ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA
ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Doc. 300.1.2

07.14.318.059

Higher Education Institution's Response

Conventional-face-to-face programme of study

Date: Date

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  Frederick University
- **Campus: Nicosia and Limassol**
- **School: Arts, Communication and Cultural Studies**
- **Department / Sector: Arts and Communication**
- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

Programme

In Greek:

Δημοσιογραφία και Μέσα Επικοινωνίας (3 ακαδημαϊκά εξάμηνα, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο (BA)

In English:

Journalism and Media Communication

Language(s) of instruction: Greek and English

- **Specializations (if any):**

  In Greek:

  In English:

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

Programme's Status: Currently Operating

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 2019" [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

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, <u>without changing the format of the report</u>:*

  - *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)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

> 1.a.   No areas for improvement or recommendations were noted for Section 1.

Department's Response:

We would like to thank the EEC for their positive remarks.

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

(ESG 1.3)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

> 2.a. The EEC recommends that modules should be revised to reflect the latest developments in communication and journalism. That should clearly be reflected in the content of the modules as well as in the recommended readings.
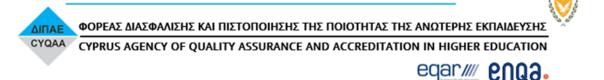
Department's Response:

We accept and adopt the recommendations of the EEC. The courses of the programme have been revised, so that the courses content better reflects the latest development in communication and journalism. Please refer to **Annex 1** – Course Descriptions.

> 2.b. The EEC suggests that an assessment strategy at a programme level that reflects the learning objective needs to be established. An assessment strategy at the programme level would help clarify the choices made with regards to the distribution of the assessment types used (both formative and summative). Such information should be clearly communicated to the students and reflected in the modules descriptors.

Department's Response:

We accept and adopt the recommendations of the EEC. Furthermore we have codified the monitoring of the student's progress in **Annex 2** and updated the assessment description in the individual modules.

3. **Teaching staff**

(ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

> 3.a. Address the lack of coverage of technological changes by introducing one or two new courses specifically on that subject, incorporating issues of technological change into pre-existing courses via updated readings and lectures, and, third, consider hiring staff with a background in teaching/research on technology

Department's Response:

We accept and adopt the recommendations of the EEC. The programme's courses have been revised as per the EEC recommendations and the new courses added are:

a) **COM280 - Digital Media Technologies.**

   The purpose of this course is to present students with the concepts involved in the process of digitisation, analyse the ways the media change both in terms of form and content, demonstrate how to set up and manage a YouTube channel, cover the ad formats available with the Google Display Network and YouTube and show how to set up and manage Display and Video campaigns.

b) **JOU370 - Digital Cultures**

   This course introduces students to the dynamics of the digital and post-digital information age, smart technology and its effects upon hybrid media systems. Students are involved in the discussion of the latest technological developments and their global spread, particularly the digital and post-digital revolution and the effects upon new and traditional audiovisual media conglomerates. On the basis of this discussion, the course will focus on different forms of digital and post-digital media culture as it is shaped in the current era of media hybridization. Instructors: Prof. George Kalliris (CV), Panayiotis Charalambous

Please refer to **Annex 1** – Course Descriptions and Annex **4b** – Programme Structure for the instructors.

> **3.a.** Expand teaching staff to include instructors with a clear teaching/research background in Journalism and/or Media & Communication Studies;

Department's Response:

The University had declared via public announcement the vacancy for permanent position in Journalism and Media & Communication studies, with deadline 09/01/2023. No applications were received so, as per the Decision of the University's Council, the vacancy is reposted with deadline 31/05/2023. ([Link](#))

The Department has made agreements for teaching and research collaborations with:

- Prof. George Kalliris, ([CV](#)) who is on a sabbatical leave from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki so he can commit to the programme, full time, in both research and teaching duties.
- Dr Anna Podara ([CV](#)), Visiting Lecturer.

Both academic staff will enhance the programme with their specialized knowledge and expertise in the areas of Journalism and Media & Communication studies.

> **3.b.** Increase research production in the relevant area of study via recruitment of a few new staff and/or encouraging new research by existing staff.

Department's Response:

As per the University's strategic goal to increase research output in all areas, the following incentives are provided:

a) Publication boosting scheme:

As per the 104th Council Decision of the University, the University financially supports publications in high-impact international journals in order to promote and strengthen its research culture.

b) Teaching load reduction scheme:

The University's teaching load reduction scheme is applied in the case of faculty who are engaged in research activities, participate in research projects. This scheme releases time for faculty to develop their research agenda and build up their research output. Furthermore, the Department's decision to

proceed with the recruitment of visiting faculty to strengthen programs' development and delivery, contributes to the teaching load reduction of resident faculty and further concentration on their research activities.

