

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 25/04/2024

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Nicosia/University of Patras
- **Town:** Nicosia/Patras
- **Programme of study
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)
In Greek:**
Διδασκαλία της Ελληνικής ως Δεύτερης/Ξένης Γλώσσας (1,5 έτος, 90 ECTS, Μάστερ, Εξ Αποστάσεως, Διαπανεπιστημιακό πρόγραμμα σπουδών με το Πανεπιστήμιο Πατρών)
In English:
Teaching Greek to Speakers of Other Languages (1,5 years, 90 ECTS, Master of Arts, E-Learning, Joint program with the University of Patras)
- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):**
In Greek: Concentrations
In English: Concentrations



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.*

Introduction

We refer to the report of the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for the evaluation–accreditation of the MA in Teaching Greek as Other Foreign Language (TGSOL) program of study, which was prepared following the onsite visit of the members of the EEC to the University of Nicosia on 27 March 2024.

We would like to thank the EEC for their professional and thorough work during the evaluation and to express our appreciation for the collegial and constructive approach with which they conducted the evaluation. The MA program was found to meet all criteria in all areas. The EEC did not identify any shortcomings in the quality indicators.

We have carefully considered their report and set out below our response to each of the points raised by the EEC. Under each assessment area, you will find our comments on the findings and strengths outlined in the report. In response to the areas for improvement and recommendations made by the EEC, our response and actions taken are set out in column 2 of the table in each section.

1. Study programme and study programme’s design and development

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

Introduction

We are pleased to see a positive report that finds our program “well-designed and coherent, with clear aims and objectives which reflect the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe” (pp. 7-8). We are happy that the EEC notes that the “provision of theoretical and descriptive linguistics modules as part of the programme on TGSOL provides the necessary background for a more informed approach to understanding issues in language teaching” (p. 8).

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
a stronger component on Greek language assessment	We appreciate the committee’s suggestion, which was discussed during their visit. We have integrated the Greek language assessment component into TGSOL-621D which focuses on teaching practices related to TGSOL (Study Guide, weeks 8 and 9, pp. 185-187). Following this change, students will be able to know the types, forms, and tools of assessment, recognize the types of language tests in terms of content-target and format, familiarize themselves with the criteria for constructing language tests, construct a language test in the framework of the language assessment of Greek as a second/foreign language and apply these tools in language assessment in their teaching. In addition, we have included a component about alternative assessment through which students will learn how to apply alternative language assessment methods in the context of teaching Greek as a second/foreign language among others. Please see the revised Study Guide for TGSOL-621D in Appendix 3.	Choose level of compliance:
a clearly defined component in each of the theory modules relating theory and practice of TGSOL	In accordance with the discussions with the EEC and their recommendations on this matter, we have taken the following steps: In the three theoretical modules, an introductory component was added to the main presentations of each week explaining how the content of the module is linked to the applied linguistic/teaching methodology aspect of the course. This is reflected in the revised Aims and Expected Outcomes in the attached study guides for courses TGSOL-610D (pp. 1-43), TGSOL-611D (pp. 44-84) and TGSOL-620D (pp. 114-163) in Appendix 3. For example, the aim of week 2 in TGSOL-610D includes the following statement: “[...] The module also aims to show how the theoretical framework relates to the teaching of Greek consonants and their pronunciation to students of Greek as an L2/FL” (p. 11). In the expected outcomes,	Choose level of compliance:

	the following statement was added: “[...] [students will be able to:] understand how theoretical knowledge will help them in teaching consonants to students of Greek as an L2/FL” (p. 12).	
a focus on skill development in TGSOL, namely Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing	The teaching of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills together with the appropriate strategies used to teach these skills were included in the course TGSOL-622D: Good teaching practices in teaching Greek as a second/foreign language (Study Guide, weeks 4-5, pp. 211-216). Also, TGSOL-635D: Teaching Greek as a second/foreign language through the internet focuses on the development of activities targeting the understanding and production of oral and written speech (Study Guide, week 9, pp. 429-431). Please refer to the revised study guides attached for more information in Appendix 3.	Choose level of compliance:
An obligatory research thesis or dissertation seems to be the norm in many other European institutions, even if it is not an absolute requirement; this may be especially important for students wishing to pursue further studies at the PhD level. As the programme stands, it is not clear how the workload for a thesis could be replaced by the workload two elective modules.	<p>As we said in the relevant discussion during the visit, the EEC’s recommendation is noted and we fully appreciate the academic value of the thesis element. The current university policy across Cyprus (set by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance in Higher Education) is that the thesis is not compulsory in Master’s level programs, and our MA follows this policy in order to offer flexibility that responds to the needs of the market and the pedagogical needs of our students for broader professional development. Thus, our program is in line with our national educational system. As we have found, a significant number of our distance learning students are mature, practicing and experienced professionals. The electives option provides a unique opportunity to students to get knowledge in specific areas that will be useful or required for their work. In addition, as explained by the program co-director from the University of Patras during the discussion at the evaluation, the existence of a thesis is no longer mandatory even in Greece.</p> <p>However, we recognize the value of the thesis and encourage students wishing to pursue a doctorate to choose this option. For this reason, and in line with the recommendations of the EEC members, we added a paragraph to the thesis handbook outlining the benefits of doing a thesis (see section 2, pp. 3-4, of MA thesis guide – Appendix 2).</p> <p>A student needs about 500 hours to write a 15.000-word MA thesis worth 20 ECTS. Considering that 10 ETCS are equivalent to 250 hours of work (https://www.dipae.ac.cy/index.php/el/enimerosi/anakoinoseis/95-2016-10-05-ects), and considering that our MA courses are each worth 10 ECTS, the workload of an MA thesis is equivalent to the workload of two elective courses.</p>	Choose level of compliance:

