

Doc. 300.1.1/2

Date: Date.

# External Evaluation Report (E-learning programme of study)

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

**In Greek:**

«Ελληνικές Σπουδές (18 μήνες/ 90 ECTS, Μεταπτυχιακό)» Εξ Αποστάσεως

**In English:**

“Hellenic Studies (18 months/ 90 ECTS, Master of Arts)” E-Learning

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

**In Greek:** 1. Ιστορία 2. Αρχαιολογία και Τέχνη 3. Πολιτιστική Διαχείριση

**In English:** 1. History 2. Archaeology and Art 3. Heritage Management



The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws” of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

## A. Introduction

*This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.*

The five-member EEC visited the campus and was given a full-day program on 23 February 2023. We met with the upper administration and members of the executive board, the internal evaluation committee and coordination committee members, the teaching staff, the e-learning staff, current students and alumni/ae, the administrative and library staff, and again the upper administration and representatives of the executive board. We also saw the impressive facilities. The conditions of our visit and the hospitality were impeccable, as was the promptness with which our occasional requests for additional information were addressed.

The internal evaluation committee had provided us with ample materials to study in advance. We were also given a copy of the program's first external evaluation which was held five years ago. Since its inception, the program has grown to its current level of just under 30 students. We discussed at length the program's quality, its visibility, and its opportunities for expansion in the future. Throughout the process, we were very impressed by the faculty's commitment and enthusiasm and by the overall spirit of collegiality. Those important qualities were reflected in the feedback provided by some twelve students as well.

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
<b>Gonda Van Steen, Chair</b>	Koraes Professor of Modern Greek and Byzantine History, Language and Literature	King's College London
<b>Iordanis Kavathatzopoulos, Member</b>	Professor, Department of Information Technology,	Uppsala University
<b>Jan C.A. Kolen, Member</b>	Dean of the Faculty of Archaeology, Professor of the History and Heritage of European Cultural Landscapes	Leiden University
<b>Ioannis Xydopoulos, Member</b>	Associate Professor, School of History and Archaeology	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
<b>Nikandros Savvides, Member</b>	Student	University of Cyprus
<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>University</b>

## 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.*

The MA study program in Hellenic Studies is an *online* program of 1,5 year, with a total study load of 90 ECTS, that offers students the possibility to specialize in three areas of expertise: History;

Archaeology and Art; and Heritage Management. The program offers students to increase their knowledge about the history, archaeology and heritage of ancient, historical and modern Greece at an advanced academic level. Additionally, the program provides students with a set of professional and “transferable” skills that prepare a new generation for the job market or increases the career prospects of more experienced students with a professional background.

The program is built up in three phases: a compulsory phase, a concentration phase, and a thesis phase (final phase), all comprising 30 EC. The compulsory phase consists of general, multidisciplinary courses in research methods and *capita selecta* in Hellenic Studies. The concentration phase is for further specialization in history, archaeology & art or heritage management and offers students a choice of three (3 \* 10 ECTS) out of four specific courses. The final phase contains individual research that generally results in the writing of an academic essay, also other formats (like a museum exhibition) are possible as well. Student mobility (up to 12 months) is encouraged through various programs for collaboration, including ERASMUS+, and MOU’s with partner institutions in other countries

At all levels (study program phases, MA specializations as well as the individual courses) the study program is considered of a high academic level, preparing students in an excellent way for a professional career in (or outside) history, archaeology and heritage management.

### Strengths

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

The teaching program has many strengths:

- Both in terms of design and content, the courses offered in the program are of a high level. Course objectives and learning outcomes are clearly defined, so that students know from the start what is expected from them. Content is described concisely and clearly, dealing with current, mostly interdisciplinary topics that show that teaching staff is familiar with frontline developments in the field (history, archaeology and heritage/museum studies). Subtopics are listed as well. The courses are theoretically well-informed, methodologically sound (dealing with sources and interpretation in a critical way) and address concrete examples that illustrate the case. Grading is consistently based on assignments and a final exam. All courses are designed according to the same format, illustrating that the program design is true teamwork, which enhances the recognizability and studyability for the student.
- The study program is built up in a logical and recognizable way, with [1] the compulsory phase, with a training in the basics of method, theory and approach, [2] a concentration phase (with specific courses) offering room for specialization, and [3] a thesis phase, training students in original research, together with a supervisor with specific experience in the field. The evaluation committee appreciates that the thesis requirement is mandatory and based mainly on written work. This sequence, too, contributes to the studyability of the program and offers students the time and space to make choices and develop their own interests.

