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

Date: 19.7.2023

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution: University of Nicosia**

- **Town: Nicosia**

- **Programme of study Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

  In Greek:

  Δημόσια Διοίκηση (3 Εξάμηνα, 90 ECTS, MA, Εξ αποστάσεως)

  In English:

  Public Administration (3 Semesters, 90 ECTS, MA, DL)

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

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

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

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 MA was considered to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section, with the exception of information management where it was deemed to be partially compliant. No deficiencies in the quality indicators have been identified.

The EEC has confirmed that the MA programme is consistent with the mission and vision of the School and University, especially in relation to social responsibility and impact. It was furthermore confirmed in the EEC's report that the University and the School of Law have excellent experience of external accreditation processes, that the administrative staff are very engaged with academic staff and with students, and that there seems to be a strong collegial ethos. There was a good quality working relationships within the Department, alumni satisfaction, and a very strong awareness of the strategic environment of the programme, informed by a rigorous PEST and SWOT analysis at School level.

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
We see some scope for the improvement of students' progress across the curriculum, i.e. the accumulation of skills from one course to the next	We welcome the recommendation of the EEC, and this will be seriously taken into account in the implementation of the curriculum. We appreciate that this is a suggestion related to the way in which skills are accumulated from one course to the next, and therefore do not require any changes in the curriculum per se, but rather the proper implementation of the skills framework during the life of the programme. We will discuss this with all instructors so as to ensure proper implementation.	Choose level of compliance:
We would encourage the comprehensive use of student feedback in considering improvements in the programme design and content for the future.	The recommendation of the EEC is very well received. We note that the departmental quality assurance committee includes a student representative. In the next internal process for the evaluation of the program (IPEP) we will focus on	Choose level of compliance:

	making the students' representative directly engaged in the process. We will further seek the views of students and graduates on the design and content of the programme and their own suggestions.	
As the programme matures, there is an opportunity to take stock of what the distinctiveness of the programme might look like in the medium and longer term	We welcome this suggestion. This comment applies for future reference. Indeed, this is an important aspect of continuous development of the programme and we will discuss it within the Department as the programme matures so as to identify distinctive characteristics of the programme in the medium and longer term	Choose level of compliance:

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

The MA 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 acknowledged that the programme is making an effort to meet the needs of modern student-centred learning. There is ongoing assessment of the programme, course content and examination formats. It was further noted that the programme encourages scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research and innovation in teaching methods and use of new technologies. Course workloads are aligned with international standards. Interviewed current and former students of the programme highlighted the support staff provided them on - or off- student hours for individual courses, as well as ad hoc for selection of specialisation, careers, and external academic activities such as student competitions. Many programme graduates find employment in their field of study, including without further postgraduate studies, so the programme offers strong employment opportunities

The EEC has made suggestions for improving the MA 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
Consider strengthening the e-learning programme use of practitioners with relevant expertise, offering ongoing learning events with alumni together with current students for improved programme relevance and impact.	The recommendation is well-received. We have used distinguished practitioners as guest lecturers. Furthermore, the Department and the School of Law hold continuously seminars and learning events where both alumni and current students are invited to participate. The Department of Politics and Governance will discuss more ways of further improving the students' ability to communicate and share experiences across their projects and departmental affiliation.	Choose level of compliance:
Assessment practices could take greater advantage of the potential of asynchronous tools and more advanced assessment strategies. This can be done, first, by reinforcing the continuous assessment approach as a	We agree with the recommendation. We note that the possibility to assign a higher scope for the weekly activities is somewhat limited by the current quality indicators which necessitate that the final exam should be	

way for formative assessment, giving a higher score for the weekly activities; and second, by initiating some co-assessment practices through the use of electronic rubrics	60% of the overall mark in DL courses. The substance of this recommendation has already been discussed at department level, and we shall ensure that the recommendation is discussed with the instructors at programme level so as to properly implement it.	

3. Teaching staff
(ESG 1.5)

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

The EEC observed that the programme represents an interesting combination of two adjunct research fields intertwined in the complex practice of local, national, and international governance. The programme further allows researchers from two fields and departments to blend and offer an interesting program to students. It was noted that the teaching staff are very professional and highly motivated, with a great deal of teaching experience. Moreover, they have a strong public profile and are regularly engaged in outward-facing activities. • The faculty training and development strategy is very well structured and organized. The academic staff has used the development of the new program as an opportunity to collaborate across the departments.

