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External Evaluation Report

(E-learning programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:** Frederick University (Nicosia)
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Business and Law
- **Department/ Sector:** Law
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Δίκαιο Νέων Τεχνολογιών και Ηλεκτρονική
Διακυβέρνηση [3 ακαδημαϊκά εξάμηνα, 90 ECTS,
Μεταπτυχιακό (LLM), Εξ αποστάσεως]

In English:

Law of new technologies and e-government [3
academic semesters, 90 ECTS, Master (LLM), E-
Learning]

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek and 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

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The evaluation of this new programme, including the site visit, was undertaken in a fully co-operative and transparent manner by all people, organisations, and institutions involved. One significant problem was that the written documentation shared by Frederick University, i.e. the application and associated annexes, lacked sufficient focus and detail on key issues, particularly pertaining to pedagogy, learning design and e-learning methodologies. This made it difficult for the EECs to fully prepare for this evaluation exercise and required more detailed and probing questioning than would usually be expected during a site visit. In effect, this meant the explanations provided by the e-learning participants during the site visit became highly crucial to the EECs evaluation. Other presentations and discussions during the site visit also provided complementary and additional information that might usefully have been documented. The EEC noted that the documentation was also amended during its evaluation period, which led to some initial confusion, which had to be addressed at the site visit. The EEC would suggest that for any future evaluations the Department of Law seek guidance on how to most effectively present their case in the application with appropriate information. All the discussions during the site visit were organized and carried out in a highly professional manner. The discussions during the site visit were conducted in an open, respectful, and very friendly manner throughout the duration of the on-site evaluation. All participants were very well prepared and able to provide well-founded answers to the questions posed by the members of the panel of experts. The panel of experts had the opportunity to understand the thinking and justification for the proposed LLM, the commitment of the teaching staff, and the effectiveness of the organisational structures, especially in the academic context, but also in the administrative and technical areas. The diverse nature of the tasks, and the importance of those tasks within the framework of the new programme, performed by the faculty and its members, have been managed with great commitment. This is promising for the successful launch of a new programme.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Jeanne Mifsud Bonnici	Professor	University of Groningen
Andrew J. Charlesworth	Professor	University of Bristol
Emily Mary Weitzenboeck	Professor	Oslo Metropolitan University
Pantelis Papadopoulos	Professor	University of Twente
Athanasia Eliadou	Student	Open University of Cyprus

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.

What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?

The Quality Assurance (QA) process at Frederick University consists of multiple layers of controls by different players during the life cycle of a programme. This spans: (i) the introduction/approval of a new programme (which is initiated by the relevant academic body/bodies of the university depending on the nature of the programme), and is hierarchically submitted to the Senate for approval; (ii) the operation of the programme where the University's Internal Quality Committee applies the Quality Assurance Policy of the University which includes an evaluation process of each course and of the program by the relevant academic and faculty staff as well as students, and (iii) a programme review intended to revise the content and learning outcomes, teaching method, assessment method, etc. of the courses and programme of study (as per the University's "Regulations for Review of a Program of Study"). At the end of each course, students are required to evaluate the course before they can access the grade obtained for that course. During the site visit, the external stakeholders informed the EEC that they commented on a draft of the proposed programme and were informed by the University that they will also be involved at a later stage, provided the programme is approved.

There is broad representation on the University's Internal Quality Committee. The committee is appointed by the Senate and comprises one representative from each School, one representative from the administrative staff, two student representatives, up to two QA experts and the Vice-Rector (chair).

With regard to its policy for plagiarism the University has incorporated Turnitin, a plagiarism detection software, in all distance learning programmes. Student assignments and reports are submitted to Turnitin, via the Moodle platform, for plagiarism checks before formal submission. The University informs that it has adopted a 25% limit for plagiarism detection, as a general guideline (page 33 of the application). Limits for class coursework reports are determined by the course instructor. Plagiarism limits concerning theses are decided by the Council of the Department. A decision on whether plagiarism has occurred is made on a qualitative analysis of the plagiarism detection software tool findings. Disciplinary action is taken, varying according to the form of plagiarism. Consequences vary from a warning by the instructor of the course and parallel resubmission by the student of the work or a reduction of the grade, to action taken by the Disciplinary Committee of the University where actions may range from grading the student with a failing grade for the course to dismissal from the University.

The University shows awareness of student use of generative AI in their coursework and has issued a policy on the use of generative AI (Annex 9). The alignment of expected student work in the programme with this policy is highly recommended.

How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?

1. Two student representatives (one undergraduate and one at graduate level) form part of the University's Internal Quality Committee (as per slide 2 of the presentation on "Internal Quality Assurance - Policies and Procedures").
2. As a rule, after the end of each academic year, the Programme Coordinator completes the Programme Self-Evaluation (IQC104) report which includes quality indicators related to the programme (structure content, etc), the students (assessment, progress, etc.) and the graduates' employability, degree grades, duration of studies etc. This report also utilises data and information

obtained through the Student Course Evaluation questionnaires (IQC100), the Faculty Course Evaluation report (IQC101) and comments and suggestions made by the focus groups (students, graduates and employers.) (p.28 of the application).

