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Date: 12 January 2023

External Evaluation Report (Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Cyprus
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Faculty of Letters
- **Department/ Sector:** Department of History and Archaeology
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Διδακτορικό στην Ψηφιακή Πολιτιστική Κληρονομιά
και Αρχαιολογία Τοπίου

In English:

PhD in Digital Heritage and Landscape Archaeology

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):** n/a

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\]](#).

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations

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A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

An application on behalf of the Department of History and Archaeology at the University of Cyprus to develop an PhD programme for 'Digital Heritage and Landscape Archaeology' has been filed with the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA). An onsite visit was organised by the CYQAA to the campus of the University of Cyprus for Professor David Keith Wright (University Oslo, appointed Chair of the Committee), Professor Alexander Mazarakis Ainian (University of Thessaly), Professor Christopher Gaffney (University of Bradford), Professor Martijn Manders (University of Leiden) and Foivi Christodoulou (PhD student at the Open University Cyprus), henceforth called the 'Committee'. Costas Constantinou from CYQAA was responsible for the logistics and communicating the rules of the evaluation to the Committee.

A site visit took place on 10 and 11 January 2023 and included meetings with the Rector of the University of Cyprus (Prof. Tasos Christofides), members of the Department of History and Archaeology, administrative staff of the department and library, and students of the department. Pictures and videos of the campus and facilities were provided by the university as well as a guided visit to the library, which gave a sense of institutional commitment to infrastructure development and programme operations.

The Rector outlined the strategic priorities for the university, to discuss features such as the Graduate School, the importance of interdisciplinarity, and the move towards more programmes using English. This was aimed at recruiting non-Cypriot students to help internationalise the university. It was evident that there is a close relationship between the university and the wider public sector and relevant industries. The University has a very good standing in relation to international research funding and a strategic fund to help generate research activity across the university.

A series of presentations and meetings between the Committee members and faculty, staff and students of the Department of Archaeology and History transpired through the rest of the day on 10 January and the meeting with the university librarians and Committee members occurred on 11 January. This report summarises the findings of the Committee as well as identifies strengths and weaknesses in the various aspects of the programme under review.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Alexander Mazarakis Ainian	Professor	University of Thessaly
Foivi Christodoulou	PhD Candidate	Open University of Cyprus
Christopher Gaffney	Professor	University of Bradford
Martijn Manders	Professor	University of Leiden
David Wright	Professor	University of Oslo

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*
- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
 - (a) *sub-areas*
 - (b) *standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
 - (c) *some questions that EEC may find useful.*
- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*
- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*
- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*
- **The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.**

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-areas

- 1.1 Policy for quality assurance**
- 1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**
- 1.3 Public information**
- 1.4 Information management**

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
 - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
 - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
 - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
 - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
 - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
 - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
 - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
 - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
 - *benefits from external expertise*
 - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
 - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
 - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
 - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*

- *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
 - *selection criteria*
 - *intended learning outcomes*
 - *qualification awarded*
 - *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
 - *pass rates*
 - *learning opportunities available to the students*
 - *graduate employment information*

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
 - *key performance indicators*
 - *profile of the student population*
 - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
 - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
 - *learning resources and student support available*
 - *career paths of graduates*
- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*
- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*
- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*
- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

In general, the committee concludes that the quality of the proposed programme is high. The application for the programme is timely and relevant for the job market in the Humanities, which is shifting to an increasing focus on technology. The programme was designed by a committee of academics from the university, who were highly supportive of the effort. The department has indicated that all aspects of the curricula will be publicly available for prospective applicants to see, although because the programme is not yet active, the website is not 'live'. However, we were informed that there are already two prospective students with MA/MSc degrees aligned to apply for the PhD programme, should it be approved, so it is clear that there is a measure of anticipation and demand for such a programme.

The Department has established good external networks with other European institutes. They are part of the Young Universities for the Future of Europe (YUFE) alliance, in which structural standards are shared between nine universities in Europe. The proposed PhD programme will target recruitment and training of international students to work together with Greek and Cypriot students, providing an opportunity for the cross-fertilization of competencies and ideas. The PhD programme is said to be central in the Department's goal of internationalising.

The proposed programme focuses on digital heritage with focus on advanced remote sensing, geophysical prospection and spatial statistical applications. These foci align with the department faculty specialties and will enable students to gain direct field-to-lab experience. The proposed PhD level research will be designed to engage students with advanced competencies in digital archaeological techniques with outcomes geared toward spatial statistical analytics. The skill sets targeted by the education programme are relevant to public archaeology employers, as well as private sector employers who seek employees with advanced digital informatics backgrounds. The declining role of the humanities overall as a share of European economies is a broader concern for the quality of the students applying to the programme over the long term, but the department feels that they have identified a target niche to attract a specific market of students.

