure that their students are properly educated to avoid plagiarism, through the curriculum with courses related to ethics, writing and communication, as well as research methods and practices.
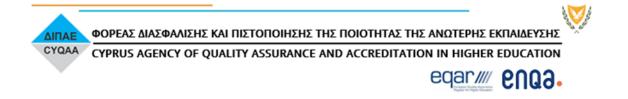
Detection of Plagiarism: Since the academic year 2016-2017, the University has incorporated in its e-learning platform the 'Turnitin' plagiarism detection software, which was initially used in all distance learning programs. This software can identify plagiaristic content in relation to published material on the Internet, data repositories and other work submitted by other students. All courses of the conventional programs are now delivered using the Moodle e-learning platform, enabling students to hand in their assignments by uploading them through the e-learning platform. All text based assignments and project reports are required to be checked for plagiarism using the plagiarism detection software. The plagiarism software provides the opportunity to students to view the plagiarism originality report of their submitted work and proceed with the necessary corrections before the final submission.

Originality Reports: The plagiarism detection software tools check for similarities between the student's work under evaluation with previously submitted or published work using the system's database, websites and other information sources. The outcome of these checks is provided in the originality report. If a match is found between the work submitted for plagiarism detection and another existing work, the matching text is highlighted, while a relevant summary of this match, including the source of the original text and the percentage of the matched text, is reported in the originality report. The originality report is not a plagiarism report by itself. It is a report that helps in identifying potential sources of plagiarism. The decision on whether the matching text found constitutes plagiarism must be made after a thorough examination of the submitted text and the suspected sources.

Criteria for Plagiarism Detection: Plagiarism can be expressed in a variety of forms, ranging from a simple word-to-word text copy of someone else's work, without a proper reference and without enclosing the copied text in quotation marks, to more severe forms of academic misconduct, such as the claim of the ownership of an idea that belongs to someone else. The use of the plagiarism detection software tools can directly identify direct word-to-word plagiarism and indirectly assist in the detection of more severe forms of academic dishonesty.

Two criteria need to be specified in plagiarism detection. These are the number of consecutive words to be examined for plagiarism and the percentage of the matching text. The "five word" rule, regarding plagiarism, is one of the toughest criteria that assumes plagiarism if there are five consecutive words identical between the examined text and the 'copied' text. Because the

plagiarism detection software tools used by the University can detect paraphrased plagiarism such as replacing a word with a synonym, or changing the words' sequence, the Department has adopted the "seven word" rule.

The second criterion is much more complex. The first reason for this has to do with the nature of the work under investigation. For example, a higher percentage of plagiarism is expected in a literature review report, compared to a report where the student describes his own work. Another issue is the 'density' of the detected plagiarism. For example, a 10% plagiarism in a thesis report has a different value if the matching text is within a few pages, or if it is scattered evenly throughout the report. Another significant issue is the handling of self-plagiarism. Considering the above, the University has adopted the 25% limit for plagiarism detection, as a general guideline. Deviations on the above limit are acceptable, given that they are justified and that students are aware of these limits in advance. The limits applied for class coursework reports are determined by the course instructor. Plagiarism limits concerning thesis reports are decided by the Council of the Department. In any case, the decision on whether plagiarism has occurred must be made by a qualitative analysis of the plagiarism detection software tool findings.

Plagiarism control in doctoral dissertations is being considered of the highest importance by the University. The 25% limit for plagiarism detection is also applied for the doctoral dissertations. Because the prior publication of the outcome of the doctoral work is a requirement by the doctoral regulations of the university, using material in the dissertation from the published work of the student is not considered to be self-plagiarism, and is not accounted in the calculation of the plagiarism percentages. The originality report with a qualitative plagiarism report, prepared by the doctoral student Research Advisor, is submitted with all other required documents to the university bodies involved in the ratification process for the doctoral award by the Senate.