<p>Coherence between modules could be improved: the content of theory modules could include a component clearly outlined in the week-by-week description of the topics covered, which would establish the link between the content of the module and the applied linguistic/teaching methodology aspect of the course</p>	<p>In accordance with the discussions with the EEC and their recommendations on this matter, we have taken the following steps: In the three theoretical modules, an introductory component was added to the main presentations of each week explaining how the content of the module is linked to the applied linguistic/teaching methodology aspect of the course. This is reflected in the revised Aims and Expected Outcomes in the attached study guides for courses TGSOL-610D (pp. 1-43), TGSOL-611D (pp. 44-84) and TGSOL-620D (pp. 114-163) in Appendix 3. For example, the aim of week 2 in TGSOL-610D includes the following statement: “[...] The module also aims to show how the theoretical framework relates to the teaching of Greek consonants and their pronunciation to students of Greek as an L2/FL” (p. 11). In the expected outcomes, the following statement was added: “[...] [students will be able to:] understand how theoretical knowledge will help them in teaching consonants to students of Greek as an L2/FL” (p. 12).</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>As it is a Joint Master’s Programme, it is essential that there is close cooperation between the two partner Universities in the development, evaluation and improvement of the modules offered. We also recommend that extensive performance evaluation is in place that provides information on the quality of the programme.</p>	<p>As we explained to the EEC members during the meeting, the CYQAA regulations do not allow us to make any changes to the content of the program after accreditation until five years have elapsed. However, there are specific guidelines that both parts have to follow. For example, in order to ensure continuous monitoring and evaluation of the program, there will be two meetings per semester between those involved in the delivery of the program. These meetings will require the presence of the Program Coordinators and teaching staff from both universities. Discussions will be held on the development, evaluation and improvement of the program, as well as on issues related to the running of the program. Summaries of the meetings will be circulated to the relevant stakeholders shortly afterwards. In terms of performance evaluation, as mentioned during the meeting, students are required to complete feedback surveys at the end of each semester. These surveys collect feedback on various aspects of the program, including quality of teaching, relevance of coursework, support services (library, administration etc.) and overall satisfaction. Finally, as we have said, the IPEP (a two-year program evaluation process) will be initiated 18 months after accreditation (see Appendix 8 – Policies for Programs of Study, p. 7).</p>	

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment

(ESG 1.3)

Introduction

As the EEC noted in its findings: "The process of teaching and learning is flexible and student-centred; The joint programme is compatible for distance learning (DL) delivery [...]; The supporting learning management system (LMS), a Moodle 4 installation, effectively supports online teaching, learning and administrative tasks [...]". (p. 12). They also stated that "the DL model meets the specific needs of both full- and part-time online students with professional and family duties, requiring efficient and timely learning" (p. 12) and concluded that "the EEC appreciates the encouraged collaboration among students fostered by project-based activities and online team discussions. Detailed study guides allowing students to plan weekly tasks are also highlighted as best practices" (p. 13).