3. The structure of the programme consists of a combination of compulsory courses, plus either elective courses or a written research thesis. This automatically gives the student some freedom to influence the content of their academic work to an adequate amount (Tables 1 and 2 of the application).

What does the design of the programme look like and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?

The design of the programme is shaped around producing professionals and academics who are equipped for the contemporary and upcoming challenges regarding the legal frameworks in the field of new technologies. The stated aim of the programme (application p. 2) is “to cultivate and promote scientific knowledge and research and to provide students with specialized knowledge in the field of law and technology” and “to equip students with a sound understanding of the law in this subject area” which is “practical in scope”, while at the same time, “through the comparison of current laws at national and European level to equip their knowledge and experience in the subject and encourage analytical thinking.” The objective is to produce specialized lawyers who are equipped for employment in both the public and private sector.

What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?)

Of the 90 ECTS Credits that are required to complete this Masters programme, 50 come from compulsory courses. These courses aim to provide a foundational base for students and are thus important in this programme. Students then have the option of either opting to write a thesis (10 + 20 ECTS courses) and one elective, or else opt not to write a thesis and select four electives (10 ECTS each) (pp.74-77 of the application).

As the programme has not yet been launched, no numbers regarding the pass rates are available.

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?

The minimum duration for the completion of the program is three academic semesters (see slide 8 of the presentation “LLM in New Technologies and E-Government”). The total number of credits required to obtain the LLM degree are 90 ECTS.

As the programme has not yet been launched, average numbers are not yet available.

Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?

There is currently no information about this programme on the homepage of Frederick University. Upon launching of the programme, the University website will be expected to include all necessary information, or how to access it, on its website, in the same way as other distance learning courses are available online.

Strengths

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

1. Frederick University has a very good and multifaceted Quality Assurance process, involving internal and external teams, feedback from various stakeholders, etc. The commitment to continuous improvement is evident, and the inclusion of student perspectives further enhances the overall quality control process. This approach ensures a satisfactory evaluation of programmes at different levels within the university.
2. The programme is designed to prepare individuals from a range of backgrounds, such as professional and academic, for legal challenges in emerging technologies such as AI. It looks at select legal issues that are crucial for the attainment of the European Union's (EU) digital strategy at both an EU and national law level and provides a varied combination of compulsory and elective courses. The programme takes an interdisciplinary approach, focusing on the intersection of law, and technology, providing theoretical legal understanding and practical skills. It aims to deepen knowledge and broaden understanding in a comparative European and international context.
3. The programme's delivery approach offers several advantages. The support provided by the Distance Learning Committee and the Distance Learning Unit, including administrative assistance, enhances the student experience and accessibility. Academic support combined with the effective use of Distance Learning, will contribute to student success and the programme's overall effectiveness.

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.

It is recommended that:

1. Title and nature of the programme of study: The programme title is "Law of new technologies and e-government." The taught subjects are preponderantly on the law of new technologies, and less room appears to be dedicated to e-government. One course - DLNLT507 "The New Governance of the Digital Age" - delves into issues of governance and democracy, in particular how "ICT can contribute to the improvement of the exercise of public service competences, contribute to the direction of deliberative and participatory democracy", though this course is an elective. Furthermore, the main programme objectives on page 2 of the application do not clearly refer to e-government (though it makes some reference to the promotion of e-democracy), and a course actually refers to the programme as being a "postgraduate program "Law and New Technologies" (see DLNLT506 "Special Contract Law Topics in the Digital Age" in Annex 2. Furthermore, the application has a long list of specific special learning outcomes (twenty issues), of which only a couple broadly relate to e-government. The EEC recommends that the University reviews the name of the programme and either changes it, for example, to "Law of new technologies" or, if it prefers to retain it as it currently is, to ensure that the programme description, learning objectives, and individual course outlines and learning objectives clearly show how each of them respectively relates to e-government. The programme would also benefit significantly from an explanation, in the introduction, of what is understood by "e-government". During the site visit, the EEC noticed that there were considerably varying understandings of what this term entails, among both the University staff, the external assessors and the committee itself.
2. Inconsistencies: There are some inconsistencies between the shorter-form course descriptions in Annex 2 of the application form and the more detailed course descriptions provided, e.g. the

description of the general purpose of the thesis (DLNLT512 Thesis II: Thesis Proposal and Implementation" in Annex 2 refers to there being an emphasis on "the comparative study of Greek and German law", as well as having, among its more specific objectives, "highlighting and critically evaluating issues of application of the law in practice, through selected case law of Greek and German courts." There is no such language in the more detailed course description. Such inconsistencies should be removed.

3. Inconsistencies as regard the final exam procedure: The application (page 9) states that the final exam "requires the physical presence of the students", where page 68 specifies that this is conducted online. During the site visit, it was clarified that the final exam will be done digitally. The programme and all documentation referring to physical exams should be amended.
4. References in the course descriptions to "national law" should clarify which national law is being referred to, e.g. is it Cypriot law, Greek law, some other national law?