Disciplinary Actions: Even though several mechanisms are in place that prevent plagiarism, there is always a possibility of plagiarism being detected. Disciplinary actions are therefore required that discourage students from intentionally plagiarizing. These actions vary according to the form of plagiarism. Plagiarism due to direct word-to-word text copying is resolved by the instructor of the course. The punishment is such a case might include a warning with parallel resubmission of the work, or a reduction of the grade of the student. More severe cases of

plagiarism are referred to the Disciplinary Committee of the University through the Council of the Department. If a student is found guilty of plagiarism, then the Disciplinary Committee decides on the appropriate disciplinary actions. Such actions range from grading the student with a failing grade for the course, to a dismissal from the University.
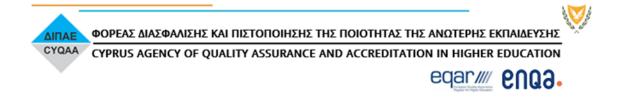
It is noted that the provision for testing the reports for plagiarism, prior to final submission, protects the students from being accused for plagiarism and gives them the opportunity to modify their work accordingly.

Academic Integrity for Academic Staff:

Academic staff may use teaching material developed by other academics, usually available through the internet, or from textbook authors, with the appropriate acknowledgement of the sources or the authors. Copyright-protected material can be used only with the prior permission of the copyright holder. Distributing to students, copies from textbooks, in either printed or electronic form, without the permission of the author or the publisher, is prohibited and constitutes a law violation that can result in disciplinary actions against the academic staff member. Exception to this is the 10% allowable limit.

Software copyrights are promptly observed by the University. Only authorized staff from the Computing Services Department has the required administrative access rights for installing software on the computer owned by the University. All academic staff and administrative personnel are provided with a computer by the University, with all requested software pre-installed. None of the academic staff or teaching personnel have the required administrative access rights to install software on their computers. If a new software is needed to be installed, then this is done by the Computing Services Department ensuring that copyrights are observed.

The above information is also distributed, into a more compact form (see Annex 01), to every course in the online moodle platform, in order for the students to be informed. The student handbook is also updated to include the relevant information. (see Annex 02).

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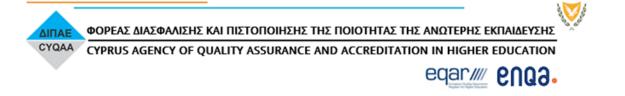| b.	The EEC recommends the University to reconsider the allocation of ECTS units per module and provide evidence that justify the discrepancies in allocation.

Response:

Frederick University is holder of both the ECTS label and the Diploma Supplement label (Link). All Frederick University programmes of study are structured as per the Bologna Process (Three (3) Cycles) (Link). Master programmes in Frederick University are between 90 – 120 ECTS and each academic year corresponds to 60 ECTS (30 ECTS per semester). Each ECTS corresponds to 25 – 30 hours of student workload and the ECTS allocated for each course are carefully planned and implemented by the Department in order for the student to fulfill the necessary learning outcomes and acquire the skills and competencies related to the course. All Master programmes of the University are in accordance with the Cyprus Qualifications Framework (CyQf) (Link).

Furthermore, Frederick University has conducted several trainings regarding the ECTS philosophy and implementation and all new teaching staff members get acquainted through relevant resources with its significance for designing teaching and learning, and for the development of new courses.

c.	After reviewing the submitted application and the supportive documents there was no evidence of existence of a Research Ethics Committee to ensure that research is carried out according to protocols, especially the management and destruction of information upon completion of research.

Response:

We apologize if it was not made clear to the members of the EEC, but Frederick University already established a Research Ethics Committee that consists by three (3) academics from the University. Please refer to Annex 03 for the Research Ethics Committee framework.

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> d. Regarding feedback, it must be stated that during the formative period the students receive feedback in their assignments, however, although we asked for sample assignment papers, we did not receive any. Therefore, we are not in a position to evaluate the content and substance of the feedback. Feedback during the summative period is not necessary, therefore the matter is not addressed, but the appeal process, especially the grounds for rectification of mistakes and re-evaluation is not clear and comprehensible, especially the grounds for appeal.

