

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 9/7/2023

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Nicosia
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **Programme of study**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

In Greek:

Νομική (1,5 έτη / 90 ECTS, Μάστερ LLM, Εξ Αποστάσεως)

In English:

Law (1,5 years / 90 ECTS, Master LLM, E -Learning)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek, English
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: Ευρωπαϊκό Δίκαιο Επιχειρήσεων / Ανθρώπινα
Δικαιώματα και Κοινωνική Δικαιοσύνη

In English: European Business Law / Human Rights and Social
Justice



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)

The LLM has been considered to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section. No deficiencies in the quality indicators have been identified.

The EEC has confirmed that the LLM programme has a clear purpose and design, as well as a set of learning objectives. The EEC acknowledged that the choice of concentrations responds to societal and professional needs of Cyprus, confirming specifically this point after discussion with alumni students.

It was furthermore confirmed in the EEC’s report that the University and the School of Law apply adequate quality assurance controls on many levels, including the LLM programme. The EEC acknowledged that there are structures and procedures, allowing for student monitoring, teaching engagement and regular interaction between students and staff. It was specifically stated and praised that there exist several research-related activities (e.g. externally funded projects) that allow for the participation of students that are interested.

The EEC further acknowledged that the Programme is taught by a healthy mix of full-time and part-time academic staff, that have a strong research background and keep up to date with developments in their respective field of research.

The EEC has further made suggestions for improvement. We address each one herein.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>The Committee encourages the School to consider making the Legal Methodology Course a compulsory course.</p>	<p>We fully understand the rationale of the suggestion. It is a critical learning objective of the Programme that all students demonstrate high-quality research skills and structured legal reasoning and writing competency. We need to note that most LLM students actually take the Methodology course, as it is compulsory for those who wish to fulfill a Master Thesis, but it is also offered as an elective for the rest. We note that the Research Methodology course was compulsory, but was changed to</p>	

	<p>elective following the revision of the Programme (which was approved by DIPAE in the previous round of evaluation), in order to enable the possibility of completing the requirements of the Programme in a single year in accordance with DIPAE's announcement. Due to the structure of the Programme this was only possible by merging the Dissertation with the Research Methodology for a unified 30 ECTS, and keeping the Research Methodology also as an elective for those students who did not wish to take the Thesis. The School of Law will examine in the future how it might be possible to implement such a change in the future, i.e. making compulsory the course, in a way that would not hinder offering the Programme in one year for those who complete the Thesis, as this is not possible at present. We have, however, set up a committee that will examine this issue in depth and revert to the School and suggest changes. For the time being we will implement alternative choices and actions, such as that key-points from the material of the specific course will be shared in the form of notes and guides in all Programme courses, and will be available to students.</p>	
<p>The Committee encourages the School to reconsider the balance between compulsory and elective</p>	<p>We carefully note this point. It is true that student enrollment numbers are relatively low (it</p>	

<p>courses, in order to provide a clearer focus on each concentration (taking into account, especially, the fact that the student numbers are low in practice).</p>	<p>remains a crucial discussion and planning issue within the School, how to increase enrollment). This is a fact that impacts negatively the ability to open numerous elective courses, at the same time, from both concentrations. As we had the chance to explain orally to the EEC, in practice we offer the elective courses in rotation. All students are appropriately and clearly informed about the above facts and factors, and every effort is made to ensure that all elective courses are being offered on a steady basis.</p> <p>The choice of concentrations, in any case, responds to actual societal and professional needs, as it is expressly acknowledged in the EEC Report, and we consider the variety of courses and subject matters covered therein as a quality feature and a strong aspect of the Programme concentrations. This will be the first time we shall offer the option of finalizing the Programme in a single year with thesis, which might be attractive for English speakers, so we will also take into account the reaction. We have set up a committee that will examine the recommendation and the wider issue in depth and provide suggestions to the School for implementation in the future.</p>	
<p>The EEC encourages the School to revisit the Learning Outcomes of the courses, further ensuring that</p>	<p>We fully agree with the specific encouragement. In fact, several actions have already been taken and are being taken in this</p>	