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

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant</i>	<i>Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1.1	Compliant	
1.2	Partially compliant	
1.3	Compliant	
1.4	Compliant	

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**
- 2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities**

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

Standards

- *The e-learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.*
- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*
- *A specific plan is developed to safeguard and assess the interaction:*
 - *among students*
 - *between students and teaching staff*
 - *between students and study guides/material of study*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the students focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of e-learning 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 e-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.*
- *For distance learning programs, the number of students in both undergraduate and Master's level postgraduate programs does not exceed 30 students per class.*

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

- A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on e-learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.
- 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 e-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.

2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

Standards

- A study guide for each course, fully aligned with e-learning philosophy and methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:
 - Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner
 - Presentation of course material, and students' activities on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)
 - **Weekly schedule of interactive activities and exercises (i.e. simulations, problem solving, scenarios, argumentation)**
 - Clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback
 - Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide
 - Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study
 - Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material
 - Synopsis
- Study guides, material and activities are appropriate for the level of the programme according to the EQF.

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Is the nature of the programme compatible with e-learning delivery?*
- *How do the programme, the material, the facilities, and the guidelines safeguard the interaction between students, students and teaching staff, students and the material?*
- *How many students upload their work and discuss it in the platform during the semester?*
- *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.

While the application lacked essential information on the DL aspects of the programme, the presentations and the following discussions during the visit provided important information for the committee to be able to comment meaningfully on the DL aspects.

The programme design currently includes five synchronous plenary sessions in each course, which is the minimum requirement set by CYQAA. This includes Week 0, though, in which no content-related issue is covered.

Students have access to their teachers via the synchronous plenary sessions and the tutorials (which may be offered by TAs instead). Office hours are not set and it was mentioned during the visit that there are no

official office hours, nor a policy to have one. Instead, the teachers are free to act on this matter as they see fit.

An induction course is offered to students on the particularities of distance learning. For students, this course is not mandatory, and the content covers primarily technical issues and course expectations. Additional information on what engagement, collaboration, and responsibility mean for students in a DL programme could be a further improvement.

An induction course is offered to teachers, and it is mandatory for all new hires to go through the course. The course is self-paced and lasts usually 3-5 weeks to complete. A certification of completion is offered to the teachers at the end of the course. The course is not currently tied to ECs, although an estimate from the DL Unit, who designed and offers this course, was 3-5 ECs. This does not fit the 3-5-week timeline.

The students can post complaints regarding their courses or their teachers formally at any point during the programme. In addition, they are asked to evaluate their courses at the end of it, and this is mandatory for the students to be able to receive their grade.

In most cases, only one teacher (the one who is teaching the course) is responsible for grading. This is common, but no information is given regarding teacher meetings in which assessment criteria per course are discussed. The preparation of a Key Issues Guide (KIG) for assessments would aid this process and provide support for other staff should the person teaching the course be unavailable to mark assessments.

There are some social events added in the programme to support students' social development, but as discussed during the visit, online students tend to ignore them, while they are more likely to attend social events that include career development aspects. Still, the EEC suggests that social events for online students should continue to be offered regularly.

Strengths

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

The e-learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study. The programme design follows the guidelines of CYQAA and ensures weekly interaction to an adequate degree.

Interaction between students is planned via collaborative activities that are embedded in all courses, and this is a very positive element.

The content of the induction course for the teachers covers several areas, including technical and pedagogical aspects of teaching in a DL programme. Pedagogical guidance is given in layman's terms for the teachers, which may be beneficial for them, even though additional explicit theoretical grounding may also be useful to further engage teachers in effective learning designs.

The e-learning process includes several interactive tools, including H5P activities, quizzes, case studies, etc. This can be very useful for students and may increase their engagement in the courses.

Forums are used throughout the programme to ensure student engagement with the course, while specific requirements for the number of posts to reply are also in place. This can indeed provide a tangible digital trail to help teachers track student engagement in their courses.

Assessment includes 50% for interactive activity and 50% for other assignments, including group assignments. This is positive and can cover multiple aspects of the learning experience.

The teachers were very appreciative of the support they receive from the DL Unit on pedagogy and learning design aspects. It is very positive that there seems to be a close connection between the teaching staff and learning design experts, especially because of the particularities of the DL programme.

The DL Unit offers ad hoc seminars to the teaching staff of emerging topics. These seminars may also include invited experts. This is a very positive characteristic of the programme.

Frederick University has received an E-xcellence certificate for DL by EADTU, which indicates that its practices have been vetted by a recognised association which specializes in distance teaching.

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.

Improvements could be made to clarify teaching, monitoring, and assessment policies and the way they are enforced during the runtime of a course, so that corrective actions could be made possible.

Currently, the program counts Week 0 within the five synchronous sessions, which is the minimum number required by CYQAA. Therefore, the students will have only four remaining synchronous sessions with their teacher in their courses. The EEC strongly suggests that Week 0 should not be counted, and an additional, course-related session is added in the programme. While the minimum requirement may be met (after excluding Week 0 from the count), the EEC proposes that more could be done and, whenever possible, the students should be offered more synchronous sessions. Indeed, during the visit, the EEC heard that several teachers hold additional synchronous sessions in their courses, as they see fit. The suggestion by the EEC would be to have, whenever possible, a homogeneous learning experience for the students in the programme. Having an engaging course with several synchronous sessions next to one in which students meet synchronously with their teachers in a plenary session only 4-5 times may have a detrimental effect on students' engagement and the way they evaluate their courses.