Response:

Although the requested samples were promptly uploaded into the cloud of the evaluation, we apologize if the committee was not able to access them. Please refer to Annex 04 for assignment samples.

The University acknowledges the importance of offering detailed and constructive feedback to support our students' learning journey. We understand that clear and insightful feedback is instrumental in helping students identify areas for improvement and enhancing their understanding of the subject matter. Thus, training on providing appropriate and detailed training on formative assessment has been already offered for the DL instructors. The importance of feedback on formative assessment has been outlined and explained. Various Moodle resources were explained on how feedback can be provided via the platform. Additionally, feedback methods and approaches were presented and explaining in order to ensure that feedback provided during the formative period is more detailed, specific, and focused on fostering student growth and development. The University is committed to continuously improving its feedback measures, thus, it will proceed with additional trainings on the matter and implement measures to improve our feedback measures and to ensure that constructive feedback is provided to better support our students' academic progress and success.

Additionally, the University has established statutes and procedures for resolving issues raised by students. Among these issues are students' objections or disagreements concerning their evaluation and academic ethics. Among these statutes are the Student's Advocate Office and the General Management Procedure (GMP08 – Satisfaction Surveys, Complaints & Suggestions).

(a) **Student Advocate Office:** The University, in its effort to ensure that all students are able to pursuit and fulfil their academic goals, has been implementing since 2012 the

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Student Advocate Office. This is an innovative scheme that allows for students to voice any complaints they may have with administrative or academic processes at Frederick University and ensure their speedy investigation. The Director of the Studies and Student Welfare Service acts as the student advocate. The Student Advocate also works closely with the Student Union and Student Representatives who also bring collectively issues that may be of concern to students.

(b) **General Management Procedure:** The General Management Procedure (GMP08 – Satisfaction Surveys, Complaints & Suggestions) procedure provides all students the option to submit a written complaint or suggestion regarding any aspect of the University's operation, through the Extranet Student Platform. The complaints are monitored daily and according to the issue raised, the complaint is communicated to the relevant department(s) concerned. If the student is satisfied with the actions taken, then the complaint is completed and archived. In case the student is not satisfied with the actions initially taken and the relevant feedback, then further action is defined.

(c) **Exam Re-evaluation:** A student who wishes to appeal their final grade has the responsibility of initiating the appeal process, first by contacting and requesting a meeting with the faculty member, within two working days from the day that the semester results are published on the student platform (Stage 1). During the meeting, the student reviews their exam paper with the faculty member, which may lead to a correction of error and change of grade by the faculty member. If the problem is not resolved between the student and faculty member, then the student proceeds to Stage 2 of the appeal process by completing and submitting to the Department Head the Exam Re-Evaluation Request form. In this case, the answer book of the student is photocopied with the markings of the first evaluator removed. The photocopied answer book with the exam marking guide is given to two evaluators, appointed by the Department Head, for a second evaluation. The new grade for the exam is the average between the two evaluations and it is final.

Academic Misconduct

The students are expected to abide by the Student Code of Conduct outlined in the Frederick University Students Regulations of 2007, which are communicated in the Student Handbook, in the course outlines and in rules that are posted on the University website (for example

during examination periods). In case of academic misconduct and given that this is the students first offence, the faculty member brings the matter to the Department Council, which may impose sanctions such as written or oral reprimand or a grade reduction. For more serious offences and for academic misconduct during final examinations, then an Incident Report is filed with the Studies and Student Welfare Service and the student is referred to the Students' Disciplinary Committee. The student attends a hearing with the Committee, which decides whether or not there was an offence as well as the sanctions imposed, which range from failing a course to suspension or expulsion from the University. The student is informed of the decision within five working days and has a right to appeal the Disciplinary Committee's decision by filing a format appeal to the Senate. The Senate holds a hearing for the student and examines all evidence submitted by the Disciplinary Committee, as well as the initial hearing's minutes. The decision of the Senate is final.