The proposed PhD programme consists of four components: research stages (120 ECTS), writing stages (60 ECTS), PhD dissertation (0 ECTS) and oral defence (0 ECTS). The proposed programme has a provision for PhD track students without an MA/MSc at the point of admission, which includes a 60 ECTS course load taking a regiment of prescribed courses to get the students up to standard. In the third stage, the programme plan includes the production of a PhD dissertation as a bound volume. Cypriot law mandates that there is a minimum 10,000 words for a PhD thesis, however the professors applying for the programme indicate that the normal standard of an 80,000 – 100,000-word thesis reviewed by a 5-member committee would be considered an acceptable standard for a PhD in Digital Heritage and Landscape Archaeology. This proposed PhD degree programme is an extension upon the recently inaugurated (2021) MSc in Digital Heritage and Landscape Archaeology programme and would serve as a terminal degree for students pursuing this track.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The programme leader, Apostolos Sarris, is highly motivated and has been a leader in geophysics and remote sensing for decades. He has supervised or co-supervised 19 PhD theses, 19 MA/MSc theses and has supervised or co-

supervised 16 postdoctoral research projects and is therefore highly qualified to lead a PhD programme. The proposed programme fulfils the institutional programme plan closely, which is of a high international standard. Prof. Sarris has participated in a wide array of EU cultural heritage programming and students will be encouraged to take advantage of digital resources from these initiatives, such as SAGA-COST and Copernicus Initiative. Since there is a high number of free digital resources for students to access, there will be ample data from which they can draw and the potential production of knowledge from existing tools is high.

There will be an enormous amount of data collected for these projects and data management plan for campus seems to be reasonably accessible and priced.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The proposed programme is highly reliant on the efforts of a single person, Professor Apostolos Sarris. While he is exceptionally well qualified to lead the proposed programme, the risk is that the programme will be too reliant on him, singularly. For a full PhD programme, particularly as also he is the programme leader of the MSc Digital Heritage and Landscape Archaeology. There should be complementariness among several faculty members in order to maintain a fair workload.

The Committee had concerns about the long-term provision of digital data for which there are services provided by the university, however a permanent solution in the form of two servers with timed backups is seen as necessary but is not yet fully planned. The proposed student projects will generate enormous amounts of data and it is essential that prior to the collecting and processing of data that there is a competent archiving plan in place.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Not applicable
1.4	Information management	Not applicable

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

Sub-areas

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

2.2 Practical training

2.3 Student assessment

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*

- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*
- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The proposed PhD programme consists of independent research undertaken by students who enter the programme with relevant MA/MSc degrees. As is the normal European standard, students are expected to come into the programme with an already developed idea for a PhD, and they are expected to conduct independent research to achieve their PhD.

As per the University's regulations, there are two primary examination periods outlined during the progression of the student's PhD candidacy. The first is a midway evaluation consisting of a three-member committee of University of Cyprus faculty. A five-member examination committee will be assembled to evaluate each candidate's final thesis project. This committee will consist of two internal and three external committee members. One of the internal committee members will consist of the PhD candidate's primary advisor. This is the North American model of PhD examination.

The campus Teaching and Learning Centre seems to be a valuable educational support resource for students to assist them with writing and finishing their degrees. However, their mission is general across the entire campus, and their expertise is not within the subject area of Digital Heritage and Landscape Archaeology. Students are expected to enter the programme with high technical competence and field experience, therefore there is not a high emphasis on training, per se, within the PhD process.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Conducting independent research is critical for PhDs, and the department is well geared to facilitate this. In particular, the landscape of Cyprus is well suited for a landscape archaeology given the rich archaeological heritage of the island. The department has many ongoing field research projects in Cyprus and the Aegean, which will serve to attract students to the PhD programme to develop theses from the extant project milieu. There is a large reservoir of data and potential projects available to PhD candidates from which they can develop independent research projects and theses.

The committee finds no fault with the rigour of the proposed examination process apart from the logistical considerations provided below.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The Committee finds that the student progression through the programme to degree is well thought out, but there is a potential risk of not having enough faculty members with competence in digital heritage and landscape archaeology to adequately supervise the students. As the programme is highly reliant on the efforts of a single faculty member, Apostolos Sarris, should he take a period of leave from the university, there is a risk that students

will not receive adequate supervision. We strongly recommend that the university commit extra staffing resources to the programme to ensure its perpetuity.