Because of the planned collaborative activities, the EEC's suggestion is to also provide guidance to students on how to effectively and productively work together. This is a critical issue. Students are not usually trained on how to be effective collaborators and collaboration activities may sometimes have negative effects on how students experience their learning.

Regarding students' access to teachers, the EEC suggests that access to teachers must be clear and welcomed. In that regard, it will be useful to have set hours and a minimum number of hours during the week during which the teachers could be accessible to their students for private consultation. Having said that, the discussion with the students (both ones in conventional and DL programmes) revealed that the students are highly satisfied with the accessibility they have with their teachers and their response times. This is commendable, but this success is still ad hoc and based on the individual investment of each teacher. It would be more productive to have a clear policy in the programme.

As a university teaching qualification (UTQ) and senior teaching qualification (SUTQ) become more common within European universities, the EEC strongly suggests a similar approach for the induction course for the teachers. It could also be seen as enhancing the teachers' professional development if such an induction course could lead to a certificate tied to ECs and aligned to European standards.

While the presentation by the DL Unit included several useful learning theories and learning design approaches, including motivational design, constructivism, connectivism, etc., it was not always easy to

identify these elements in the induction course for the teachers. For motivational learning design especially, the EEC suggests looking into Keller's ARCS model (attention-relevance-confidence-satisfaction).

Regarding flexible learning paths and inclusion, it is not clear how this could be applied in the programme as the material shared seems to have one predetermined path designed by the teacher. Even though this path was meticulously designed with the collaboration of the DL Unit, alternative learning paths have not been presented.

According to the EEC's view, complaints are usually extreme measures and students do not tend to expose themselves like that, while a course evaluation session at the end of the course is common for conventional courses. Therefore, the EEC suggests the inclusion of additional student-feedback moments during each course so that corrective actions would be possible.

Despite the positive elements of having a digital trail within a forum, using a forum can be outdated and lacking interactivity. Discussion rooms, or group chats could be seen as a more modern and common tools by the students.

One issue for attention is the individual contribution in group assignments. Students may need additional guidance to work effectively and productively in collaborative settings. Peer assessment is also in place and it is also positive, but it is happening at the end of the course, when no corrective action is possible. Especially for a DL programme, more checks throughout the timeline could be useful.

Regarding assessment, the EEC stresses the need for an aligned and coherent assessment procedure for all students throughout the whole programme. As such, it is advised that teacher meetings, either formal or informal (e.g., brown bags) would occur often.

Regarding the demonstration of mastery of intended learning outcomes (ILOs), the programme advertises a long list of outcomes per course. Curriculum mapping - the way and level in which each course contributed to the ILOs was not part of the application but was provided upon request. Still, it is unclear how and to what degree each course will actually contribute to each ILO. Specifically, the assessment is focusing primarily on knowledge acquisition and near transfer. Therefore, it is not clear how ILOs, such as cultivating critical thinking, are addressed in the different courses. Moreover, the interactive activities, which are mostly closed-type items, and group assignments (e.g., case studies) may offer limited space for students to exercise and demonstrate critical thinking. Finally, many of the ILOs seem to be focused on the subject matter (knowledge acquisition) and not so much on the other two levels required by CYQAA, namely skills and competences. It is strongly advised that a pragmatic approach will be followed in the ILOs and the curriculum mapping.

The courses follow the same structure regarding available information, assessment criteria, and overall style. This is very positive and can be attributed to the fact that the teachers have to work very closely with the learning design experts of the DL Unit. Having said that, the EEC would like to stress again that the depth of information provided in the application was not adequate and it was the presentations and discussions that covered the gaps presented in the application. If a revised application is needed by CYQAA, the EEC would like to emphasize the importance of adding all relevant information in the application.

A refresher of the induction course, or an advanced version of it, could be offered periodically.

One issue that emerged and caused serious concerns was the involvement of students in research activities. In principle, Master's students are expected to develop some research skills, including searching for information, validating sources, performing literature reviews, applying or designing solutions/interventions, and so on. During the discussion with the students, it was surprising to hear that the apparent consensus across the board was that they did not have to search for literature in any of their

courses and that they were unaccustomed to having to use the library to locate materials in paper or digital formats themselves. The implicit suggestion was that they felt they only needed to use the chapters and articles provided by their teachers in the courses. While this finding was inevitably based on a small sample, this is an issue on which the EEC has a strong and clear opinion that research activities must be part of the learning design and the students should be encouraged and supported in doing their own research, whether or not they intend to write a dissertation as part of their study. Linked to the ILOs and the critical thinking requirement, providing all the sources pre-emptively, without a requirement to extend the bibliography, seems like a clear impediment of students' opportunity to develop their critical thinking.

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
2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	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.*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the teaching staff focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *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:

- Is the teaching staff qualified to teach in the e-learning programme of study?
- 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.

Is the teaching staff qualified to teach in the e-learning programme of study?

