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21 Σεπτεμβρίου 2021

Πρόεδρο Συμβουλίου Φορέα Διασφάλισης και Πιστοποίησης  
της Ποιότητας της Ανώτερης Εκπαίδευσης

Καθ. Μαίρη Κουτσελίνη

Αξιότιμη κυρία Πρόεδρε,

**Θέμα: Αναβολή λήψης απόφασης και υποβολή διευκρινίσεων και τεκμηριωμένων ενεργειών βελτίωσης για την αξιολόγηση του προγράμματος «Conservation & Restoration of Historical Structures & Monuments» (3 academic semesters / 90 ECTS, Master, E-Learning)**

Σε συνέχεια επιστολής σας, με ημερομηνία 16 Σεπτεμβρίου 2021 και με το ίδιο θέμα, θα θέλαμε να διευκρινίσουμε τα ακόλουθα σχετικά με τα ερωτήματα που τέθηκαν από το Συμβούλιο του Φορέα ΔΙΠΑΕ:

- Συγκεκριμένα, και με βάση την έκθεση της Επιτροπής Εξωτερικής Αξιολόγησης, όσο και του Συμβουλίου του Φορέα εντοπίστηκαν αδυναμίες στα κριτήρια που αφορούν την εξ αποστάσεως εκπαίδευση και ειδικά στο «Teaching and Learning resources» όπου η ΕΕΑ βαθμολόγησε με (*partially compliant*):  
«with regard to Distance Learning provision, we feel that more support should be provided at Departmental level, to better enable teaching staff to provide innovative teaching methods – such as virtual reality, computer simulations etc »

We agree with the committee's comments and the University will continue to provide support on personal as well as Departmental level. The University gives great emphasis on providing quality online education by the continuous improvement and enhancement of the teaching methods and the educational material provided. It acknowledges the need and has been continuously working towards the aforementioned. There is a firm intention from the University to move in this direction.

The newly established Centre for Professional and Personal Development of Frederick University aims to cultivate the professional, but also the personal growth and development of Frederick University staff. The breadth of this task is very wide, from improvement of pedagogical techniques, training on new technologies and dissemination of policies and procedures, to promotion of values and communication of organizational goals to personal well-being. As of now, Frederick University ensures that appropriate training and support is provided for the academic staff and that this training is enhanced in the light of technological and educational developments. The University gives great emphasis on staff training and development, thus the Center has already developed a professional development action plan in regards to the workshops/trainings/courses to be offered during the following academic year. Some of the courses will be considered as mandatory and some others as voluntarily. Some courses will be provided in-house, some others from collaborators/ experts outside university, and some others as MOOCs. An indicative list is given below:

- Course on Instructional Design
- Course on Blended Teaching and Learning
- Workshops focused on the use of LMS and its tools (activities and resources)
- Workshops on the advanced use of LMS (i.e data analytics, use of H5P), other equipment, hybrid classrooms and Virtual Computer Labs
- Training on the use of more advanced tools and pedagogies (i.e. simulations, serious games, augmented and virtual reality, adaptive assessment and e-assessment).
- Trainings on innovative and alternative assessment and feedback methods and tools (within and outside LMS) (adaptive assessment, e-assessment and personalized feedback)
- Workshops on the use of technological web-based tools to enhance the teaching and learning process
- Workshops tailored to the needs of each department
- Workshops on Course Design and Delivery based on the Blended and Distance Learning Pedagogical Framework.
- Workshops on library resources and capacities
- Training on how to use ZOOM (face to face Vs online synchronous Vs hybrid classrooms)
- Training on how to integrate synchronous and asynchronous activities in courses

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 Open and Distance Learning Center (ODLC) 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 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, ODLC 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 Distance Learning Committee in collaboration with the Open and Distance Learning Center will continue to regularly organize professional development trainings for the DL instructors (newcomers and experienced), as well as to pedagogically and technically support them.

- Βελτίωση της Παιδαγωγικής Μονάδας

Σύμφωνα με την ανακοίνωση του Φορέα της 12 Ιανουαρίου, 2017 η παιδαγωγική μονάδα θα πρέπει να ενισχύει παιδαγωγικά τη Μονάδα Εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευσης και θα επιμελείται των αναγκών σε υλικό μελέτης, διαδραστικές δραστηριότητες και διαμορφωτική αξιολόγηση, σύμφωνα με τα διεθνή πρότυπα.

The Distance Learning Committee (DLC) and the Open and Distance Learning Center (ODLC) closely collaborate in order to pedagogically and technologically support the faculty members. The DCL ensures that the faculty members go through the appropriate training in order to be able to design and deliver successful online learning environments, developing the appropriate interactive educational material.