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 present learning objectives for the overall program under evaluation mention learning objectives in areas such as understanding issues from a "rich theoretical background,"; "communication skills,"; "managerial skills," and being able to promote "innovation and leadership" in the public sector. These areas of research are presently not strongly represented in the qualifications of the academic staff. This needs to be considered.	The recommendation is seriously taken into account. We appreciate that the learning objectives need to always be represented in the qualifications of the academic staff. We will discuss this recommendation with the faculty and suggest that they engage in an improvement of their qualifications in these categories. This will also be taken into account with regards to future hirings.	Choose level of compliance:
Could and should the two departments further establish collaborative teaching in some courses? This could facilitate the program's interdisciplinary nature and expose students and scholars to various perspectives, e.g., by using shared cases.	We note this recommendation. Indeed, collaborative teaching in some courses could be beneficial. We note that this can be easily achieved, since we already have faculty from both departments teaching in the programme and therefore, we will review on how to properly implemented this recommendation immediately.	

Could the positive experiences from developing the new program be used for increasing collaborative research, e.g., on shared international publications between two or more researchers? Eventually, teaming up with relevant international collaborators?	The suggestion is a helpful one, and indeed we have already been considering on how to increase collaborative shared research on the basis of the experiences from developing the new programme. This has already been a topic of discussion within the Department, and we shall discuss with faculty how to implement it. International collaboration is definitely of particular importance, and this is the objective of faculty.	
Improvements in research and internationalization of the research will require further opportunities to meet colleagues in relevant international forums and have an exposure of researchers' own research. This will require further allocation of funding for going to conferences, workshops and other relevant events	The EEC's recommendation, is positively received. Whereas, the University already has programmes in place for the allocation of funding and sponsoring of specific publications, we agree that further incentives would be useful. This is of course something that needs to be discussed at Senate/Council level, and the Department will indicate this recommendation to the appropriate organs.	
Research should show more evidence in the teaching materials. Development of digital materials from the academic staff would be a good chance for improving the synergy between research and teaching.	We agree with the EEC's recommendation. We will discuss with faculty how they can develop further digital materials and further improve synergies between research and teaching.	
Although the training provided to the academic staff seems to be impressive, it is important to consider how they reach higher levels of "digital teaching competence", as established in the current European framework (DigComEdu)	We thank the EEC for the suggestion. Indeed, there is always room for improvement, and we should definitely strive for reaching even higher levels of digital teaching competence. We shall further discuss this both internally and with the appropriate university organs, and consider how we can implement the	

	recommendation most appropriately.	

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
(ESG 1.4)

The Programme 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 there is a provision of a very good level of assistance in all issues related to access and operation of the e-Learning platform, availability of assistance for students with special needs, and cooperation between the different units of the University, in order to accommodate student requests and issues. It has further noted that there is homogeneity of the student body, which allows for easier comprehension of examples provided and enables the academic staff to provide cases and examples tailored to the previous, similar user experiences.

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Provide additional assistance in developing further the level of English proficiency, in order to overcome the language barrier and access additional material in English.	We thank the EEC for the recommendation. The University already provides the opportunity for assistance in developing further the level of English proficiency in order to overcome linguistic barriers, and there is a dedicated English language unit in this regard. We will discuss with colleagues how to further implement this for the benefit of the students.	Choose level of compliance:
Provide material in interactive format and in new technologies, which will allow the students to experience a rich content. Although this is logically appropriate for e-learning programmes, it is also very useful for conventional programs, in order to enhance student engagement	The comment is well-received. We agree with the recommendation. We will discuss with faculty how they can develop further material in interactive format and in new technologies which will allow students to enhance their experience.	

5. Learning resources and student support
(ESG 1.6)

The Programme 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 both physical and human resources are in place and adequate, that support to the pedagogical strategy of the study programme is professionally provided by different units, and that student support is provided at the start and during the studies, and is adequate, as well the consideration and care to respect to the students with disabilities or special needs. It has further noted that the library offers both hard and electronic copies of academic texts and research literature. The student workload seems to be balanced. Students mentioned that they manage to address all the requirements of the course. Furthermore, students are adequately informed about the online services available to them.