Aside from the faculty selection and promotion process for Teaching and Research Staff outlined in the internal regulations of the Frederick University (referred to at p.14 of the application), there is a clear process for ensuring that teaching staff are appropriately prepared: the Distance Learning Pedagogical Framework establishes the basis for a co-ordinated approach to teaching in an e-learning environment. The Center for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching (CIET) provides e-learning training beginning with a two stage Instructors Induction Course, followed up with in-semester training and on the spot training with new tools. This is further supported by a comprehensive set of optional continuing professional development courses for all faculty. Combined with the support of the Distance Learning Unit and the Learning Support Unit, all programme members are sufficiently qualified to teach in the e-learning programme.

With regard to the subject matter of the program all the teaching staff have suitable qualifications and expertise to provide high quality teaching in the teaching units specified.

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?

There is, in addition to the e-learning-teaching-training process, the teaching-training process via the Personal and Professional Development Center at Frederick University which provides a range of

development opportunities to faculty to enable them to enhance their professional and personal skills. Staff are assigned annual training according to internal University categorisation (e.g. Faculty, part time faculty), including mandatory and highly recommended training. This includes mandatory training in teaching related issues. Failure to complete mandatory training is pursued rigorously.

There are student evaluations of the programme and the faculty, as well as a range of quality control measures (outlined in section 1 and below).

How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?

The Internal Quality Committee of Frederick University has developed and applies a Quality Assurance Policy. This addresses four broad areas, one of which is its programs of study and teaching. The internal quality system includes the processes and methodologies which (a) define, monitor, analyse and evaluate relevant quality indicators, (b) identify weaknesses and opportunities for further improvement and (c) apply remedial measures. The internal quality process is achieved through annual reporting, and the processes concerning academic staff, student performance and programs of study are assessed through student questionnaires and self-evaluation reports, for which templates are supplied by the University. The Department of Law implements the University's Quality Assurance Policy for teaching. Internal evaluation of a Program is the responsibility of the program coordinator and the program Internal Quality Committee, which consists of two program members and one student of the program. At the end of the academic year, the program coordinator completes a Program Self Evaluation report including quality indicators related to the program (structure, content, etc.), the students (assessment, progress, etc.), and the graduates (employability, degree grades, duration of studies, etc.) drawing upon data and information obtained through Student Course Evaluation questionnaires, the Faculty Course Evaluation report, and comments and suggestions made by the focus groups with students, graduates and employers. The Program Self Evaluation also reports on the action taken, related to the Program, with respect to the implementation of the Departments Action Plan agreed between the Department and the Internal Quality Committee. The Program Self Evaluation report is submitted to the Council of the Department and is part of the Department's Self Evaluation Report submitted to the Internal Quality Committee of the University.

Teaching performance is one of the key criteria for promotion of faculty members and will be evaluated in accordance with Frederick University's promotions process. Promotion (or not) will clearly affect a staff member's remuneration.

Is teaching connected with research?

Research and its linkage to teaching are encouraged by the University's general research policy. The full-time and part-time faculty members involved in the new programme are expected to actively pursue funded research projects, the dissemination of results from which will be systematically pursued through publication in refereed academic journals, chapters in edited volumes, and conference proceedings. The research activity of the faculty involved in the programme is compatible with the subject matter of the programme and is comprehensively listed in their extended CVs included in Annex 4.

Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?

The Department of Law of the Frederick University, in general, includes guest lecturers and guest professors from other Universities in Cyprus and abroad (p.13 of the application).

What is the number, workload, qualifications, and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?

The new programme consists of twelve teaching staff: one lecturer, one visiting lecturer, six assistant professors, three associate professors, and one visiting professor. The teaching staff are appropriately qualified. Ten of the teaching staff members are full-time faculty members and two are part time. Nevertheless, the teaching staff are spread relatively thinly with seven of the twelve units taught by a single staff member. There should be a system in place to ensure that teaching can continue for a set time without a specific faculty member, especially in the case of urgent and long-term illness etc.

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)?

There will be an extensive student evaluation process in place, which is, as mentioned, considered both in reviewing the teaching staff's performance, as well as the programme overall (for more information please see the responses to the questions above).

Regarding the third area, the review of the application and the findings from the onsite visit permit the evaluation committee to state that all the ESG/EQF-Standards are met by the Frederick University, Department of Law.

Strengths

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

The programme was designed, and is supported, by a talented and enthusiastic teaching staff.

The University's effective quality control system as well as their established and comprehensive pedagogical support structure regarding both classical teaching and particularly distance learning will enhance the effectiveness of the teaching staff.

The research strengths of the teaching staff provide a plausible support for the development of current and future quality teaching.

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 programme has an ambitious teaching and student support agenda, given the number of teaching staff deployed. While staff indicate that they are happy to manage the workload required, it is recommended that the School/program have a formalised process for addressing the unexpected absence of key teaching staff, beyond the current, apparently ad hoc, arrangements.

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	Compliant
3.2 Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3 Synergies of teaching and research	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.

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)?

The Programme will admit students in the Fall semester. Applications for admission to the programme will only be considered from candidates that fulfil the minimum entrance criteria and are set out in the General Student Regulations and the Frederick University Regulation. Eligible students should hold a Bachelor's degree in law, LLB or equivalent international qualification. Students with a related relevant academic qualification (e.g. political science, international and European studies) are also eligible but will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Further requirements include a very good command of Greek and English is highly important. Evidence of satisfactory knowledge of English (TOEFL, IELTS, GCSE, IGCSE and Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English or equivalent) may be considered an advantage. Prospective students are expected to submit their application and all relevant supporting documents, including copies of their diplomas, detailed transcripts, two letters of recommendation from professors or supervisors in the workplace and a statement of research interests. Whenever the Programme Committee deems it necessary, applicants may be invited for an interview.