Whilst it is good that students are engaged in independent research, the Committee fears that given the relatively high emphasis on supervision from a single faculty member, some of the more silent students may become 'too independent'. It is easy for a supervisor to become overwhelmed when there are too many responsibilities heaped upon him/her, and, as it pertains to the students, it is the ones who are not as assertive who will likely become lost. It is not explicitly stated in the application materials, but students should be afforded monthly meetings with their primary supervisor and bimonthly meetings with their secondary supervisor (if applicable) to ensure that they receive adequate supervision. It is not clear why a full time PhD should take up to eight years to complete if the milestones are adhered to that are within Table 2 (page 54) of the application.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*

- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The proposed PhD programme follows Cypriot regulations for matriculation spanning six semesters (three years), however the regulations afford students up to eight years to complete their degrees. In the event of a worst-case scenario in which three students are accepted to the programme per year, after the eighth year, there may be as many as 24 PhD students in the programme, which would leave the department short staffed for supervisory resources relative to the numbers of students present. It is noted that, in the University's regulations, a maximum of 10 PhD students are allowed for an academic supervisor.

The staff are comprised of excellent researchers with impressive CVs who are long-term academics. They are highly experienced and understand the University's system and pedagogical stance. There are, however, many open vacancies in the department, which raise challenges for the sustainability of the proposed programme in the longer term.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The focus of the programme and main supervisor of the students will be Professor Apostolos Sarris, however the application paperwork includes six faculty members and one post-doctoral researcher are listed as potential supervisors for PhD students. Most of the team are highly experienced and have shown a commitment to interdisciplinarity as well as involvement in integrated programmes of work with colleagues from other institutions.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

As indicated above, under existing Cypriot regulations, there could be difficulties in covering the supervising needs of students if too many students take their full, allotted time to degree. Without the granularity of a full workload analysis, it is difficult to understand the full implications of a successful programme on the staff. We recommend that the university commit more teaching resources to this programme in the form of permanent, tenured faculty, perhaps with an international focus, to attract, supervise and matriculate students successfully through the programme. There would be evident synergies with teaching on the MSc programme if an additional lecturer were available to support digital heritage themes. In particular, there are some elements of digital heritage, such as object scanning or virtual museums that are highly relevant but do not appear to be currently within the scope, as defined, of either programme. Therefore, the programme title is too broadly defined for the interests of potentially incoming students who might expect a full digital heritage environment, but receive guidance limited primarily to geophysical/remote prospection.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Partially compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Partially compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Partially compliant

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

Sub-areas

- 4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria
- 4.2 Student progression
- 4.3 Student recognition
- 4.4 Student certification

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
 - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
 - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Are the admission requirements for the study programme appropriate? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?*
- *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*
- *Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The Committee was not provided information on the timing of application process or the timeframes of student admission. It is not clear whether there is one application time per year, several with specific admission periods or if entry to the programme was possible at any time.

Students will be admitted to the programme on the basis of specific regulations of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the University of Cyprus, which are adhered to in a consistent manner and are published for the information of the public and candidate students. To be considered for admission, students must have bachelor's and master's degrees from recognised, accredited academic institutions in a relevant field to the programme with an equivalent of 7.0/10 in the Greek/Cypriot education system (or equivalence from external applicants), two letters of recommendation, GCE or TOEFL with a grade "B" or higher for GCE- O' level or 600 for TOEFL (native English speakers are excluded from this provision), a 1-page letter of intent, a research proposal between 2-5 pages and an oral interview in English.

Since this is a new programme, the Committee met with existing Master's level students in the department. Overall, the students were very positive towards the institution and individual academics employed in the department.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The committee sees a high level of English proficiency for a PhD as an essential prerequisite, we are satisfied that it will allow a seamless progression of students from the MSc into the PhD programme. Based on our discussions with the current and graduated MSc students, the oral competency of the students is quite high, and included two native English speakers. There was no separation in communication ability between the native and non-native speakers, which is encouraging.

The admission, matriculation and graduation procedures proposed are of a high international standard and follow rules and regulations outlined by Cypriot law and within the ECF. On paper, there are adequate standards in place to ensure high student quality and fairness in the evaluation procedures throughout the students' careers in the PhD programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

In reviewing the CVs of the extant faculty, none of the other faculty members apart from Prof. Sarris have an exceptional track record in digital heritage or landscape archaeology. Thus, it appears to the Committee that there will be a high burden placed on Prof. Sarris to provide primary supervision to the PhD candidates. Additionally, the Committee understands that there is no requirement to provide the student with an associate supervisor - this may be seen as problematic should the supervisor have extended periods of absence due to illness or if a dispute arises between student and supervisor. As indicated above, we recommend contracting at least one more permanent faculty member to ensure the robustness of the programme. The Rector stated clearly that archaeology is central to the university's mission to internationalise and is a core department within the overall framework of the institution. As such, resources need to be allocated to enact this vision and we therefore recommend that the proposed Digital Heritage and Landscape Archaeology PhD programme (as well as extant MSc degree in Digital Heritage and Landscape Archaeology) be prioritised according to these stated goals.