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>The EEC would like more information on how grading and assessment are carried out for the optional thesis compared to the different modules (one or two assessors; how is final grade agreed etc).</p>	<p>There are two evaluators for each thesis who need to write an evaluation (minimum of 300 words). The first evaluator is the student’s supervisor and the second is another colleague who works on the program and who is selected by the program coordinator depending on the relevance of their research interests to the thesis’s topic. Apart from the written evaluations, we assess the MA theses using rubrics. We have two different rubrics (one for a literature review thesis and one for a thesis including primary research). For example, the rubrics give a mark on a particular aspect of the thesis (e.g., originality, literature review, methodology, language, structure, etc.), which is assessed out of 100. The average mark of the two evaluators is the final mark for the thesis. For more information, please see the MA Handbook in Appendix 1 (see section A 2.7., pp. 10-12). If a student does not choose the thesis, the different modules provide the opportunity to conduct research, which typically requires assignments between 3000-5000 words; for example, see TGSOL-630D (Appendix 3, Study Guide, p. 236). Also, some weekly interactive activities require students to conduct small scale research on a particular topic based on the literature; for example,</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	<p>see TGSOL-631D, (Appendix 3, Study Guide, p. 293), and TGSOL-633D (Appendix 3, Study Guide, p. 359).</p>	
<p>Relations with alumni can be more streamlined and a track record of future steps of graduates can be established.</p>	<p>We would like to thank the EEC members for their suggestion. The faculty members maintain the relationships among the graduates by inviting them to conferences and workshops organized regularly (e.g., they do have the opportunity to participate in the Advances in Second/Foreign Language Acquisition conference and specifically in the thematic session of TGSOL, see www.asefola.weebly.com). We also approach good graduates on an individual basis and learn about their careers and further academic development. We consistently use the success stories of our graduates to further promote our programs. In the future, we also plan to engage our alumni in more events such as reunions, networking mixers, or professional development workshops, to foster relationships and facilitate networking opportunities among alumni.</p> <p>In addition, the DL Unit has established a centralized alumni database to systematically track the postgraduation trajectories of alumni. They collect data on their career paths, further education pursuits, professional accomplishments, and other relevant information. This database serves as a valuable resource for assessing the outcomes of the program and identifying areas for improvement.</p> <p>Approximately 1 year to 18 months after graduation, as dictated by the instructions of the ranking institutions (QS World University Rankings and the QS Europe Rankings), an alumni survey is conducted: this pertains to the complete set of graduates who have graduated from all programs of the University (undergraduate as well as postgraduate).</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	<p>The alumni survey, labelled by the year of graduation, is carried out both as a call survey as well as an online survey. A fixed set of questions is required, to which graduates are requested to respond and update/share their details, corresponding updates on UNIC database, in line with what follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal details • Employment status • Professional information • Employer • Corporate title and rank • Details on employer • Salary range • Career success story <p>After completion of the survey, the data is analyzed to derive corresponding statistics and information on the career paths of graduates as well as on the progress of professional success after graduation.</p> <p>For a sample employability report, please see the report for our old program in TGSOL “Employability 2017-2020 MA TGSOL” report in Appendix 4, which includes the latest available data on graduates and the labor market provided by the university’s Careers Office.</p> <p>Periodically and on an ad-hoc basis, successful graduates are contacted in order to collect their success stories. These stories are published in the annual UNIC guides, on the website and landing pages of the corresponding programs of studies.</p> <p>The success stories for the Department of Languages and Literature are available here:</p> <p>https://www.unic.ac.cy/school-of-humanities-and-social-sciences/department-of-languages-and-literature/</p>	
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<p>Documentation and meeting information did not clarify the use of gamification strategies to enhance student motivation and engagement in the e-assessment process. The EEC also suggests adopting advanced feedback forms, such as intelligent tutoring systems and conversational pedagogical agents, for immediate and automatic feedback, facilitating student progress and self evaluation.</p>	<p>We appreciate the committee’s suggestion, which was discussed during their visit. We recognize the importance of integrating gamification strategies in our courses to enhance student motivation. For example, TGSOL-630D: The utilization of literature in the teaching of Greek as a second/foreign language (Study Guide, week 10, p. 261) suggests gamification activities so that students can understand the connection between literature and love for reading. Also, TGSOL-635D: Teaching Greek as a second/foreign language through the internet is directed towards this purpose. More specifically, after the end of week 9 (Study Guide, week 9, p. 430), students will be able to understand the usefulness of using authentic multimedia and multimodal materials as a means of engaging their students, aiming to teach Greek in a playful manner and empowering the students. Furthermore, other courses such as TGSOL-621D: Teaching methodology, classroom management and assessment include quizzes which are part of the students’ formative assessment and contribute critically to self-reflection in a playful manner (Study Guide, week 7, p. 184). Please see the study guides in Appendix 3.</p> <p>Regarding feedback, the university uses Learning Analytics to generate reports on student engagement on the platforms, including response levels to specific tasks. Data from analytics help lecturers adjust gamification strategies in order to ensure maximum student participation. To this end, the university has also authorized access for the program coordinator to TGSOL PowerBI for monitoring/follow-up/QA purposes. Moreover, faculty teaching in the program (including part-time lecturers) are offered training on a regular basis in Learning Design of Distance Learning courses through the university’s Technology Enhanced Learning Centre, which is headed by Dr Chris</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
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	<p>Alexander, a member of faculty in our Department. Information for all training sessions is publicly available here: https://telblog.unic.ac.cy/training/</p>	
<p>The EEC points out potential issues with online synchronous teleconferences and teamworks if the programme expands internationally, given the challenges of coordinating across diverse time zones. The universities' support for this collaboration type and the recommendation for adapting the DL model to increase asynchronous online interaction and collaboration were unclear.</p>	<p>Based on the information from our previous program in TGSOL, most of our students do not have a problem with the time zones as they are mostly based in Greece, Cyprus and other European countries. However, to accommodate the few cases of students living in other continents, we set convenient hours for the teleconferences. For example, sessions between 15:00-18:00 (Cyprus time) are convenient for both students living in Asia and students living in the Americas. In addition, except the teleconferences, all the other activities are asynchronous, providing the opportunity to the students to work with their own pace and complete the activities at their convenience.</p> <p>The DL model we use in our courses enhances asynchronous online interaction as it promotes independent learning and self-paced progress, integrates collaborative tools and platforms that enable virtual teamwork and project-based learning, and incorporates strategies for fostering community and peer interaction in an online environment. For example, independent learning and self-paced progress include activities such as discussion forums and quizzes offering instant grading once completed. Project-based learning includes collaborative assignments, online collaborative documents (e.g., wikis), etc. Finally, peer interaction incorporates chat rooms and live discussions during teleconferences among others.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>Based on the study guide samples, the EEC recommends that the Institution could offer more detailed guidance for online students (all students in the proposed joint programme),</p>	<p>We thank the EEC for this recommendation and we would like to point out that we have already updated the study guides to include a detailed plan of learning and assessment methodology. Specifically, we have added a table after the contents of each study guide, which includes the sections “Teaching</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

<p>including a detailed learning and assessment methodology. Moreover, the EEC recommends providing clear indications of the relevant parts of the entire book volumes in focus (e.g. specifying page numbers), making the task more feasible for part-time students with limited time. These recommendations aim to improve the study guides for better student guidance.</p>	<p>Methods” and “Assessment”, which explain in detail how teaching takes place (e.g., teaching and learning methods, student duties, etc.) and how the students are assessed (e.g., type of assessments, the deadlines, instructions, etc.) respectively. For example, for TGSOL-610D, see pp. 4-6 in Appendix 3.</p> <p>Finally, where possible, we have added specific pages for book/volumes, (e.g., see TGSOL-632D, week 12, p. 342; TGSOL-634D, week 8, p. 388 etc.). Please refer to the Study Guides in Appendix 3 for additional information.</p>	
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3. Teaching staff

(ESG 1.5)

Introduction

In terms of the faculty, we thank the EEC for identifying and pointing out that “it is clear that all of them are qualified enough for their positions. The teaching staff status is appropriate to offer a quality programme of teaching Greek as a second/foreign language” (p. 15). They also noted that both universities have “an adequate number of staff members in the relevant subdisciplines with permanent positions with an appropriate range in rank” (p. 15) and that “several national and international projects and publications show that UNIC and the University of Patras are involved in research and innovation, and innovative teaching methods using ICT were mentioned during the visit.” (p. 15).