The criteria for the evaluation of the student are the following:

- Academic qualifications (grade and reputation of the accrediting institution of the first degree, field of first degree and specialization, and if any, other post-graduate studies),
- The recommendation letters and the quality of the personal statement,
- Digital literacy
- Research interests
- Interview
- Work experience
- Knowledge of Greek and/or English

The admission criteria (summarized above) of Frederick University are, in the evaluation committee's opinion, satisfactory for this type of Masters' degree programme.

How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?

There is an established procedure at Frederick University for assessing prior learning and work experience.

Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?

Adherence to the Bologna Process Declaration also provides for the diploma supplement (as per Frederick University rules).

Based on the review of the application and the findings from the onsite visit, as the above outlined summary shows, the evaluation committee finds the fourth area and its respective subareas meet the ESG/EQF-Standards.

Strengths

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

In so far as it demonstrates clear adherence to the ECTS and the Bologna Process Declaration as well as the selected criteria for student admission, Frederick University provides for a good student admission and grading structure.

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.

Frederick University's admission criteria for the master's programme are satisfactory, considering academic qualifications, language proficiency, and professional experience. However, continuous review and adaptation to evolving educational landscapes are recommended.

Furthermore, given that the student cohort may have different disciplinary backgrounds, the ECC highly encourages providing a legal methodology course for students that come into the programme with another (even if related) field of specialisation.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
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

- Weekly interactive activities per each course are set.
- The e-learning material and activities take advantage of the capabilities offered by the virtual and audio-visual environment and the following are applied:
 - Simulations in virtual environments
 - Problem solving scenarios
 - Interactive learning and formative assessment games
 - Interactive weekly activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities for reality reconstruction and further processing based on hypotheses
 - They have the ability to transfer students to real-life situations, make decisions, and study the consequences of their decisions
 - They help in building skills both in experiences and attitudes like in real life and also in experiencing - not just memorizing knowledge
- A pedagogical planning unit for e-learning, which is responsible for the support of the e-learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.
- 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 e-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.

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?

As seen in Annex 6 of the application, the infrastructure of Frederick University is highly developed and extensive.

The programme uses Moodle as the primary LMS for asynchronous teaching and learning. The panel has been given access to an example Moodle course (from another programme).

All DL teaching staff are expected to follow a self-paced learning programme on how to design and deliver DL. This self-paced learning programme is offered by the DL department. Students are also offered training (in Week 0 of each course) on how to use the DL environment for their learning. There is also technical support throughout the period of studies.

Additionally, the University library also gives access to a good number of electronic resources. Furthermore, it has collaborations with other academic libraries in Cyprus and with the library of the University of Cyprus for additional resources.

Furthermore, the students are provided with a study guide for each course they have to, or choose to, complete.

Moreover, all faculty members have access to the extensive support and resources as well as administrative support.

Student well-being is at the centre of university values and provides students with various support centers (academical, technical, financial, regarding special needs and the use of the library etc.).

What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?

Both the teaching staff and students (following the law undergraduate programme/other DL programmes) feel that the infrastructure for DL, teaching materials, library resources etc. are sufficient and appropriate for the needs of the programme. The EEC is satisfied that the institution seems to have enough structures in place to allow rapid upscaling of resources (e.g. library resources) should this be needed once the programme is running.

**Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements?
How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?**

All the resources outlined above are up to date and state of the art. All the resources can be, and are reviewed, through the continued review process of the Distance Learning Committee and the Distance Learning Unit. Additionally, there is student feedback at the end of each course, which can be factored in if the need arises.

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?

Since the new programme is well integrated into the whole University structure and a distance learning programme, changing numbers of students should not be a problem for the infrastructure and the resources needed for the programme. The infrastructure for digital exams is provided for, but the use of proctoring software may need to be periodically reviewed.

The biggest and ongoing challenge for distance learning courses is the ever-changing digital environment, which has to be mitigated for, in order to guarantee an optimal learning and teaching experience for the students and the faculty members.

Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?

There are no reflections on this in the application. During the onsite discussions with students (from the LLB and other DL programmes), students reported that they had no difficulty accessing and receiving adequate support. They explained that apart from the structural university offered services, members of the teaching staff were very accessible and available to discuss study related questions and/or to guide students to the right persons who could support them further (e.g. student psychologists, technical support services etc.)

How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?

The student learning will be well supported. For the detailed information see area 2.

How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?

As also stated in detail under area 2, there is a university-wide system to identify needs and to monitor and mitigate special needs and different capabilities of students, e.g. either through the feedback system, where the students are monitored on their performance, the various support systems (pedagogical, technical etc.), or in the regard that special needs due to physical or psychological disabilities (e.g., learning difficulties) are taken into account.