Additionally, the University has approved budget for Teaching and Research Assistants to faculty so as to support not only the educational process but also assist in research production
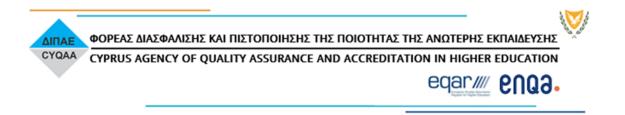
c) *Internal Funding:*

The University opportunities for internal funding to encourage faculty members that require financial assistance to develop their research ideas. Notably, faculty members can take advantage of the decision taken by the Senate in Fall 2020 to fund competitive research proposals. The Senate has allocated a portion of the University's Research Fund to an internal funding scheme through which members of staff can apply for internal small-scale financial support. The call was announced in January 2021 and several faculty members submitted proposals in their field of expertise

Furthermore, as per their research strategic goals, the Departments offers guidance and sets targets for its faculty members that relate to key performance indicators (KPIs) in the following:
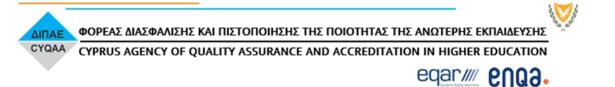
- The number of publications as listed in Scopus
- High impact (quality) publications as measured by SJR index in Scopus
- Submitted funding proposals & funding
- h-index (measured in Scopus)
- Citations (measured in Scopus)
- PhD supervision (Number of students)

The Department has measured and assessed all KPIs listed above for each faculty member and has set overall targets in each *KPI* for a horizon of 3 years. These KPIs and each faculty member's contribution is evaluated every year against these targets. Specifically relating to publications, faculty members are expected to contribute to the research output of the Department with a focus on Scopus ranked publications. In order to provide merit for high quality research output, the Department measures high rank publications for each faculty member based on SJR with high impact publications considered when a rating SJR>=1. The SJR>=1 appears highly correlated with other international rankings.

Specifically the programmes have undertaken a number of research activities in the relevant area of the programme of study, as shown in **Annex 3**.

Further to the above, the addition of Prof. George Kalliris and Dr Anna Podara to the programme, will further enhance the research activities and collaborations of the academic staff.

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

(ESG 1.4)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

> 4.a.   The EEC recommends that consideration be given to the possibility that the diploma delivered by the Department should include a specialisation in either Journalism or Public Relations and Communication. Such an indication follows from the structure of the curriculum.

Department's Response:

We accept and adopt the recommendations of the EEC and we propose the establishment of two specializations: (a) Journalism, (b) Public Relations and Communications.

Please refer to **Annex 4a – List of Compulsory and Elective Courses** and **Annex 4b – Programme Structure.**

> 4.b.   The EEC also proposes that the thesis should not be limited to a dissertation. It can equally be a creative portfolio to demonstrate students ability to perform at a high level of multimedia storytelling.

Department's Response:

We accept and adopt the recommendations of the EEC regarding the thesis.

Students have the choice of writing a dissertation or producing a multimedia project (creative portfolio). This option is clearly communicated to the students, via the Thesis Guidelines handbook (**Annex 05**), before the beginning of the course COM353 – Social Sciences Research Methods, and before the initiation of their final thesis project (JOU481/PRC481 – Thesis).
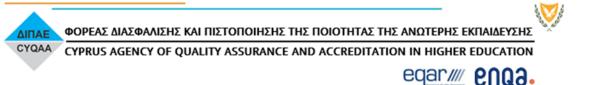
> 4.c. As for the Thesis dissertation, it must follow the criteria of academic writing. These criteria must be defined and known in advance to the students. This remark is evident from the study of three theses given to us, on the topics of "Political Theatre in Cyprus", "Football as a Business" and "Theatre and the place of women in plays". There are huge differences between them. For example, the first one is an encyclopaedic type work, without documentation, footnotes or bibliography. We also lacked diplomas on journalism or public relations.

Department's Response:

We accept and adopt the recommendations of the EEC. The Thesis Guidelines handbook has been revised, to clearly indicate the structure and procedures of the Thesis that **all** students must follow. Please refer to **Annex 05 – Thesis Guidelines** . Furthermore, the structure and overall presentation of the final thesis, is assessed during the final evaluation and the oral presentation. The evaluation criteria are shown in **Annex 06 – Thesis Evaluation Form.**

5. **Learning resources and student support**

(ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

> 5.a. Greater encouragement for student mobility and exchanges. Talking to students we found that the levels of mobility are not satisfactory.