<p>they are actionable and measurable.</p>	<p>direction. The Office of the Dean has recently given, in the framework of a General Meeting, a concise presentation of the “Bloom’s taxonomy”, asking all faculty to strictly adhere to relevant specifications when designing courses. We are now gathering for review the study guides and course outlines of all School of Law Programmes, so as to assure that the Learning Outcomes comply with the taxonomy. We consider that this issue has fully been resolved.</p>	
<p>The EEC suggests that the School provides clear information in regards to course assessment, on the Programme materials addressed to prospective students.</p>	<p>The suggestion is very well appreciated. We will make sure that all publicly available Programme info material (see official sites, course outlines available on line etc.) contain specific information on the various types of assessment, i.e. that each course contains a final exam, written essay(s) and weekly activities. Specification of assessment percentages within this tripartite structure cannot however be a priori given, except to some general frames, since it is up to each instructor to specify more precisely within the wider framework.</p>	
<p>The Committee encourages the School to consider work placements of students across institutions in Cyprus (public, private, NGOs) as part of the existing courses, or perhaps</p>	<p>The recommendation is very well appreciated. In general, most courses include teaching and assessment methods that are practice-oriented. A certain difficulty, though, that is raised in regards to offering an organized</p>	

<p>introduce a new work-basement course, e.g. Law Clinic.</p>	<p>work-basement course is that the Programme follows DL mode of delivery and adheres students from many areas and countries. So this is not a recommendation we can apply as a compulsory part of the Programme due to its DL nature. We will strongly recommend, in any case, the instructors to introduce a practice-based approach in the weekly activities and in the essay topics they assign, for each course.</p>	
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2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

The LLM has been considered to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section. No deficiencies in the quality indicators have been identified.

The EEC has confirmed that the design and content of the Programme support the individual and social development of students; as well that it is sufficiently flexible, allowing for students to take a number of electives. At the same time, the EEC acknowledges that in practice course choice is limited due to low student numbers.

The EEC has further acknowledged that a. the teaching processes are modern and effective, b. the distribution of ECTS seems reasonable, c. the existing processes for collating feedback, appeals and complaints seem to work well, d. the Programme is compatible with DL delivery and the relevant methodology, e. students have several opportunities to participate in research, f. the University utilizes platforms and installations that support on line teaching, learning and administrative processes.

The EEC acknowledged moreover that academic integrity is upheld through Proctorio and Turnitin, while the Programme staff is fully aware of the challenges posed by the current advancement of AI technology and actively working on strategies to address the situation. The EEC finally noted that assessment methods seem fair and consistent, highlighting however that assessments are not anonymised.

The EEC has made suggestions for improving the LLM Programme. We address each one in the following table.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>The Committee strongly recommends that the university anonymizes student assessments.</p>	<p>The current practice of universities in Cyprus is that there is no anonymization of scripts and essays. Having said that, the recommendation of the Committee is seriously taken into account. It is appreciated that this is something that needs to be discussed on a Senate level, since it would not be practically possible to proceed to anonymization in only one programme of the University, without a uniform decision being taken. We cannot therefore take</p>	

	<p>any action in the present stage. We confirm that we will further discuss this issue at School and Senate level.</p>	
<p>The EEC suggests that the School considers further implementing gamification strategies to increase student motivation and engagement.</p>	<p>We fully endorse the suggestion. LLM courses already include game-based activities (such as problem-solving scenarios, assessment quizzes, use of art in legal education etc.), as component either of the webex meetings, or of the course weekly activities, the latter being fully laid out at the study guides and separately evaluated. We need to note separately that the Office of the Dean has recently presented, in the framework of a General Meeting, the approach and practice of a game-inspired teaching methodology, asking of the School's teaching staff to further incorporate it in all School Programmes course design and practice. Accordingly, as far as LLM is concerned, we shall proceed promptly in reassessing the content of all LLM courses, so as to assure that they integrate and make use of game-based methods and approaches (see simulations, multimedia activities, interactive scenarios), in addition to those already included.</p>	
<p>The Committee suggests that an approach to address the ChatGPT and similar technologies is considered at the University level for a unified approach.</p>	<p>We fully endorse the suggestion. As the EEC in fact ascertains in the Report, the Programme staff are fully aware of the challenge and are actively working on developing strategies to address and respond to</p>	

	<p>it. We actually had a recent Law School General Meeting, dedicated exclusively to this topic with a discussion about possible coping strategies. Furthermore, indeed, this is something being currently discussed at a University-wide level, within the competent authorities and bodies. We commit to promptly conveying the relevant discussion and the EEC suggestion to the Senate.</p>	
<p>The Committee recommends that the courses prioritizes asynchronous on line-interaction (due to the fact that students face various problems while attending teleconferences).</p>	<p>The recommendation is noted and very well received. We place absolute emphasis on interactive learning and concurrent teaching methods and approaches. As previously noted, we shall review all LLM courses aiming to further ensure that they promote on-line interaction in all teaching and assessment aspects. Speaking of asynchronous interaction, this can be especially realized in the framework of weekly activities, since other-type of assessment, i.e. final exam and written essays concern much more individual work-organization and tasks. We consider that there is already a focus on asynchronous interaction so the recommendation can be easily implemented.</p>	

3. Teaching staff

(ESG 1.5)

The LLM has been considered to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section. No deficiencies in the quality indicators have been identified.