Governance outline on assessment arrangements

- The overall student assessment framework is outlined in the Frederick University Students Regulations of 2007 and it is further clarified in subsequent rules and guidelines that are issued by the Senate and the University's Internal Rules and Regulations Committee always taking into account established best assessment practices and guidelines from the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQQA).

- Student assessment issues are also examined within the University's Internal Quality Committee through annual reporting from all relevant parties. Assessment relevant data is collected through the Faculty Course Evaluation Form, as well as through the results from the Student Course Evaluation Questionnaires that student submit for all of their semester courses, as well as from comments and suggestions made by focus groups with students.

- An Academic Progress Committee (APC) operates within each Academic Department and is responsible for reviewing grades, grade distribution, course completion rates and other relevant academic indicators to ensure students are meeting academic requirements and making satisfactory progress towards their degree. The APC may identify areas where curriculum content, delivery and academic support and resources could be improved within the Department.

2. **Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment**

   (ESG 1.3)

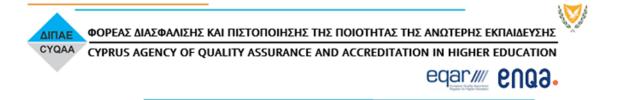   <u>**All areas COMPLIANT**</u>

Areas of improvement and recommendations

> a. From the documentation provided and the information gathered from the meetings, it was not clear if formative assessment provides feedback based on rubrics and whether these rubrics are shared with students. If that is the case, then the above are recommended. In addition, the use of peer-assessment as well as gamification strategies are encouraged to increase the student levels of motivation and engagement with the e-assessment process. Finally, more sophisticated forms of feedback based on intelligent tutoring systems and conversational pedagogical agents could be considered to support immediate and automatic feedback to students and self-evaluate their advances.

Response:

Rubrics are indeed used for the assessment of students. Please refer to Annex 05 for the rubric of a course from the programme.

The University recognizes the benefits of incorporating peer assessment and gamification strategies into its e-assessment process. Consequently, CIET has already set up a procedure in integrating gamification int our DL teaching and learning practices, and has been working with DL instructors in employing the gamification approach. The initiative will be gradually expanded to all DL programs and courses. Additionally, the University acknowledges that peer assessment not only encourages active participation and collaboration among students but also provides valuable insights into their learning progress. There are DL instructors that are currently using peer assessment, however the University aims to communicate the value and importance of peer assessment to DL instructors and ensure that it will be widely employed. The University is committed to further integrate these approaches to enrich the learning experience for our students. Along the same lines the University, acknowledges the importance of providing more sophisticated forms of feedback to support student learning and self-evaluation. Self-evaluation quizzes, either independently or integrating in presentations, videos and learning scenarios are being widely used in our DL programs. Additionally, the University, has been already exploring the integration of intelligent tutoring systems and conversational pedagogical agents to deliver immediate and automatic feedback tailored to

students' individual needs, by employing artificial intelligence tools and specifically chatbots as course tutors. By leveraging these technologies, we aim to provide students with timely and personalized feedback that facilitates their learning and enhances their ability to self-assess their progress.

> b. While the EEC emphasises the benefits of any form of online collaboration among students, teleconferences and other forms of online synchronous collaboration may be perceived as problematic, if the program is open internationally and attended by students across remote time zones. It was not clear how the university would support this type of collaboration from the coordination perspective.

Response:

The issue, appears manageable based on our current student body, as the time lag among the existing time zones is limited (max 2 hours). Nevertheless, expanding to a broader international audience with greater time-lags may force the delivery towards a more asynchronous model where real-time interaction will be, inevitably lower. In such case, a major redesign of the modules may be required. To avoid this, the program would proceed with the development of subgroups/cohorts so as to ensure that the model for synchronous communication can be maintained. It is noted that a new cohort is created for every group of 30 students. On the other hand, or limited experience with international students has shown that the students have a lot to gain from interaction with other students from other parts of this world so we would be against forming strict cohorts divided by time regions, so interaction, especially in form of group work would be required.