Throughout their studies, students are supported in multiple ways at Frederick University. Students can reach out to the helpdesk and support services and directly to the lecturers. The University provides students with services including the advising and approval of pre-registration, assistance with financial difficulties, advising about students' grades and CPA, handling of petition requests and explanation of students' tuition fees, balance, and instalments. Furthermore, students are asked to inform the University of any particular requirements, so that those needed are addressed accordingly. Where needed, for students with special needs (facing either physical and/or learning difficulties) special arrangements are made during their studies or during the DL Final Exams (e.g., extension to the submission of assignments).

How is student mobility being supported?

Frederick University enables student mobility through Erasmus exchanges and Erasmus + internship participation.

From the review of the application and the findings from the onsite visit, the EEC finds that the requirements for the fifth and final area, and its respective subareas are met by Frederick University.

Strengths

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

The greatest strength, aside from the extensive support system for all lecturers, faculty members and all students, is the extensive coverage of teaching and learning resources, physical resources, human support resources and student support service of Frederick 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.

From the on-site discussions it appeared that teaching staff do not have fixed office hours for DL students. The EEC suggests that it is a good practice to have fixed office hours where students can reach the teaching staff: this provides clarity to students, reduces the threshold to reach out when help is needed and is a more effective use of the teaching staffs' time.

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	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	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.

1. Study Programme

Overall, the new programme described aligns well with the guidelines of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in all relevant aspects. The programme has a good quality assurance process, involving internal and external reviews, feedback solicitation from various stakeholders, and end of course evaluations.

Recommended action 1: introduce formal mid-course evaluation to complement end of course evaluations.

Recommended action 2: introduce formal ways of organising constructive alignment between learning outcomes, the content and assessment methods.

The programme title 'Law of new technologies and e-government' gives space for multiple interpretations. One interpretation of the title is that the programme has two themes as its focus: a. law of new technologies and b. e-government. Following this interpretation the programme content reflects on law of new technologies (e.g. on cybersecurity and artificial intelligence) in compulsory courses; and e-government is barely touched upon. This does not seem to sufficiently reflect the title of the programme.

Another interpretation, supported by the teaching staff during the on-site visit is that the e-government (in the title) needs to be understood as 'governance' and that the first three compulsory courses reflect this governance approach (EU policies in the digital sector; European Protection of fundamental rights in the digital era; law of digital economy). If this is the preferred interpretation, then the EEC recommends changing the programme title to 'Law of new technologies and their governance'.

Recommended action 3: ensure that the title of the programme reflects the content of the programme: either change the programme title or the content of the programme.

The programme is designed to address contemporary challenges in legal frameworks related to new technologies, aiming to produce professionals with a deep understanding of European technology regulation. The objectives align with the evolving needs of society. The designers of the programme have been in contact with external stakeholders and are inspired by the needs of practitioners. The link with the world of legal practice is very valuable and should be maintained.

Recommended action 4: maintain and strengthen the relations with practitioners to renew and keep the course content up-to-date and to set up internships for the DL students in the different practice areas.

The course descriptions and study guides are at an advanced stage. No completed DL course has been yet prepared but the study guides give a good idea of what is being planned. The courses are very ambitious in nature as can be seen from the extensive number of learning outcomes for each course. This needs revision and in line with Recommended action 2, the programme learning outcome and the learning outcomes for each course need to be reduced and aligned. Furthermore, the EEC is concerned with what seems to be repetitions of particular topics in multiple courses (e.g., the GDPR and other data protection regulations appearing in multiple courses).

Recommended action 5: set up formal coordination meetings discussing content of each course to ensure a clear learning pathway for students following the programme.

The University also handles the extensive challenge of sustaining the high standards of quality assurance, maintaining relevance to societal and technological developments, and actively involving students in programme development; this requires continuous effort and analysis, which the University and the Department of Law undertake with great commitment.

To address these challenges, the University continuously analyses student feedback, evaluates programme outcomes, and adapts to emerging needs. The commitment to preventing student dropouts and providing a supportive learning environment necessitates ongoing monitoring and improvement. The EEC had the impression that the research learning goal of the programme, especially when students opt not to undertake a thesis, seems to be a bit vague. Furthermore, it seems that only one course (Cybersecurity and AI) has a substantial technical knowledge component (i.e. how does the particular technology that is the subject of discussion actually work). Some more information concerning the technical knowledge content of the programme could be helpful.

Recommended action 6: strengthen the research skills components in the programme courses by explaining clearly to the students what is expected in the writing assignments of the courses.

Recommended action 7: consider providing, perhaps in the interactive sessions of some of the courses, more information on technical issues of the new technologies under investigation in the programme.

As the programme is yet to be launched, the University's success in meeting these commitments will be demonstrated through its ability to utilize student feedback effectively, make informed programme enhancements, and ensure that the programme remains aligned with the evolving landscape of technology and legal frameworks. Continuous self-assessment and a proactive approach to refining the educational experience will be key to maintaining the programme's effectiveness and meeting the outlined goals.

Recommended action 8: implement a continuous self-assessment process and set up regular course alignment and revision meetings between teaching staff and teaching staff and external stakeholders.

2. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

The programme is very relevant and actual, not only regarding its field of study and research, but also regarding the dynamic nature of new technologies and their regulation. Furthermore, it is especially suited to effective delivery through the chosen distance learning method. The programme aligns well with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), reflection on policy making at a European level and its translation and implementation in the national context (both in Cyprus and in Greece). The well-developed e-learning infrastructure supports student-teacher interaction, utilizing tools like Zoom and Moodle.