The EEC acknowledged that the University has a strong support structure for teaching staff. It especially recognized that the Programme staff demonstrates a high level of teaching dedication and effort. The Committee has further noted and praised the following: a. high quality academic profile of the teaching staff, b. quite low staff-student ratio c. adequate support of staff from senior management and university structures.

The EEC has further pointed out areas of improvement and made certain suggestions. We address each one herein.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The Committee highlights the underrepresentation of women within teaching staff and suggests working out a gender-balance strategy plan.	In the LLM programme only three women participate as faculty, although overall, at the School of Law level, gender balance is considerably more equitable. We confirm that we will consider the possibility of prioritizing women participation in the teaching staff of the specific programme, taking into account of course the subject matter of the courses. In any case, the gender balance factor is something we definitely take into high consideration, as a School, while calling for new, part-time or permanent staff positions.	
The EEC believes that the current University policy of rewarding only Scopus-indexed publications is not fair, as many leading peer reviewed law journals are not in Scopus.	The point is very well noted and, of course, it will be promptly transmitted on our behalf to the competent units and bodies of the University. We adhere to the point, in general, that discipline-	

	<p>based considerations (related, but not limited, to law and legal science) should be relevant in regards to research reward policies. It still remains an issue that cannot but be discussed at a University-wide level.</p>	
<p>The Committee suggests taking into consideration the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN Agenda in the training programmes for the teaching staff in order to redesign the teaching material appropriately.</p>	<p>We fully appreciate the suggestion. We will promptly liaise with the Direction of Faculty Training and Development Unit of the University to convey the suggestion. Meanwhile, we will take on the task of distributing material related to the SDGs within the teaching staff, explaining the EEC suggestion, so that the staff can be informed at a basic level and properly act.</p>	

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

(ESG 1.4)

The LLM has been considered to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section. No deficiencies in the quality indicators have been identified.

The EEC has confirmed that the regulations regarding student admission are pre-defined and published online, while being flexible enough to accommodate different types of students. The access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.

The Committee confirmed moreover that the teaching staff actively promotes interaction, fostering a collaborative learning environment and encouraging student self-assessment, continuous improvement and feedback. The EEC acknowledged that students benefit from a good student-teaching staff ratio and that student feedback is very positive

The EEC has finally made a certain suggestion for improving the LLM Programme, which we address in the following table:

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The Committee suggests the introduction of a General Introduction to Law and Legal Methods course, addressed to students without a strict law studies background.	We fully endorse the suggestion and actually this has been an issue of internal programme planning discussion for quite some time within the School. We will implement the suggestion from now on by introducing a distinct course (aside the current courses and path requirements), offered as a preparatory course for students who don't have a strict legal background, named as "Law, Legal Reasoning and Legal Methods (Preparatory Course)".	
The EEC encourages the Institution to consider using more sophisticated forms (AI-based) of learning analytics mechanisms, in order to monitor and predict	The suggestion is noted and very well received. Since it refers not to LLM-specific actions, but to university-level planning and acting, we commit conveying it to	



student performance and dropout and, thus, provide timely corrective measures.	the competent authorities and bodies of the University.	
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5. Learning resources and student support

(ESG 1.6)

The LLM has been considered to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section, with the exception of one where it was partially compliant. No deficiencies in the quality indicators have been identified.

The EEC has confirmed that the Institution has sufficient equipment for the delivery of DL programmes, as well as a library with an accessible catalogue and access to other on-line resources. The Committee has reported that the University overall has the appropriate mechanisms for overseeing the development and implementation of student-related policies; and that the DL Unit (ePSU) provides pedagogical support to staff members in creating, implementing and evaluating on-line courses. The Report confirms that the courses have comprehensive syllabus and detailed weekly study guides, noting at the same time that assessments are not always clearly detailed.