With the planned acceptance of up to three PhD students per year and each student potentially taking up to eight years to complete their degrees, the Committee is worried that an excessive burden of supervision will develop in the programme, in particular with the emphasis, singularly, on Prof. Sarris. There is effectively the potential for him to be charged with supervising up to 24 students, which even if only a fraction of this number turns out to be the case, this will compromise both his effectiveness and inhibit the students' mentorship needed to complete their degrees. Clearly this would be highly inadvisable, and in opposition to the institution's regulation that indicate that each supervisor is allowed to supervise only up to 10 PhD students simultaneously. We understand that these issues are systemic, baked into Cypriot law, but provisions should be made to limit the time of student progression of degree or, more realistically, a junior faculty position should be created so that there is redundancy in potential supervisors. Otherwise, it is possible that good quality students / PhD proposals may have to be rejected due to capacity constraints.

If there is a significant increase in PhD students as a result of this programme, then there will be an associated increase in administrative duties. It is not clear if the present administrative infrastructure can cope with this.



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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



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Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

5.2 Physical resources

5.3 Human support resources

5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*
- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

On balance, the Committee was impressed with the campus environment as a good location for learning and student development. The Department of History and Archaeology itself is dispersed among several different buildings, which is an admitted shortcoming for cross-disciplinary integration and education. There is a significant amount of equipment for field-based geophysical prospection and data recording housed in the ARU of the department. The university hosts an array of geophysical prospection devices, including a ground penetrating radar (GPR), a survey drone, soil resistivity meter, two Fluxgate gradiometers, a magnetic susceptibility device and two GPS units. It would be valuable to consider an equipment and software pipeline to ensure that high calibre students are not persuaded to apply to another university with more up to date instrumentation. There is also a Geoinformatics Laboratory (<https://ucyweb.ucy.ac.cy/geoinfolab/>) specifically built for the MSc programme in Digital Heritage and Landscape Archaeology; while software provision is listed in the application and on the University's webpage, the Committee cannot find any details of the physical infrastructure associated with this laboratory.

The university library is a significant resource for students offering excellent on-campus study space, books and computer laboratories. The ARU also houses a significant library resource, although the committee did not visit the ARU. There is a free shuttle service between the campuses that students and staff can utilise. There is a Student Welfare Association, which offers financial support to students in need of assistance. There is also administrative support for students by the Graduate School, Academic Affairs and the International Relation Services. Finally, there is a Career Center, which assists students with skills development and finding work opportunities following graduation.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The campus infrastructure is generally adequate or excellent to support the programme. The library has offered computing facilities needed for desktop GIS applications. The students also have access to software such as ArcGIS, which is necessary for the proposed PhD programme. On paper, the students seem well supported with psychological and medical services provided by the university.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The Committee determined that the available research equipment / software may not fully cover the resource needs for the proposed programme in Digital Heritage and Landscape Archaeology. Currently, the lack of student bench fees and/or clear commitment of equipment designed for digital heritage management beyond geophysical prospection will serve as a limiting factor to the development of the programme. For example, structured light scanners, laser scanning and SLAM devices are relatively common for landscape archaeology / monument recording applications. It is also unclear how students gain expertise or pilot licenses needed to operate drone equipment for landscape-scale survey. A consideration by the university should be made to purchase devices such as these. Prof. Sarris has knowledge and expertise necessary to utilise such equipment and therefore these could easily be incorporated as part of the programme.

The Committee also finds the split campus model in which the ARU are physically separated from teaching locations is not a conducive environment for both students and faculty, who must spend much of their time moving between facilities. Given the potential lack of physical, committed laboratory space for PhD students either at the ARU or on campus, the Committee is worried that there may be infrastructural challenges for PhD candidates to matriculate should they not have consistent access to computers with the needed software and access to databases needed to conduct research.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Partially compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Partially compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

6.3 Supervision and committees

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
 - *the stages of completion*
 - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
 - *the examinations*
 - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
 - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
 - *the chapters that are contained*
 - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
 - *the minimum word limit*
 - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
 - *regular meetings*

- *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
- *support for writing research papers*
- *participation in conferences*
- *The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?*
- *Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?*
- *Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

To qualify for a PhD, candidates must be admitted into the programme following the regulations discussed above. The candidate then progresses through a six-semester course list entailing research and writing. Along the way, the candidate must pass a thesis proposal defence consisting of three faculty members (the student's main supervisor, one member from the departmental academic staff, one member from the departmental academic staff, or from another department of the University of Cyprus in a related discipline or from another university or research centre). Finally, the student submits a PhD thesis (recommended between 80,000 – 100,000 words) for defence by a five-person committee (three members from the departmental academic staff, one of whom is the student's Research Supervisor, one member from another university or research centre and one member from another Department of the University of Cyprus in a related discipline or from another university or research centre).