In summary, the concerns raised by the EEC are shared with us and we are appropriately prepared to address them, should such issues arise.

3. **Teaching staff**

 (ESG 1.5)

All areas COMPLIANT

Areas of improvement and recommendations

> a.   Certain training courses on distance learning programmes should be offered to all faculty and that should form an element in their promotion track

Response:

Responsible for the training and improvement of programmes offered to all faculty member is the Personal and Professional Development Center at Frederick University. The Centre aims at providing a range of development opportunities to faculty and staff that will enable them to enhance their professional and personal skills and ultimately improve the quality of conventional programmes.

Given our academic environment, personal and professional development activities can take the form of training opportunities, both supply and demand-driven (workshops, seminars, informal discussions, Teaching and Learning Day), mentoring programs, service opportunities (Active Citizenship) so as to maximise interaction and active participation.

As of 2022, the P²DF Center has developed and implemented the ['Rule for Staff Training'](#) to ensure its smooth operation.

P²DF's activities are planned and implemented through two processes:

- The Center's Board and Sub-Committees proactively identify training needs and develop targeted training programs (Push Process)
- All formal bodies of the University, such as Senate Committees, Departmental Committees, and Administrative Services, may request from the Center to incorporate activities that are deemed beneficial or necessary to the operations of the University (Pull Process). If they wish to develop a training program, they should contact the P²DF Board at pdfcouncil@frederick.ac.cy.

Since the introduction of Distance Learning programs trainings are provided on a regular basis. The Distance Learning Committee (DLC) in collaboration with the Learning Support Unit (LSU) and the Center for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching (CIET) organize and deliver regular training sessions and information days for the academic staff involved in distance teaching. Specifically, the initial basic training for new distance learning instructors it is scheduled and delivered at the beginning of every semester. Follow up training sessions

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throughout the semesters are also organized based on the needs and demands of the new as well as experienced academic staff in distance teaching and learning. Additionally, various sessions are scheduled in light of any technological and pedagogical developments and advancements. Finally, information and training sessions are organized and delivered within the academic year, when considered necessary and upon request on a personal as well as group/program level basis. In order to better support the academic staff, a DL Instructors Portal, a DL Instructors Induction Course and Sample Distance Learning Courses are developed in LMS. Educational materials, videos, tutorials and guidelines are developed by the DLC, CIET and DLU (Distance Learning Unit) and are provided to instructors (via the aforementioned portals and courses). The academic staff involved in distance learning programs is also welcomed to attend any other professional development training is provided by the University. The DLC in collaboration with CIET will continue to regularly organize professional development trainings for the DL instructors (newcomers and experienced), as well as to pedagogically and technically support them.
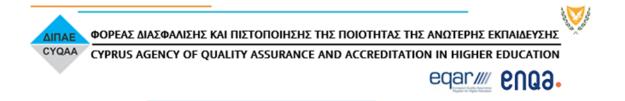
Finally, here you can find examples of the trainings for the current academic year. For all our past trainings, here you can find resources such as recordings, presentations, links and helpful material.

According to the University's rules regarding academic staff promotion process, each full time teaching personnel promotion includes a report by an external to the university, special scientific committee. This committee examines the candidate's portfolio and one of the indicators that are taken into consideration is teaching quality. The committee has at its disposal students' assessments, teaching material, and a teaching demonstration by the candidate.

> b. Based on the discussion with the faculty, we would recommend that expansion of the legal toolbox of the University in relation to legal journals and periodicals. This would also strengthen the delivery of the various modules.