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>It is not clear how members of staff in UNIC and Patras will be supported in their teaching skills development as some of them are in early stages of their teaching career.</p>	<p>Both faculty members of UNIC and the University of Patras participate in the Faculty Professional Development Seminar on Teaching and Learning Theory and Practice, which is a mandatory 12-week training covering aspects such as course development, interactive and collaborative tools in online learning, measurement of learning outcomes using authentic assessment, assignments, quizzes, tests and rubrics in online and face-to-face courses, etc. Moreover, the Faculty Training and Development Unit (FTDU) and e-Learning Pedagogical Support Unit (ePSU) offer different types of training (i.e., pedagogical, research, technical, training and development on current higher education topics) which can be attended by all faculty members, both synchronously and asynchronously (more information can be found in the “Pedagogical E-learning Model” in Appendix 7 and UNIC Pedagogical Model for eLearning in Appendix 9).</p> <p>In addition, inexperienced teaching staff is continuously supported by experienced faculty members through discussions that take place during the meetings organized by</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	the coordinators and on an individual basis if needed.	
It is important that guest lectures with special expertise or/and experience are invited to contribute to the diversity of the course materials.	We appreciate the EEC's comment. As with other Masters programs, we will invite colleagues with expertise/experience in the course topics to contribute to the development of the course materials and we will organize sessions with invited lecturers on relevant topics.	Choose level of compliance:

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

(ESG 1.4)

Introduction

The EEC found that “pre-defined regulations regarding student admission, progression, recognition and certification are in place”, which “are in line with the University internal regulations and with European and international practices”. Also, they stated that “The recognition of prior learning is carried out in accordance with the existing legal regulations”. (p. 17).

The Committee highlighted a number of strengths such as “The virtual classroom used (moodle platform) provides a clear and effective environment for monitoring student progress and the tasks and activities they must carry out; The teaching staff is very aware of the students' needs and care about personalized monitoring of their progress; High level of graduate student satisfaction with the activity of the teaching staff; The general low drop-out rate for DL programmes as well as the technical and teaching support to provide work-life balance. Students will receive a certificate signed by both universities; UNIC's DL unit innovative efforts to remain at the forefront by adopting advanced learning analytics mechanisms, especially those leveraging AI and Machine Learning.” (p. 19)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
If the aim of the programme is to attract also international students and students from foreign universities, not just from Cyprus and Greece, the level of knowledge of the Greek language should be included in the admission criteria.	Graduates of non-Greek speaking Universities will need to present a Greek Proficiency Certification (Πιστοποίηση Ελληνομάθειας) acquired in Greece or Cyprus (conducted by the Greek Language Center of the Hellenic Republic). The certificate must be at the B2 level at a minimum. This information is included in the MA Handbook in Appendix 1 (see section A 2.3.1, p. 7) and will be posted on the program	Choose level of compliance:

	website (Admission criteria) once the program is accredited.	
In addition, according to the admission criteria, candidates from other disciplines (outside the field of philology and education) may be accepted in the programme if they have previous experience in teaching Greek. It should perhaps be clarified how and according to which criteria this previous experience will be recognized.	Students are required to provide relevant documentation or evidence of their previous teaching experience. This includes certificates, letters from employers or contracts clearly stating the candidate's teaching experience in schools/universities/institutions, the duration of employment, the exact role of the candidate, and the quality of teaching practice. This information is now included in the MA Handbook in Appendix 1 (see section A 2.3.1, p. 7).	Choose level of compliance:
It would be advisable, going forward, for information on student admission, progression, recognition and certification to be included in the Study Guide. In addition, it would be useful for the requirements and guidelines for part-time study to be added to the Study Guide.	Following the EEC's recommendation, we have added all the information in the MA program Handbook (see Appendix 1). Specifically, for student admission, we added information such as application procedures, deadlines (section A 2.3, p. 7), required documents (section A 2.3.2, pp. 7-8), and any specific criteria or qualifications that applicants must meet (section A 2.3.1, p. 7). With respect to progression, we included details about course prerequisites, credit requirements, and academic policies (e.g., grading criteria) (see sections A 2.2.1-2, pp 5-6. and A 2.5, pp. 8-10). For recognition, we added that students can be included in the Dean's list. We also added that the best graduating student of the program, department and school is given an award at the graduation ceremony of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (section A 2.6, p. 10). As regards certification, we included information about graduation requirements, and the degree conferred (see section A 2.5, pp. 8-10). We also included guidelines for part-time students (see section A 2.5, pp. 8-10). More information about the academic policies of UNIC can be found in Appendix 6.	Choose level of compliance:

<p>A data collection system in relation to student success, dropout rates, employability and career paths of future graduates should be in place.</p>	<p>The University’s Careers Office collects and analyses information regarding the students’ profile and career progression.</p> <p>Approximately 1 year to 18 months after graduation, as dictated by the instructions of the ranking institutions (QS World University Rankings and the QS Europe Rankings), an alumni survey is conducted: this pertains to the complete set of graduates who have graduated from all programs of the University (undergraduate as well as postgraduate).</p> <p>The alumni survey, labelled every time by the year of graduation, is carried out both as a call survey as well as an online survey. A fixed set of questions is required, to which graduates are requested to respond and update/share their details, corresponding updates on UNIC database, in line with what follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal details • Employment status • Professional information • Employer • Corporate title and rank • Details on employer • Salary range • Career success story <p>After completion of the survey, the data is analyzed to derive corresponding statistics and information on the career paths of graduates as well as on the progress of professional success after graduation.</p> <p>For a sample report, please see the “Employability 2017-2020 MA TGSOL” report in Appendix 4, which includes the latest available data on graduates and</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
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	<p>the labor market provided by the university's Careers Office.</p> <p>Periodically and on an ad-hoc basis, successful graduates are contacted in order to collect their success stories. These stories are published in the annual UNIC guides, on the website and landing pages of the corresponding programs of studies.</p> <p>The success stories for the Department of Languages and Literature are available here:</p> <p>https://www.unic.ac.cy/school-of-humanities-and-social-sciences/department-of-languages-and-literature/</p>	
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5. Learning resources and student support

(ESG 1.6)

Introduction

The EEC noted positively that it “recognizes the [DL] unit’s efforts to improve the online teaching and learning experience” (p. 23) and that “a comprehensive Faculty Handbook offers clear, detailed guidelines for course development and delivery” (p. 23).

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>Based on the study guide samples, the EEC recommends that the Institution could offer more detailed guidance for online students (all students in the proposed joint programme), including a detailed learning and assessment methodology. Moreover, the EEC recommends providing clear indications of the relevant parts of the entire book volumes in focus (e.g. specifying page numbers), making the task more feasible for part-time students with limited time. These recommendations aim to improve the study guides for better student guidance.</p>	<p>We thank the EEC members for their comments and recommendations. As a result, we have updated the study guides to include a detailed plan of the teaching/learning and assessment methodology. Specifically, we have added a table after the contents of each study guide, including the sections “Teaching Methods” and “Assessment”, which explain in detail how teaching takes place (e.g., teaching and learning methods, student duties, etc.) and how students are assessed (e.g., type of assessments, the deadlines, instructions, etc.) respectively. For example, for TGSOL-610D, see pp. 4-6 in Appendix 3.</p> <p>Finally, where possible, we have included specific pages for books/volumes, (e.g., see TGSOL-632D, week 12, p. 342; TGSOL-634D, week 8, p. 388 etc.).</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

6. Eligibility (Joint programme)

(ALL ESG)

Introduction

In its conclusions, the EEC highlighted the following strengths: “[...] the joint programme leads to an added value for the two Universities; it increases internationalisation of both institutions and stimulates strong synergies between them; it develops highly educated candidates’ employability and motivation for mobility in a global labour market and improves educational and research collaboration” (p. 25).

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The committee was not provided with the details of the collaboration agreement between UNIC and the University of Patras regarding the co-development of course content and the distribution of labour regarding content management and the financial organization and implications for each institution	Thank you. Please find attached the agreement between the two Universities in Appendix 10.	Choose level of compliance:

B. Conclusions and final remarks

Introduction

As a final conclusion for the program, we appreciate that EEC finds the joint program “well thought” and “developed” (p. 27). They highlight that “The program is supported by qualified and motivated teaching staff from both institutions, knowledgeable and efficient administrative staff, and an appropriate level of library, IT, financial and human resources”. They also state that “The nature of the programme is compatible with Distance Learning infrastructure and delivery” and that “The DL unit at UNIC has long-term expertise in delivering such programmes and the added value of this particular programme is in its joint nature between UNIC and the University of Patras. In addition, they report that “the overall student support from both academic and administrative staff seems to be appropriate” and that “The applied nature of the joint programme enhances the employability of future graduates in the area of primary and secondary education.” (p.27).

We carefully considered the recommendations of EEA and took the relevant actions outlined below to enhance the quality of our program.

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
a stronger component on Greek language assessment	We appreciate the committee’s suggestion, which was discussed during their visit. We have integrated the Greek language assessment component into TGSOL-621D which focuses on teaching practices related to TGSOL (Study Guide, weeks 8 and 9, pp. 185-187). Following this change, students will be able to know the types, forms, and tools of assessment, recognize the types of language tests in terms of content-target and format, familiarize themselves with the criteria for constructing language tests, construct a language test in the framework of the language assessment of Greek as a second/foreign language and apply these tools in language assessment in their teaching. In addition, we have included a component about alternative assessment through which students will learn how to apply alternative language assessment methods in the context of teaching Greek as a second/foreign language among others. Please see the revised Study Guide for TGSOL-621D in Appendix 3.	Choose level of compliance:
a clearly defined component in each of the theory modules relating theory and practice of TGSOL	In accordance with the discussions with the EEC and their recommendations on this matter, we have taken the following steps: In the three theoretical modules, an introductory component was added to the main presentations of each week explaining how the content of the module is linked to the applied linguistic/teaching methodology aspect of the course. This is reflected in the revised Aims and Expected Outcomes in the attached study guides for	Choose level of compliance:

	<p>courses TGSOL-610D (pp. 1-43), TGSOL-611D (pp. 44-84) and TGSOL-620D (pp. 114-163) in Appendix 3. For example, the aim of week 2 in TGSOL-610D includes the following statement: “[...] The module also aims to show how the theoretical framework relates to the teaching of Greek consonants and their pronunciation to students of Greek as an L2/FL” (p. 11). In the expected outcomes, the following statement was added: “[...] [students will be able to:] understand how theoretical knowledge will help them in teaching consonants to students of Greek as an L2/FL” (p. 12).</p>	
<p>a focus on skill development in TGSOL, namely Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing</p>	<p>The teaching of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills together with the appropriate strategies used to teach these skills were included in the course TGSOL-622D: Good teaching practices in teaching Greek as a second/foreign language (Study Guide, weeks 4-5, pp. 211-216). Also, TGSOL-635D: Teaching Greek as a second/foreign language through the internet focuses on the development of activities targeting the understanding and production of oral and written speech (Study Guide, week 9, pp. 429-431). Please refer to the revised study guides attached for more information in Appendix 3.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>An obligatory research thesis or dissertation seems to be the norm in many other European institutions, even if it is not an absolute requirement; this may be especially important for students wishing to pursue further studies at the PhD level. As the programme stands, it is not clear how the workload for a thesis could be replaced by the workload two elective modules.</p>	<p>As we said in the relevant discussion during the visit, the EEC’s recommendation is noted and we fully appreciate the academic value of the thesis element. The current university policy across Cyprus (set by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance in Higher Education) is that the thesis is not compulsory in Master’s level programs, and our MA follows this policy in order to offer flexibility that responds to the needs of the market and the pedagogical needs of our students for broader professional development. Thus, our program is in line with our national educational system. As we have found, a significant number of our distance learning students are mature, practicing and experienced professionals. The electives option provides a unique opportunity to students to get knowledge in specific areas that will be useful or required for their work. In addition, as explained by the program co-director from the University of Patras during the discussion at the evaluation, the existence of a thesis is no longer mandatory even in Greece.</p> <p>However, we recognize the value of the thesis and encourage students wishing to pursue a doctorate to choose this option. For this reason, and in line with the recommendations of the EEC members, we added a paragraph to the thesis handbook outlining the benefits of doing a thesis (see section 2, pp. 3-4, of MA thesis guide – Appendix 2).</p> <p>A student needs about 500 hours to write a 15.000-word MA thesis worth 20 ECTS. Considering that 10 ETCS are equivalent to 250 hours of work</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	<p>(https://www.dipae.ac.cy/index.php/el/enimerosi/anakoinoseis/95-2016-10-05-ects), and considering that our MA courses are each worth 10 ECTS, the workload of an MA thesis is equivalent to the workload of two elective courses.</p>	
<p>Coherence between modules could be improved: the content of theory modules could include a component clearly outlined in the week-by-week description of the topics covered, which would establish the link between the content of the module and the applied linguistic/teaching methodology aspect of the course.</p>	<p>In accordance with the discussions with the EEC and their recommendations on this matter, we have taken the following steps:</p> <p>In the three theoretical modules, an introductory component was added to the main presentations of each week explaining how the content of the module is linked to the applied linguistic/teaching methodology aspect of the course. This is reflected in the revised Aims and Expected Outcomes in the attached study guides for courses TGSOL-610D (pp. 1-43), TGSOL-611D (pp. 44-84) and TGSOL-620D (pp. 114-163) in Appendix 3. For example, the aim of week 2 in TGSOL-610D includes the following statement: “[...] The module also aims to show how the theoretical framework relates to the teaching of Greek consonants and their pronunciation to students of Greek as an L2/FL” (p. 11). In the expected outcomes, the following statement was added: “[...] [students will be able to:] understand how theoretical knowledge will help them in teaching consonants to students of Greek as an L2/FL” (p. 12).</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>As it is a Joint Master’s Programme, it is essential that there is close cooperation between the two partner Universities in the development, evaluation and improvement of the modules offered. We also recommend that extensive performance evaluation is in place that provides information on the</p>	<p>As we explained to the EEC members during the meeting, the CYQAA regulations do not allow us to make any changes to the content of the program after accreditation until five years have elapsed. However, there are specific guidelines that both parts have to follow. For example, in order to ensure continuous monitoring and evaluation of the program, there will be two meetings per semester between those involved in the delivery of the program. These meetings will require the presence of the Program Coordinators and teaching staff from both universities. Discussions will be held on the development, evaluation and improvement of the program, as well as on issues related to the running of the program. Summaries of the meetings will be circulated to the relevant stakeholders shortly afterwards. In terms of performance evaluation, as mentioned during the meeting, students are required to complete feedback surveys at the end of each semester. These surveys collect feedback on various aspects of the program, including quality of teaching, relevance of coursework, support services (library, administration etc.) and overall satisfaction. Finally, as we have said, the IPEP (a two-year program evaluation process) will be initiated 18 months after accreditation (see Appendix 8 – Policies for Programs of Study, p. 7).</p>	