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

In discussions with the faculty, it came up that the European standard of three to four peer-reviewed publications has become a new normal, but there is no provision in the guidelines for this kind of thesis. The Committee was encouraged that the faculty recognise the standards and will encourage their PhD candidates to broadly follow the new standards, even though they recognise that they cannot strictly enforce it. In particular, Prof. Sarris was very optimistic that students he has identified as prospects for the new PhD programme will be motivated to concentrate on peer-reviewed paper submission. The Committee sees this as a real potential strength of the proposed PhD programme and strongly encourages development in this direction.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The Committee is uncertain about the provision of plagiarism checking in the programme. We strongly recommend that PhD candidates are required to attend courses in plagiarism avoidance. Furthermore, they should be required to scan their theses using plagiarism-detection software such as Turnitin prior to submission of the thesis to the doctoral examination committee.

The time to degree for a PhD in Cyprus is afforded up to eight years. Within the European context, such a time-to-degree is generally unacceptable and the Committee feels that this regulation does not serve the programme, individual staff members or students well. We recommend that the university seriously lobby for academic reforms in Cypriot law to shorten the time-to-degree.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Compliant
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Compliant
6.3	Supervision and committees	Compliant

D. Conclusions and final remarks

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

In conclusion, the Committee evaluates the overall quality of the University of Cyprus, the Department of Archaeology and History and the faculty associated with the proposed PhD programme in Digital Heritage and Landscape Archaeology as high. The faculty are well qualified to direct the proposed programme and have been actively engaged in digital heritage and landscape archaeology for decades. The faculty are also experienced supervisors at both the undergraduate and post-graduate level, including PhDs, and students who are accepted to this programme under the rubric provided to the Committee will be well served and have the potential to generate exceptionally excellent PhD projects and theses.

However, there are several significant limitations to enacting the proposed programme:

(1) The programme is highly dependent on a single (albeit well-qualified) professor: Apostolos Sarris. The lack of redundancy in the faculty with competencies that pertain to technical aspects of either digital heritage or landscape archaeology present a potential pitfall for students should there be a dispute between a student and his or her supervisor or should Prof. Sarris take extended leave of the university for some reason. We strongly recommend that the next hire for the department should be an individual with overlapping competencies to Prof. Sarris, which will be necessary to provide some element of resilience within the programme staff. It would be helpful for any additional

staff to come with strong international networks, preferably extending beyond those already evidenced by the programme team.

(2) PhD students should have supervision from at least two supervisors as a compulsory (not optional) aspect of their progression through their degrees. The second supervisor does not necessarily have to be UCY faculty, and in many ways given the rather centralised focus of the proposed programme, it would be both necessary and preferable that the second supervisor come from an outside institution.

(3) There needs to be a system of recompense for students to contest the quality and quantity of their supervision. This system should serve to protect both students and supervisor(s) as it is common in academic settings for disputes to arise. The lack of a clear system of redress outside the formal university channels could potentially compromise the entire programme if a particularly contentious dispute arises.

(4) The lack of physical infrastructure in the form of desktop computers loaded with needed software in a laboratory accessible to PhD candidates outside of the library is requisite for the programme. PhD students often work at off hours and they require space to keep their research materials (e.g., student office, laboratory space) that they can access when they are able to conduct research. The practical solution is that the ARU and/or Annex should be equipped with desktop computers sufficient to accommodate all the PhD students accepted to the programme. Admission and enrolment should be restricted to the facilities available to accommodate the students.

(5) On a university-wide and/or Cypriot legal level, there needs to be a higher focus on matriculation of PhD students within a 3-4 year timeframe as opposed to a 7-8 year timeframe. The risk of continuing the programme structure as it stands is that a backlog of non-graduated PhD students will accumulate beyond the resources the programme has to support them, both in terms of infrastructure and supervision.



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Alexander Mazarakis Ainian	
Foivi Christodoulou	
Christopher Gaffney	
Martijn Manders	
David Wright	

Date: 12 January 2023