The e-learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study. The programme design follows the guidelines of CYQAA and ensures weekly interaction to an adequate degree. Nevertheless, improvements could be made to clarify policies and the way they are enforced during the runtime of a course so that corrective actions could be made possible. The programme design currently includes five synchronous plenary sessions in each course, which is the minimum requirement set by CYQAA. This includes Week 0, though, in which no content-related issue is covered. Therefore, the students will have only four remaining synchronous sessions with their teacher in their courses.

Recommended action 9: The EEC strongly suggests that Week 0 should not be counted as part of the minimum requirement, and an additional, course-related session is added in the programme.

The student support services, including counselling and career advice centres, address diverse student needs. The current responsibility of monitoring student involvement lies with instructors/teaching staff. A more institutional approach to monitoring student participation and needs that does not require students to

reach out, but rather that the institution reaches out to them, could support student well-being more effectively.

Recommended action 10: consider using more learning analytics by the DLU to support the ad hoc monitoring of students by teaching staff.

The pedagogical model emphasizes multimodality, various teaching and learning methods such as interactivity, as well as a well thought out system of formative and evaluative assessments.

In conclusion, the programme has a good foundation. Regular reviews and a culture of innovation will contribute in preparing students for the intersection of law and digital technologies.

3. Teaching Staff

The teaching staff on the programme are all highly qualified members of staff, mostly with specialisations in some areas of technology regulation or law and technology. This can also be seen from the publication lists. There is also a conscious drive for funded research projects. This is very important as research projects can also be used to engage students in practical research training and work. The qualified teaching staff also work or contribute to the teaching in external institutions (e.g., in Greek, German universities to mention but a few) and European Union institutions (e.g., OLAF and other EU agencies). Periodic assessments of workload distribution and faculty satisfaction contribute to a positive teaching environment. However, the workload for the Law Department is high, too.

Recommended action 11: reduce teaching staff obligations to monitor student progress by using learning analytics tools or support of DLU.

Frederick University provides a self-paced learning module for teaching staff involved in DL. It also provides different training opportunities that staff can choose from.

Recommended action 12: consider introducing / assigning ECTS/certification for staff training.

The multifaceted approach to teaching performance assessment, including quality control and student feedback is well designed. Incorporating external stakeholder input ensures alignment with real-world demands.

The commitment to the synergy of teaching and research efforts is to be further encouraged. While it is commendable that separate research achievement KPIs for the law department have been made, this should not lead the department members to keep on doing 'more of the same' but more ambitious approaches to involvement in external research funding should be further pushed. Research-led teaching best benefits students. The encouragement of interdisciplinary research projects and the strengthening of the link between research outputs and courses enhances the academic environment for the faculty and the students.

Utilising visiting teaching staff enriches the programme and brings in aspects from legal practice or law in practice that is indispensable for student learning.

Enhancements to the student evaluation process that involve systematic feedback analysis and a feedback loop for continuous improvement are greatly encouraged by the EEC.

In conclusion, Frederick University's Department of Law demonstrates a strong commitment to quality education. Emphasizing continuous improvement, periodic evaluations, and proactive measures for industry alignment will further strengthen the programme being proposed.

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Frederick University's admission criteria for the Master's programme are satisfactory, considering academic qualifications, language proficiency, and professional experience. However, continuous review and adaptation to evolving educational landscapes are recommended.

Recommended action 13: consider providing a legal methodology course for students that come into the programme with another (even if related) field of specialisation.

The recognition of prior learning and work experiences aligns with European standards and the Bologna Process Declaration.

Concerning the students' workload the evaluation committee had the impression that the students may feel some pressure because they have to work very hard during the programme.

Recommended action 14: reconsider the assessment workload and distribution of courses being offered in the same semester.

The University's commitment to the Bologna Process Declaration includes providing a diploma supplement in line with European and international standards, demonstrating compliance with ESG/EQF-Standards. Regular reviews and updates of the diploma supplement content can further enhance its relevance.

In conclusion, Frederick University, Department of Law, has also met the ESG/EQF-Standards in the fourth area of evaluation. The recommendations focus on continual evaluation and adaptation to ensure sustained alignment with international educational benchmarks.

5. Learning Resources and Student support

The evaluation of Frederick University's master's degree programme, particularly in the context of EQF standards, reveals a robust and well-established infrastructure. The extensive facilities, including numerous buildings, classrooms, laboratories, and a well-equipped library with international affiliations, provide a commendable foundation for the programme.

The DL infrastructure is appropriate for the offering of this programme. The E-xcellence certification by EADTU is commendable.

The EEC acknowledges the programme's strong support structures for students, including counselling services, flexibility in the study programme, and accommodations for special needs. The EEC would recommend that the University take more proactive measures to support student well-being and in ensuring more inclusion of DL students in the life of the university and the Department of Law in particular.

Recommended action 15: take more proactive action in ensuring students' well-being while studying online.

In the overall assessment, Frederick University meets the ESG/EQF standards.



E. Signatures of the EEC

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