Response:

Frederick University offers subscriptions to various databases with legal content such as ProQuest, ECOLEX, Iris, Kluwer Law etc. Additionally, Frederick University gains access to academic electronic resources through its membership to the Consortium of Academic Libraries of Cyprus (CALC). The University has already requested from CALC to participate

in the consortium subscription for the NOMOS Journals, Qualex, Sakkkoulas and Lexis Nexis which will be available to us in the coming academic year.

> c. The University is encouraged to follow good practices in the appointment of instructors in the programme based on the Agenda 2030 SDG's, especially Goal 5.
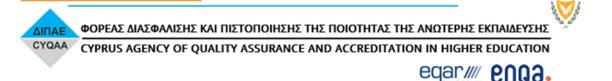
Response:

We fully agree with the Committee's comments. Frederick University has committed to improve gender equality in recruitment and career progression, and has recently launched a training on unconscious gender bias targeting both academic and administrative personnel to ensure inclusive and equal recruitment and selection.

The gender pay gap is both associated with gender balance in leadership and decision-making and also with career progression. The university committed to eliminating gender pay gap, adopts a policy goal of having a minimum of 30% representation of women in all top governing bodies. The university aims also to have the gender pay gap less than 5% in all posts and considers any such gaps when applying salary increases. In relation to gender pay gap tracking, the university has a positive record in gender gap in management (9% higher for women). For administrative staff the gender pay gap is negligible. For academics, the gender pay gap is 4%. Although the gap is considered acceptable, it arises due to the lack of female academics at the rank of Professor. Analysis of salaries by rank shows that gender pay gap is <2%.

Please find here the University's sustainability report for 2023. Please refer to Page 47 for the SDG 5.

Frederick University is also bound by the Gender Equality Plans of the EU-CONEXUS, a European Universities Alliance to which it participates as a full member.

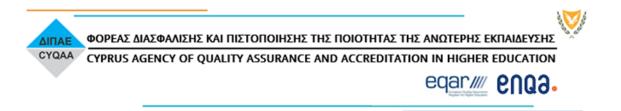4. **Student admission, progression, recognition and certification**

(ESG 1.4)

All areas COMPLIANT

Areas of improvement and recommendations

a. The University's Moodle platform offers an extensive array of learning analytics tools to monitor student engagement, progression and performance in the programme. These tools are based on data from inactive students with limited participation or incomplete activities. However, it remains unclear how instructors make use of this information to help their students and the daily benefits derived from it. While the University gathers all the above mentioned data, effective use of it, in terms of specific measures for improvement being adopted by the University, should be ensured.

Response:

The University recognizes the value of the extensive array of learning analytics tools available on our Moodle platform, which provide valuable data on student engagement, progression, and performance. There are some procedures already being in place in regards to their use. The DL instructors are currently using the analytics tools offered via the Moodle Platform in order to gather information in regards to DL students' activity and participation. When this information is gathered, DL instructors act accordingly, by getting in touch with students and provide their guidance, support and help. Additionally, the coordinator of the DL program is informed in order to academically advice and support the students where is needed. Additionally, the information gathered from the data collected from the Moodle platform are used by the DLC and CIET in order to develop appropriate measures in regards to students' participation and engagement as well as to develop the appropriate educational material for them. However, we acknowledge the need for clearer communication regarding how instructors utilize this information to assist their students effectively. To address this concern, we are committed to enhancing our practices regarding the utilization of learning analytics data. We work closely with instructors to ensure they are equipped with the necessary resources and training to interpret and utilize this data effectively in their teaching practices. Finally, we enhance our current procedures and develop specific measures for improvement

based on the insights gained from learning analytics, thereby enhancing the overall learning experience for our students.

5. **Learning resources and student support**

(ESG 1.6)

All areas COMPLIANT

Areas of improvement and recommendations

a.	The Handbook should make clear distinction in the activities included in an ECTS pertaining to the conventional as opposed to the distance learning LLM, because they encompass different activities.