The EEC has further made suggestions for improvement of the Programme. We address each one herein.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>The EEC suggests that there is a clear part in the study guides of the courses, covering detailed learning methodology, learning outcomes and recommended study time, as well as a clear indication of the relevant parts of the literature items and volumes.</p>	<p>The suggestion is noted and very well received. We are glad first of all that the Report confirms that the courses have comprehensive syllabus and detailed weekly study guides. The Committee notes furthermore at the same time that some areas could be much more detailed. Course outlines contain a specific section referring to learning methodology, but surely there could be added a relevant section on study guides as well. Furthermore, as long as the study guides already contain detailed learning outcomes per week, we commit to make clear to all course instructors that they should add recommended study time per week (indicative study load calculation e.g., 2hours per week for lecture reading, 2h for assignments</p>	

	<p>preparation, 2h for weekly activities etc.). The teaching staff will be explicitly asked furthermore to specify chapters or page numbers in the bibliography of each section.</p>	
<p>The Committee suggests that the Programme further incorporates innovative teaching practices that promote collaboration, interaction and active learning in DL context. The EEC suggests to this end that the ePSU should provide clear guidelines and procedures for the implementation and evaluation of such practices.</p>	<p>We fully endorse the suggestion, reaffirming that it stays a clear learning strategy and aim of the School. We have noted above relevant actions that are already taking place from our part, as regards reviewing Programme courses in this direction. We will forward the suggestion, as requested, to the DL Unit (ePSU) and will aim for a School oriented discussion in order to better implement this recommendation.</p>	
<p>The Committee recommends that the University offers short guidance to students as regards on-line engagement and etiquette.</p>	<p>We understand and welcome the rationale of the suggestion. It refers not to a programme-specific agenda, but to university-wide actions, and we will discuss with the DL unit in order to properly implement this further.</p>	



6. Additional for doctoral programmes

(ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY



7. Eligibility (Joint programme)

(ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY

B. Conclusions and final remarks

We wish to thank the EEC for the professionalism they showed during the execution of their duties. The detailed discussion of all issues pertinent to the degree under evaluation, led to a fruitful discussion between the members of the EEC and the official representatives of the University and faculty members of the programme. The discussion proved to be extremely helpful due to the expertise of the members of the EEC and their willingness to share their suggestions and recommendations for further improving the programme. The demanding set of questions allowed us to elaborate on specialized aspects and deep foundations of the Programme and expand upon the content of the application form.

We have assessed and reviewed carefully the EEC report. We are pleased to note that the report is extremely positive, and we thank the EEC for their remarks and conclusions that are very supportive of the Programme. We fully acknowledge that all programmes are always amenable to further improvement, and indeed we have been constantly working towards further improving our Programme since it was initially accredited.

Accordingly, the suggestions for further improvement offered by the EEC are taken very seriously into account. We consider the suggestions of the EEC as very helpful and we will try to incorporate them to the widest extent possible. We thank once more the Committee for all the suggestions/recommendations, and address each concluding remark herein.

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>Recommendation for providing clear information as to the type of course assessment used in the courses of the Programme, on the info documents/material addressed to prospective students</p>	<p>The suggestion is very well appreciated. We will make sure that all publicly available Programme info material (see official sites, course outlines available on line etc.) contain specific information on the various types of assessment, i.e. that each course contains a final exam, written essay(s) and weekly activities. Specification of assessment percentages within this tripartite structure cannot however be a priori given, except to some general frames, since it is up to each instructor to specify more precisely within the wider framework.</p>	

<p>Consideration of making Legal Research Methodology (MLAW-509 DL) a compulsory course</p>	<p>We fully understand the rationale of the suggestion. It is a critical learning objective of the Programme that all students demonstrate high-quality research skills and structured legal reasoning and writing competency. We need to note that most LLM students actually take the Methodology course, as it is compulsory for those who wish to fulfill a Master Thesis, but it is also offered as an elective for the rest. We note that the Research Methodology course was compulsory, but was changed to elective following the revision of the Programme (which was approved by DIPAE in the previous round of evaluation), in order to enable the possibility of completing the requirements of the Programme in a single year in accordance with DIPAE's announcement. Due to the structure of the Programme this was only possible by merging the Dissertation with the Research Methodology for a unified 30 ECTS, and keeping the Research Methodology also as an elective for those students who did not wish to take the Thesis. The School of Law will examine in the future how it might be possible to implement such a change in the future, i.e. making compulsory the course, in a way that would not hinder offering the Programme in one year for those who complete the Thesis, as</p>	
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	<p>this is not possible at present. We have, however, set up a committee that will examine this issue in depth and revert to the School and suggest changes.</p> <p>For the time being we will implement alternative choices and actions, such as that key-points from the material of the specific course will be shared in the form of notes and guides in all Programme courses, and will be available to students.</p>	
<p>Suggestion for reconsidering the balance between compulsory and elective courses</p>	<p>We carefully note this point. It is true that student enrollment numbers are relatively low (it remains a crucial discussion and planning issue within the School, how to increase enrollment). This is a fact that impacts negatively the ability to open numerous elective courses, at the same time, from both concentrations. As we had the chance to explain orally to the EEC, in practice we offer the elective courses in rotation. All students are appropriately and clearly informed about the above facts and factors, and every effort is made to ensure that all elective courses are being offered on a steady basis.</p> <p>The choice of concentrations, in any case, responds to actual societal and professional needs, as it is expressly acknowledged in the EEC Report, and we consider the variety of courses and subject matters covered therein as a</p>	