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
Although the available teaching resources could be sufficient at this stage, some room for improvement is clear, considering the e-learning study programme in the mid-term. In that sense, the kind of materials used would have to be updated, especially by using tools that could permit introducing more interaction and innovations in the teaching strategies	The recommendation is well received, and appreciated. There is always room for improvement as the programme progresses, and we definitely are cautious of the need to use more advanced and interactive digital materials. We will definitely discuss this issue further with the faculty in order to improve further in this regard.	Choose level of compliance:
Teaching (or learning) materials should specially be diversified by using by using more digital-based materials and, probably, more audio-visual ones (like podcasts, short videos with learning content -not necessarily the lecturer speaking-, etc.) providing more interaction when students use them. Although this can be a matter of investment, it is important to consider this as a priority, as	The comment is well-received. We agree with the recommendation. We will discuss with faculty how they can develop further material in interactive format and in new technologies which will allow students to enhance their experience. We have extensively discussed with instructors the need to apply learning content in the form of podcasts, videos etc, and we will definitely consider how we	

there is a risk of obsolescence of the programme, maybe not because of the content, but the way it is delivered in comparison to other institutions. To respect the fact that it is difficult to find digital materials in Greek, there are several options: a) to subtitle materials in other languages; b) to reach an agreement with some Greek digital publisher for creating these materials; c) to allocate extra time to the academic staff to elaborate new materials under the coordination of the PSU, e-PSU, TELC, and the Mediazone centre.	can best implement this. We note that the Department has already produced a number of videos/podcasts through its events, which can be further used during the e-learning process, and we shall review how to best implement this both immediately and in medium term.	
This EEC thanks academic staff and the officers for the willingness to provide the data on academic students' performance and satisfaction during our visit. As this data exists, this committee thinks it could be better organized, as the following step to properly use data analytics to improve the quality of the provision. Comparative tables to look at the increase or decrease of satisfaction and academic results would be very useful.	We thank the EEC for the comment. Indeed, the data requested were provided to the EEC, and we will discuss with the department of Academic Affairs how the data can be better organized and used. This cannot be done by the Department, as it requires support by the relevant units, but we will definitely liaise with them so as to implement this recommendation as soon as possible.	

6. Additional for doctoral programmes
(ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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7. Eligibility (Joint programme)
(ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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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 note that in their concluding remarks, the EEC has noted that there is much to appreciate about this MA programme. It was observed that the learning orientation to the evaluation process promoted a positive attitude toward the assessment visit. It was an engaging experience to learn more about the Programme and the broader context.

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
To support the research ambitions and internationalization strategy, it is essential for research time for staff to be adequately resourced within workload allocation processes. Relatedly, the capacity for staff to extend their participation in international research networks (e.g., participation in appropriate conferences) needs to be supported.	We agree with the recommendation. Whereas, the University already has programmes in place for the allocation of funding and sponsoring of specific publications, we agree that further incentives would be useful. This is of course something that needs to be discussed at Senate/Council level, and the Department will indicate this recommendation to the appropriate organs.	Choose level of compliance:

The School has a large number of alumni in various public sector roles. However, alumni engagement is under-developed. This should be addressed as there is a big opportunity to utilise alumni contacts and experience for the benefit of teaching and research. Given the internationalization of the students, fostering a virtual community of Alumni would be strongly suggested	We agree with the recommendation, and we have ourselves noted that alumni engagement needs to improve. We have discussed internally within the Department a strategy plan for better utilizing our alumni contacts and experience for the benefit of teaching and research, and we shall seek to promote this pursuant also to the comments of the EEC.	
The distinctiveness of the Programme (beyond the parameters of external ranking systems) could be articulated in ways which reflect the strengths and developing profile of staff.	We agree with the comment. Indeed, there is room for improvement to this direction, and we shall discuss with faculty how to better reflect their strengths and developing profile in a way that enhances the distinctiveness of the programme as it further develops.	

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 MA 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 MA and its potential for academic success.

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

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Achilles C. Emilianides	Professor, Dean	
Christina Ioannou	Associate Professor, Associate Dean	
Andreas Theophanous	Professor, Head of the Department	
Giorgos Kentas	Associate Professor, MA Co-ordinator	

Date: 19/7/2023