- Theses are of a high academic level, covering current academic topics that are relevant for the students' CV and career prospects. In some cases, the thesis can even be an important step towards a PhD dissertation.
- Drop-out rates are low (< 10%) without compromising on quality requirements. This may be related to the fact that many students have a professional background, but teaching staff ensures that adhering to quality standards is a shared principle.

### 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.*

Although the study program is of high quality, both at the course level and program level, the following recommendations can be made:

- The program not only aims at the transmission of (inter)disciplinary knowledge and the training in academic research skills (critical attitude, analytical skills, writing skills), but also focuses on the training in transferable skills (and so-called “soft skills”), like science communication. It is not entirely clear from the program outline how the different skills are interwoven with the organization of the program in terms of courses and phases (compulsory/concentration/thesis). It is advisable to design/describe separate learning lines for the most important skills (academic/professional and transferable) in order to make clear how they relate to -and are further developed within- the subsequent phases and courses of the program.
- Initially the program attracted students with a professional background (already having jobs in secondary education etc.), but it now attracts young students without professional experience as well (having finished a BA elsewhere). It is advisable to investigate if the current program is still optimal for this last group when the student numbers are increasing and while distinct student populations with different profiles may form. This issue is not a problem yet, but it is recommended to anticipate it at an early stage to maintain the high level of education within the program for different target groups.
- The thesis phase, as well as its intended learning outcomes, is described in a very concise way. Although this is not reported by the students as insufficient, it could be good for new students to know at an early stage what will be expected from them in this final phase and - more importantly- what the different possibilities and formats look like. The program description seems to suggest that the main goal is learning to write an academic essay about a self-chosen and original research topic, although -in reality- this final phase is more flexible and could also contain the design of a museum exhibition, conservation plan (heritage management) or similar topics. This is a true asset of the program and it should be advertised more explicitly.
- Theses are of a high academic level, like the courses in the first two phases of the program, but it seems that students devote (much) more time to finish them than the program anticipates, leading to inevitable delays. Although this may seem understandable from the perspective of both students and staff, and while this is the case in many European master programs in history, archaeology and heritage studies, it is advisable to investigate how this effect can be mitigated.

- It may well be that the program is sustainable with the current student numbers. These seems to be stable for several years now, at c. 30 students. Additionally, as said, drop-rates are low. However, when there is the need to attract more students, we recommend reconsidering the labelling of the program, the teaching language and the recruitment strategy. The program holds a huge potential in terms of attracting a larger student population, not only from Cyprus and Greece, but in fact from the Eastern Mediterranean region as a whole and other regions in the Near East, Europe and North America, where the history and heritage of ancient and modern Greece has (had) an impact on culture, science and society. This potential now remains hidden in the Greek language program and in labels like “Hellenic Studies”. It is advisable to explore alternatives like “History, Archaeology and Heritage of the Greek World”. More actively advertising the English-language version will help as well, by organizing online open days, the summer school, etc.

**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	Partially compliant
1.4	Information management	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.*

### **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.*

What stood out for the EEC members including the student representative on this evaluation team was the following:

The structure of the Hellenic Studies MA program and the process of teaching are well adapted to e-learning methodology and clearly supports and facilitates the achievement of the pedagogical goals. Students are taking an active role in the e-learning process. Interaction between teachers and students takes many different forms taking advantage of the possibilities offered by technology. The important parameter of student-student interaction is supported, for example, by the opportunities of giving feedback to fellow students during oral presentations (assignments).

The students spoke consistently highly of the program and its faculty, and appreciated the instant connection with the faculty and other students, despite the e-learning structure. If anything, everyone made extra efforts to supersede distance and to contribute to a vibrant intellectual community.

The committee members appreciate the supportive learning environment for students with special needs, which gives true meaning to a student-centred university. The EUC and the program are aware that student needs may be invisible as well as visible, and that a confidential environment is therefore as essential as a supportive environment.

The faculty has engaged its students in community-building events across the Green Line, bringing Greek-Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots together at events. Such events may be small in size or scope, but they carry symbolic weight for the future of the divided island.

Many students come from a position of current employment. They are very mature and have defined clear goals for themselves, which they shared freely. They applaud the faculty's openness to their interests and objectives. They also welcome opportunities to engage with faculty members in the organization of colloquia, for instance, which again expands their horizons and ultimately enhances their employment prospects.