<p>quality of the programme.</p>		
<p>Relations with alumni can be more streamlined and a track record of future steps of graduates can be established.</p>	<p>We would like to thank the EEC members for their suggestion. The faculty members maintain the relationships among the graduates by inviting them to conferences and workshops organized regularly (e.g., they do have the opportunity to participate in the Advances in Second/Foreign Language Acquisition conference and specifically in the thematic session of TGSOL, see www.asefola.weebly.com). We also approach good graduates on an individual basis and learn about their careers and further academic development. We consistently use the success stories of our graduates to further promote our programs. In the future, we also plan to engage our alumni in more events such as reunions, networking mixers, or professional development workshops, to foster relationships and facilitate networking opportunities among alumni.</p> <p>In addition, the DL Unit has established a centralized alumni database to systematically track the postgraduation trajectories of alumni. They collect data on their career paths, further education pursuits, professional accomplishments, and other relevant information. This database serves as a valuable resource for assessing the outcomes of the program and identifying areas for improvement.</p> <p>Approximately 1 year to 18 months after graduation, as dictated by the instructions of the ranking institutions (QS World University Rankings and the QS Europe Rankings), an alumni survey is conducted: this pertains to the complete set of graduates who have graduated from all programs of the University (undergraduate as well as postgraduate).</p> <p>The alumni survey, labelled by the year of graduation, is carried out both as a call survey as well as an online survey. A fixed set of questions is required, to which graduates are requested to respond and update/share their details, corresponding updates on UNIC database, in line with what follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal details • Employment status • Professional information • Employer • Corporate title and rank • Details on employer • Salary range • Career success story 	

	<p>After completion of the survey, the data is analyzed to derive corresponding statistics and information on the career paths of graduates as well as on the progress of professional success after graduation.</p> <p>For a sample employability report, please see the report for our old program in TGSOL “Employability 2017-2020 MA TGSOL” report in Appendix 4, which includes the latest available data on graduates and the labor market provided by the university’s Careers Office.</p> <p>Periodically and on an ad-hoc basis, successful graduates are contacted in order to collect their success stories. These stories are published in the annual UNIC guides, on the website and landing pages of the corresponding programs of studies.</p> <p>The success stories for the Department of Languages and Literature are available here:</p> <p>https://www.unic.ac.cy/school-of-humanities-and-social-sciences/department-of-languages-and-literature/</p>	
<p>Documentation and meeting information did not clarify the use of gamification strategies to enhance student motivation and engagement in the e-assessment process. The EEC also suggests adopting advanced feedback forms, such as intelligent tutoring systems and conversational pedagogical agents, for immediate and automatic feedback, facilitating student progress and self evaluation.</p>	<p>We appreciate the committee’s suggestion, which was discussed during their visit. We recognize the importance of integrating gamification strategies in our courses to enhance student motivation. For example, TGSOL-630D: The utilization of literature in the teaching of Greek as a second/foreign language (Study Guide, week 10, p. 261) suggests gamification activities so that students can understand the connection between literature and love for reading. Also, TGSOL-635D: Teaching Greek as a second/foreign language through the internet is directed towards this purpose. More specifically, after the end of week 9 (Study Guide, week 9, p. 430), students will be able to understand the usefulness of using authentic multimedia and multimodal materials as a means of engaging their students, aiming to teach Greek in a playful manner and empowering the students. Furthermore, other courses such as TGSOL-621D: Teaching methodology, classroom management and assessment include quizzes which are part of the students’ formative assessment and contribute critically to self-reflection in a playful manner (Study Guide, week 7, p. 184). Please see the study guides in Appendix 3.</p> <p>Regarding feedback, the university uses Learning Analytics to generate reports on student engagement on the platforms, including response levels to specific tasks. Data from analytics help lecturers adjust gamification strategies in order to ensure maximum student participation. To this end, the university has also authorized access for the program coordinator to TGSOL PowerBI for</p>	

	<p>monitoring/follow-up/QA purposes. Moreover, faculty teaching in the program (including part-time lecturers) are offered training on a regular basis in Learning Design of Distance Learning courses through the university's Technology Enhanced Learning Centre, which is headed by Dr Chris Alexander, a member of faculty in our Department. Information for all training sessions is publicly available here: https://telblog.unic.ac.cy/training/</p>	
<p>The EEC points out potential issues with online synchronous teleconferences and teamworks if the programme expands internationally, given the challenges of coordinating across diverse time zones. The universities' support for this collaboration type and the recommendation for adapting the DL model to increase asynchronous online interaction and collaboration were unclear.</p>	<p>Based on the information from our previous program in TGSOL, most of our students do not have a problem with the time zones as they are mostly based in Greece, Cyprus and other European countries. However, to accommodate the few cases of students living in other continents, we set convenient hours for the teleconferences. For example, sessions between 15:00-18:00 (Cyprus time) are convenient for both students living in Asia and students living in the Americas. In addition, except the teleconferences, all the other activities are asynchronous, providing the opportunity to the students to work with their own pace and complete the activities at their convenience.</p> <p>The DL model we use in our courses enhances asynchronous online interaction as it promotes independent learning and self-paced progress, integrates collaborative tools and platforms that enable virtual teamwork and project-based learning, and incorporates strategies for fostering community and peer interaction in an online environment. For example, independent learning and self-paced progress include activities such as discussion forums and quizzes offering instant grading once completed. Project-based learning includes collaborative assignments, online collaborative documents (e.g., wikis), etc. Finally, peer interaction incorporates chat rooms and live discussions during teleconferences among other.</p>	
<p>Based on the study guide samples, the EEC recommends that the Institution could offer more detailed guidance for online students (all students in the proposed joint programme), including a detailed learning and assessment methodology.</p>	<p>We thank the EEC for this recommendation and we would like to point out that we have already updated the study guides to include a detailed plan of learning and assessment methodology. Specifically, we have added a table after the contents of each study guide, which includes the sections "Teaching Methods" and "Assessment", which explain in detail how teaching takes place (e.g., teaching and learning methods, student duties, etc.) and how the students are assessed (e.g., type of assessments, the deadlines, instructions, etc.) respectively. For example, for TGSOL-610D, see pp. 4-6 in Appendix 3.</p> <p>Finally, where possible, we have added specific pages for book/volumes, (e.g., see TGSOL-632D, week 12, p. 342; TGSOL-634D, week 8, p. 388 etc.). Please refer to the Study Guides in Appendix 3 for additional information.</p>	