Response:

We adopt the EEC recommendation. Please refer to Annex 02 for the updated Handbook.

b.	The contents that would comprise the mentioned faculty handbook are scattered across the university's web page and the study guides, among other documents. The University is urged to consolidate these resources into a single, central handbook that would serve as an essential reference for the faculty and others interested in maintaining high-quality standards in distance learning.

Response:

We acknowledge the need for a consolidated faculty handbook to streamline information and ensure consistency in standards for distance learning. It should be mentioned that for the majority of policies, procedures and practices there is available resources, guides and tools on specific instructor courses on Moodle and are communicated to new members during the New Faculty and New Staff Orientation Days. Presently, the Rules and Regulations University Committee is reviewing all academic related policies, incorporating in many cases the feedback from accreditation committees, with the aim to make any necessary revisions before the end of this academic year, in order to have available for the new academic year, a comprehensive Handbook for both faculty and students.
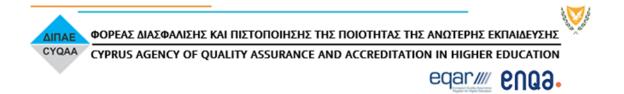
Apart from the Faculty Handbook we are also developing an online *A to Z guide* to policies and procedures that will be available on the University website in time for the start of the Fall 2024 semester.

There is a DL Instructors Handbook, where all the information are consolidated in one document. (see Annex 06).

c.	The EEC recommends ensuring that recorded teleconferences and video lectures include the instructor in all videos to provide non-verbal communication and add subtitles for accessibility. In addition, the use of interactive videos is suggested to enhance engagement among online students during teleconferences, featuring embedded quizzes, navigation options, and additional resources.

Response:

The University takes very seriously and puts great efforts in preparing the appropriate material for its distance learning students. The Center for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching (CIET) aims to pedagogically support the DL instructors to design, develop and deliver material that are aligned to the principles of distance learning as well as to the Universal Design Learning (UDL) to address inclusivity and accessibility issues. We value the importance of incorporating non-verbal communication into our instructional materials to improve accessibility and engagement among our online students. Thus, CIET works in ensuring that all instructors are prominently featured in all recorded teleconferences and video lectures. This will allow students to benefit not only from the verbal content but also from the non-verbal cues provided by the instructors. Moreover, we acknowledge the significance of accessibility and inclusivity in our instructional materials. Therefore, CIET also works on promptly implementing the addition of subtitles to all of our recorded teleconferences and video lectures. This will ensure that all students, including those with hearing impairments or language barriers, can fully engage with the content. We have already developed interactive videos and presentations as well as learning scenarios that incorporate interactive elements to enhance students' engagement even further. Quizzes were already integrated, and we are working on adding more navigation options and additional resources in order to make the learning experience more interactive and dynamic for all of our DL students.

ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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6. **Conclusions and final remarks**

a. Based on the findings and the recommendations as reflected in the performance per section we do not see the need to provide general remarks, subject to the conclusions below. The EEC would like to take this opportunity and thank again the CYQAA for the invitation and the coordinator of CYQAA, Mr. Georgios Aletraris, for managing the evaluation of this programme both efficiently and effectively. Also, we, as EEC, would like to extend our thanks to all the colleagues at the University for the dedication, professionalism, and co-operation during the evaluation process. The EEC report highlights the committee's key findings, the strengths of the programme and the University, and recommendations for improving the LLM (conventional) offered by the University. **Overall, the EEC found the University's programme along the expected national standards.** The nature of the programme is compatible with physical delivery and the methodology provided is appropriate for the particular programme of study, i**ncluding some strong elements that reinforce the University's teaching and learning mode**l. The EEC believes that revisions based on the feedback provided would strengthen the programme. We advise the faculty of Frederick to take into consideration our recommendations and address all the suggestions. Once more we remain at the disposal of CYQAA for any clarification required.

Response:

We would like to thank the EEC for their positive remarks. The University has adopted all recommendations by the External Evaluation Committee as shown in the responses above.

B. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Prof. George Demosthenous	Rector	

Date: 20/02/2024