### Strengths

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

Uploading individual work and devoting the following seminar to discussing the same work create opportunities for interaction among students, which plays an important role in achieving the educational goals of the program.

The E-learning format is well-suited for -and much appreciated by- students who have jobs or other commitments that prevent them from following a more "conventional" study program (with physical attendance), without losing academic quality.

This MA program delivered excellent work and managed to grow under pandemic conditions.

### 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.*

Communication, cooperation and interaction among students could be strengthened further by introducing special assignments explicitly demanding from fellow students to provide feedback on other students work. In a next step, the student receiving feedback could show how his/her work has been revised, or not, due to the feedback. That could be a natural way for students to interact with each other and at the same time learn from each other.

**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.*

Findings and Strengths: The faculty body of the EUC's MA in Hellenic Studies consists of 11 members, of which only two hold permanent positions. Most of the others are in adjunct positions, a couple are called scientific collaborators. The gender ratio is about even, with five male faculty members and six female faculty members.

Since the program itself is very young, recruitment has often been by word-of-mouth. Several faculty members worked together in other capacities and locations, and thus some are responsible for bringing on board several others. We discussed additional recruitment options but those will depend on increased student numbers. The faculty as a unit needs to make its case for new hires to the upper administration and needs to motivate its choices. At this level, they compete with other programs. In sum, for recruitment to be initiated, the total student numbers in the program will first have to (steadily) increase.

The members of the faculty are highly qualified and have a lot of expertise in research as well as in teaching. They are experts in delivering e-learning: they have benefited from many hours of training provided by the EUC and from support and development opportunities once on board (the 2021-22 faculty professional development program consisted of 35 hours of training, with some sessions being more specialized than others). The faculty members earn points for research activities (such as participating in international conferences, publications, etc.), which they can exchange for course reductions. They also actively pursue international collaborations and maintain ties with the universities where they themselves studied and/or the universities where they are employed as well. They are eager to become members of international research

collaborations. To the question of whether this very involved e-learning teaching method cuts into their research time, some faculty members answered that they really enjoyed being able to teach within their area of expertise and ongoing research. They noted that this was not always the case at the other universities where they are employed. The faculty members also embrace the thesis topics that the students propose, even though some of these topics may not lie within their area of specialization.

Most of the faculty members are indeed in positions at other universities, mostly in Greece, while also committing to teaching for this MA program. This dual employment is often necessitated by financial need. It therefore poses the question of the salary structure at the EUC. See below under Weaknesses/ Areas for Improvement.

On the positive side: an academic leave policy is in place, as is a health insurance scheme and pension plan. Faculty promotion procedures follow EUC's charter. A faculty member has to have served for at least three years in any given rank before applying for promotion and needs to demonstrate excellence, in all three areas of teaching, research, and service.

### Strengths

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

Combined with the above section.

### 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 response to the EEC's questions, we were told that the incoming salaries are determined by perceived market value, that is, a faculty member in the Humanities will be offered a smaller incoming salary than a colleague in a STEM discipline. Moreover, merit increases are not exclusively based on objective criteria but on informal evaluations or input offered by the faculty members' supervisors. This type of informal evaluation happens in addition to student evaluations, but it is not entirely clear which evaluations carry more weight. Salaries do go up if the instructor has more than 10 students in one course, and again after the next 10 students. On 24 February, we were informed that the average gross salary of the full-time academic staff of the Department of Humanities is €3,750 per month (X13). But we realize that this average would not apply to adjunct faculty, who are hired on a course-by-course basis.

Already in the on-site session, the EEC members pointed out the lack of transparency in this remuneration system. The system also risks de-incentivizing qualified faculty members who may use their EUC position as a springboard to a better paid position. We appreciate the collegiality and enthusiasm that the MA faculty and their supervisors brings to the program, but they are no substitute for transparency and equity. In other words, the salary system and the merit pay scale are structural problems of a serious nature that need to be addressed at the highest levels. There may even be liabilities to this system from a legal point of view. Our advice: drop the "penny wise pound foolish" approach and put in place a more transparent system that will be robust enough to sustain itself through the near future.