<p>It is not clear how members of staff in UNIC and Patras will be supported in their teaching skills development as some of them are in early stages of their teaching career.</p>	<p>Both faculty members of UNIC and the University of Patras participate in the Faculty Professional Development Seminar on Teaching and Learning Theory and Practice, which is a mandatory 12-week training covering aspects such as course development, interactive and collaborative tools in online learning, measurement of learning outcomes using authentic assessment, assignments, quizzes, tests and rubrics in online and face-to-face courses, etc. Moreover, the Faculty Training and Development Unit (FTDU) and e-Learning Pedagogical Support Unit (ePSU) offer different types of training (i.e., pedagogical, research, technical, training and development on current higher education topics) which can be attended by all faculty members, both synchronously and asynchronously (more information can be found in the “Pedagogical E-learning Model” in Appendix 7 and UNIC Pedagogical Model for eLearning in Appendix 9).</p> <p>In addition, inexperienced teaching staff is continuously supported by experienced faculty members through discussions that take place during the meetings organized by the coordinators and on an individual basis if needed.</p>	
<p>If the aim of the programme is to attract also international students and students from foreign universities, not just from Cyprus and Greece, the level of knowledge of the Greek language should be included in the admission criteria.</p>	<p>Graduates of non-Greek speaking Universities will need to present a Greek Proficiency Certification (Πιστοποίηση Ελληνομάθειας) acquired in Greece or Cyprus (conducted by the Greek Language Center of the Hellenic Republic). The certificate must be at the B2 level at a minimum. This information is included in the MA Handbook in Appendix 1 (see section A 2.3.1, p. 7) and will be posted on the program website (Admission criteria) once the program is accredited.</p>	
<p>In addition, according to the admission criteria, candidates from other disciplines (outside the field of philology and education) may be accepted in the programme if they</p>	<p>Students are required to provide relevant documentation or evidence of their previous teaching experience. This includes certificates, letters from employers or contracts clearly stating the candidate’s teaching experience in schools/universities/institutions, the duration of employment, the exact role of the candidate, and the quality of teaching practice. This information is now included in the MA Handbook in Appendix 1 (see section A 2.3.1, p. 7).</p>	

<p>have previous experience in teaching Greek. It should perhaps be clarified how and according to which criteria this previous experience will be recognized.</p>		
<p>Although the joint programme is new, the EEC noted that the clarity on how student feedback is effectively utilized for specific measures of continuous quality improvement by the Universities remains unclear, as information on quality standards and indicators from the current programme was not provided.</p>	<p>Receiving feedback from students is one of the major sources of information for course design and course delivery improvement. At the University of Nicosia, students are asked to voluntarily assess the courses and faculty teaching in their enrolled program every semester. The Student Evaluations are completed anonymously through the Student Portal and the results are available to the Faculty through the Faculty Portal. Additionally, the Dean and the Head of the Department also have access to the aggregate results of the assessments.</p> <p>Below, we describe the process for collecting, analyzing, and utilizing student feedback:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At the start of week 9 in each semester, the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research (VRFR) announces the student evaluation dates for that semester, including the activation date, deactivation date, and date of result release to all faculty members. Faculty members are urged to communicate this information to their students during class to encourage them to complete the Student Evaluation surveys through the Student Portal. 2. The evaluations are activated once 75% of the semester has been completed. However, for some programs, different conditions may apply. For example, some joint degree programs run on an academic year basis rather than a semester basis, and the summer semester may be extended for Distance Learning programs. 3. After the evaluations are activated, the office of the VRFR coordinates with the Vice President of Student Services, the Director of Academic Advising, the Director of Student Affairs, the Head of the Distance Learning Administrative Unit, and IT staff members in an attempt to increase the students' response rate. This involves several actions, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Preparation of messages to be sent to students via SMS, emails, and personal messages through the Student Portal. b) Telephone communication with students by academic advisors. 	

	<p>c) Activation of a banner in the Student Portal during the period the evaluations are available.</p> <p>4. Throughout the period when student evaluations are active, the office of the VRFR regularly updates all relevant stakeholders on the number of evaluations completed. This allows for appropriate follow-up measures to be taken as necessary.</p> <p>5. The evaluations are deactivated one day before the start of the examination period.</p> <p>6. The results of the student evaluations are released through the Faculty Portal 21 days after the end of the examination period. The VRFR informs the faculty when the results are available and provides instructions on how to access them.</p> <p>7. The VRFR informs the Senate and Student Representatives that the results of the Student Evaluations for the semester have been released through the Faculty Portal. Additionally, the VRFR reports that the evaluation questionnaires have been analyzed, and the results have been communicated to the lecturers, Heads of Departments, and School Deans. Based on these results, faculty, Departments, and Schools take corrective action and further communicate these to the Student Representatives at the School and/or Department level.</p>	
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C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Prof. Klimis Mastoridis	Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences	
Prof. Polina Mackay	Head of the Department of Languages and Literature	
Prof. George J. Xydopoulos	Scientific Director, University of Patras	
Dr Georgios Georgiou	Program coordinator	

Date: 25/04/2024