Department's Response:

We agree with the Committees recommendation, as we believe that students participation in mobility schemes enhances their learning experience. Increasing mobility for students, and staff, is one of the basic goals of the University. A few years ago Frederick University was honoured by the Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes (IDEP) for its significant results and the continuous policy for student mobility. Due to the impact of COVID-19, student mobility was significantly reduced, but we are hopeful that starting the next academic year the mobility of students from and to our University will continue.

> 5.b. Also care to update technological infrastructure, particularly in cutting edge areas such as virtuality or data.

Department's Response:

We accept and adopt the recommendations of the EEC.

Digital competencies, in alignment with latest developments in the media industry, are actively sought after. Software and specialised equipment are used as part of the curriculum. Modules such as COM 100, COM 122, COM134, COM 280, COM 330, JOU 210, JOU22, COM 248, PRC317, PRC203, amongst others, utilise software and equipment as a basis.
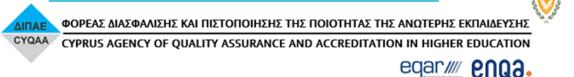
Please refer to **Annex 07 - Infrastructure**.

6. Conclusions and final remarks

We would like to begin our concluding remarks by saying that we were overall satisfied with the program, the department and the university. There was clarity and openness, and the materials provided to the EEC provided almost all of the information needed. We found during our discussion an engaged, enthusiastic and qualified staff who were clearly committed to the program who very clearly had a good working relationship between staff and university/faculty management. This positive feeling was confirmed by our interactions with the students, who were positive about their educational experiences at the university.

As you will note in our evaluation, we did not grade any area as "Non-compliant." This reflects our overall impression that this is a program (and a department) in good standing. It is, nevertheless, the role of the EEC to come with observations and recommendations for making the program better, and there were a few areas that we have graded as "Partially Compliant." It is with this in mind that the EEC feels the following areas and suggestions could be taken into account:

(1) Address the lack of coverage of technological changes by introducing one or two new courses specifically on that subject, incorporating issues of technological change into pre-existing courses via updated readings and lectures, and, third, consider hiring staff with a background in teaching/research on technology.

(2) Expand teaching staff to include instructors with a clear teaching/research background in Journalism and/or Media & Communication Studies.

(3) increase research production in the relevant area of study via recruitment of a few new staff and/or encouraging new research by existing staff.

(4) beyond issues of technological change, modules should be revised to reflect the latest developments in communication and journalism broadly. That should clearly be reflected in the content of the modules as well as in the recommended readings.

(5) an assessment strategy at a programme level that reflects the learning objective needs to be established. An assessment strategy at the programme level would help clarify the choices made with regards to the distribution of the assessment types used (both formative and

summative). Such information should be clearly communicated to the students and reflected in the modules descriptors.
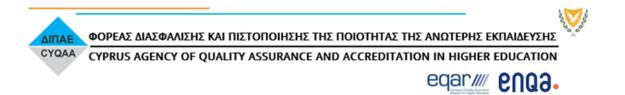
(6) consideration be given to the possibility that the diploma delivered by the Department should include a specialisation in either Journalism or Public Relations and Communication.

(7) the thesis should not be limited to a dissertation. It can equally be a creative portfolio to demonstrate students ability to perform at a high level of multimedia storytelling.

(8) the thesis must follow the criteria of academic writing. These criteria must be defined and known in advance to the students.

(9) encourage student mobility and exchanges. Talking to students we found that the levels of mobility are not satisfactory.

(10) Update technological infrastructure, particularly in cutting edge areas such as virtuality or data.

Department's Response:

The Department of Arts and Communication wishes to express its gratitude to the members of the External Evaluation Committee for their thorough and insightful evaluation of the bachelor programme of study BA in Journalism and Media Communication as well as their fruitful comments and constructive discussion. The accreditation process provided the opportunity to the Department and the Program Coordinators to obtain the objective views of external and independent peers, as well as examine aspects of the program from a different perspective.

The Department has already considered the issues raised, as well as the recommendations of the EEC and has already acted upon, in terms of implementing the Committee's recommendations as shown in sections 1 to 5.

The Department also wishes to thank the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, as well as the members of staff of the Agency that facilitated the organisation and implementation of the External Evaluation Committee's evaluation of the programme of study.

ΔΙΠΑΕ
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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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B. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	*Position*	*Signature*
Prof. George Demosthenous	Rector	

Date: Click to enter date