Specifically, The DLC has the overall responsibility of DL programs operation and development at the University, the policy development/supervision & quality assurance. It coordinates and enables quality assurance mechanisms regarding instructors, procedures, courses etc. It collaborates with the with the Quality Assurance Committee of the University in order to implement the quality control process. It communicates and coordinates quality assurance mechanisms, decisions and the strategy of the distance learning programs to the

responsible bodies of the University. Additionally, nit is responsible to disseminate e-learning practices in all programs and support and guide the development of the DL programs infrastructure in closed cooperation with the LSU (Learning Support Unit). It oversees and coordinates in collaboration with the LSU and ODLC, DL instructors' and Teaching assistants (TAs) training & professional development. It also defines roles, tasks and responsibilities for DL instructors and TAs, provides ongoing support to course coordinators and instructors and monitors the development of the teaching materials curricula. Last but not least, it monitors and controls the application of the distance learning Distance Learning Pedagogical Framework and provides training for the improvement of program of studies quality where necessary. The DLC and the existing operational framework guarantee the appropriate mechanisms for the distance learning program development and support, adopting in this way the most up-to-date technologies and pedagogical theories.

The Open and Distance Learning Centre (ODLC) aims to promote and further develop the open and distance learning at the University and in society in general. Specifically, it aims to:

- Educate, train and support (researching and teaching) instructors and students who are involved in teaching and learning in open and distance learning environments, through the pedagogical utilization of up-to-date technological tools
- Promote research in the fields of open and distance education and learning, and providing advisory services
- Contribute to the promotion & continuous updating of open and distance learning methods at the University
- Organize educational programs and training activities for instructors and students with the aim of pedagogical utilization of up-to-date distance education and learning technological tools
- Support SEP, DEP and TA members of the University with the aim of training them in the pedagogical utilization of modern distance learning technological tools
- Develop quality educational interactive/digital material for use in distance learning programs of undergraduate and postgraduate level, conventional, mixed and distance learning
- Strengthen the training of SEP, DEP, TA members of Frederick University in developing, shaping and enriching the educational/digital material, the interactive activities of formative assessment, in line with international standards

The Open and Distance Learning Center is responsible in providing tools, instruments and physical space for conducting courses and workshops for designing and developing digital/interactive educational material. It develops and organizes workshops and training seminars for educational and academic conferences in open and distance learning topics, as

well supports and pedagogically enhances the DLC and DLU (Distance Learning Unit). Finally, it collects and analyzes information and data collected from the e-learning platform for the purpose of:

- Conducting research, teaching measures and experiments aiming to upgrade policies and learning in online environments
- Developing reports on educational and pedagogical practices in open and distance learning
- Identifying deviations and problematic situations and taking amending actions

• Εφαρμογή μηχανισμών για εμπλοκή φοιτητών στη διαδικασία διασφάλισης ποιότητας

Students are actively engaged in the quality assurance procedures of the University, via their representation and participation in (a) the Departmental Quality Assurance Committees, (b) the University's Quality Assurance Committee, (c) the Department Council. Furthermore, at the end of semester, students evaluate both the quality of the programme and the teaching staff via anonymous questionnaires. Student feedback received by the Committee meetings as well as the questionnaires, is taken into consideration to further enrich the teaching methodology, the update of the curriculum and the better realization of the intended learning outcomes and the overall quality of the programmes offered. Furthermore, the Department meets with a students' focus groups once a year, as part of the process employed for the annual Program Self-Evaluation report. It is also noted that course instructors collect feedback from students during the last lecture of the course. This feedback is also provided to the Program Coordinator and used in the annual Program Self-Evaluation report.

- Εφαρμογή μηχανισμών ούτως ώστε όλοι οι φοιτητές να τυγχάνουν ίσης μεταχείρισης και αντιμετώπισης όσων αφορά στην πρακτική άσκηση.- Η πρόταση σας pp. 9-10 from the **Comments on the EEC report** για τους ξένους φοιτητές δημιουργεί διάκριση

We would like to clarify that **no direct or indirect discrimination** between local and foreign students exists in the design programme. All necessary equipment required for the practicum, is provided to **all** students by the University.

Specifically, as noted in the response, we would like to clarify the following that is in line with our no-discrimination policy and we apologize for not making this clear:

- During visits to monuments devices to be used are mobile (such as thermal cameras) and will be available for use by all students at the site visit, whether this site visit occurs

in Cyprus or abroad. As said, these devices are mobile and shall be transported by the faculty members participating in the field.

- All demonstrations and presentations for the use of equipment by the students are done prior to the physical visits to the monuments and are conducted via teleconferencing and distance learning means so again there is no issue of discrimination. Of course, assistance and guidance for equipment use will also be available by the instructors during the visits. Similarly, demonstrations in use of laboratories will be conducted either by students being present or through simultaneous demonstration through hybrid laboratory environment available at the university with remote students participating synchronously, thus having no differentiation or discrimination between students.
- Any experiments conducted by the Materials Laboratory at the University will not be conducted by the students themselves - this is beyond the scope of program as this is not a Civil Engineering program. Instead, students, whether in Cyprus or abroad, will be taught how to request the specific laboratory tests and utilize the results of these tests once received by the specialized laboratory. It is stressed that these experiments are specialised and are not conducted by the candidates themselves, however, as graduates of the program, they should be able to use and interpret the results of such measurements. Therefore, there is no discrimination between students. Of course, any students that wish to observe such experiments could do so, with prior arrangement, either with physical presence or via teleconferencing.

Παρακαλούμε για τις δικές σας ενέργειες.

Καθ. Γιώργος Δημοσθένους  
Πρύτανης