	<p>quality feature and a strong aspect of the Programme concentrations. This will be the first time we shall offer the option of finalizing the Programme in a single year with thesis, which might be attractive for English speakers, so we will also take into account the reaction. We have set up a committee that will examine the recommendation and the wider issue in depth and provide suggestions to the School for implementation in the future.</p>	
<p>Strong recommendation that the university anonymizes student assessments</p>	<p>The current practice of universities in Cyprus is that there is no anonymization of scripts and essays. Having said that, the recommendation of the Committee is seriously taken into account. It is appreciated that this is something that needs to be discussed on a Senate level, since it would not be practically possible to proceed to anonymization in only one programme of the University, without a uniform decision being taken. We cannot therefore take any action in the present stage. We confirm that we will further discuss this issue at School and Senate level.</p>	
<p>A clear plan to redress the gender imbalance within staff members</p>	<p>In the LLM programme only three women participate as faculty, although overall, at the School of Law level, gender balance is considerably more equitable. We confirm that we will consider the possibility of prioritizing women participation in the teaching staff of the specific programme, taking</p>	

	<p>into account of course the subject matter of the courses. In any case, the gender balance factor is something we definitely take into high consideration, as a School, while calling for new, part-time or permanent staff positions.</p>	
<p>Reconsidering the current University policy of rewarding publication of research in Scopus-ranked journals only</p>	<p>The point is very well noted and, of course, it will be promptly transmitted on our behalf to the competent units and bodies of the University. We adhere to the point, in general, that discipline-based considerations (related, but not limited, to law and legal science) should be relevant in regards to research reward policies. It still remains an issue that cannot but be discussed at a University-wide level.</p>	
<p>Offering students from non-law background a General Introduction to Law and Legal Method course</p>	<p>We fully endorse the suggestion and actually this has been an issue of internal programme planning discussion for quite some time within the School. We will implement the suggestion from now on by introducing a distinct course (aside the current courses and path requirements), offered as a preparatory course for students who don't have a strict legal background, named as "Law, Legal Reasoning and Legal Methods (Preparatory Course)".</p>	
<p>Recommendation for providing more information through the course to effectively guide online students (see detailed learning and assessment methodology, and</p>	<p>The suggestion is noted and very well received. We are glad first of all that the Report confirms that the courses have comprehensive syllabus and detailed weekly study</p>	

<p>recommended study time, as well as a clear indication of the relevant parts of the literature items and volumes)</p>	<p>guides. The Committee notes furthermore at the same time that some areas could be much more detailed. Course outlines contain a specific section referring to learning methodology, but surely there could be added a relevant section on study guides as well. Furthermore, as long as the study guides already contain detailed learning outcomes per week, we commit to make clear to all course instructors that they should add recommended study time per week (indicative study load calculation e.g., 2hours per week for lecture reading, 2h for assignments preparation, 2h for weekly activities etc.). The teaching staff will be explicitly asked furthermore to specify chapters or page numbers in the bibliography of each section.</p>	
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We would like to thank the committee once more, both for the positive and fair evaluation, as well as the constructive comments and suggestions and the fruitful discussion that we had with its members during the visit. We also thank the committee for the time and thoroughness it dedicated to the evaluation of the LLM and for helping us improve the Programme through the suggestions made. All recommendations of the committee refer to further improvement, and some need discussion and potential decision at Senate level as they are not applicable only to this specific Programme. The recommendations and evaluation of the committee are seriously taken into account for the further improvement of the Programme. We consider this endorsement under the conditions of external peer review as a resounding vote of confidence in the LLM and its potential for academic success.

We finally acknowledge the clear positive evaluation and recommendation for accreditation of the LLM.



C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Achilles C. Emilianides	Professor, Dean	
Christina Ioannou	Associate Professor, Associate Dean	
Christos Papastylianos	Associate Professor, Head of the Department	
Stergios Mitas	Assistant Professor, LLM Programme Coordinator	

Date: 9/7/2023