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.*

The student admission requirements appear on the EUC's webpage. The general admission requirement for graduate programs is the successful completion of a bachelor's degree at an accredited institution, or its equivalent (professional qualifications). The documentation received by the Department does not mention the existence of an annual welcome event for incoming students. However, new students receive information about the function and structure of the Department and the specific program, the medical (and psychological) care facilities, the university library and the (electronic) access to all services. Moreover, they are informed about the program of study and the organization as all information is posted on the website and the Student Advising Center. The program currently admits about 30 students per year. This number is considered vital for the viability of the program and current indications are optimistic for the next three years.

Students' assessment is competence-driven. It consists of a final written exam, an oral exam (Minor Assignment) in the form of individual students' presentations, a written essay (Major Assignment), and Self-Assessment & Interactive Exercises/Activities, all with a standard percentage counting towards the final assessment/grade.

The Department discusses student progression in their departmental meetings. They base their discussions on statistical data gathered by the QA team. In addition, informal discussion takes place in the sector meetings, which address issues of student progression and completion. All students and full-time staff of the European University Cyprus are welcome to participate in all schemes of the Erasmus+ program. Their participation is subject to certain criteria found on the website of the EUC, where more information may be found as well.

Student mobility, especially with the Erasmus+ program, is actively promoted by the Department since the internationalization of students is one of its strategic goals. The EUC has developed numerous agreements with European universities. Mobility programs allow the faculty to make their expertise more broadly known to the international and, particularly, the European academic community. The students receive faculty and administrative support to participate in mobility

programs, but the rate of participation is relatively low, mainly because many students in the e-learning program are actively employed. However, a higher participation rate in such mobility programs would increase the students' international exposure and this program's visibility and impact.

The Department has made available a clear and useful thesis handbook. The students are fully aware that they cannot continue their education at a PhD level, although -when asked - some of them stated clearly that they would like to continue at a higher level in this program. The faculty runs a very successful MA programme that produces high-quality research results but considers the leap to a PhD program to be a big leap and considers that it may be more beneficial to the students to enter competitive PhD programs elsewhere and to thus expand their horizons.

High completion rates can also be linked with the quality of the students admitted in the program of study. We understand that the low percentages of non-completion are the result of many different factors, such as social and personal factors, economic factors, and so on.

Percentages of students who used their MA degree for employment or improvement of their current status as employees were not available.

### Strengths

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

The overall environment is stimulating and nurturing for the students. This has its visible effect in the percentages of successful progression and completion of study which are relatively high and are increasing. This is recognized as a positive aspect by the EEC and is highlighted accordingly. The e-learning environment is friendly and easy to handle by the students.

Courses are evaluated by the students and the results are taken into consideration by the Department and the Rector, as the non-permanent teaching staff is also being evaluated on a yearly basis.

We note that students strongly appreciate the support they receive regularly from the Department. As stated also in section 2, there is excellent support also for students with special educational needs and the Department can cope with all probable difficulties in advance.

Students are involved in the conferences and colloquia organized by the MA program. Also, the annual organization of a colloquium of postgraduate students online is noted as a means of advertising the program but also as an opportunity for feedback within the program. The Summer School organized by the Department is also adding to students getting more acquainted with various fields of History and Archaeology.

Opportunities are given to potential students who are not able to attend physically other programs. Interaction between teaching staff and students but also between students is feasible via the e-learning and Blackboard environments. Students expressed their satisfaction for benefitting from the recording of the classes and the importance of connecting all three subjects (H-A-CH).

Master theses' subjects are eligible for a PhD thesis in other HEIs, a fact attesting to the high quality of the program.

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.*

\*We recommend the establishment of a day-long Welcome Event for incoming students at a university-wide level, as the program of study has a particularly interesting structure.

\* We recommend that the Department continues to closely monitor the completion and progression rates of students.

\* We recommend that the Department considers enhancing the role of the student advisor, by appointing more members of staff in that role, so that students can be further supported in their studies.

**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

- *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.*

All necessary teaching and learning resources (for example library, online access to library, experienced teachers, support structures, etc.) are in place, easy to access and possible to use in the proper way due to the training and support procedures of the EUC. The training of teachers is oriented toward the use of technical resources for e-learning, but there is also some focus on the pedagogical dynamics of distance learning and the use of online technology.

### Strengths

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

Enthusiastic and highly motivated teachers as well as satisfied students. Readiness to take care of new developments in technology that may affect the learning process. For example, initiation of a plan to support teachers in detecting and handling the threat, or the possibilities, coming from algorithms like chatGPT.

Teachers participate in the design of their educational materials as well as receiving support from a professional designer during this process.

### 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 skills of teachers can be developed further and be supported more if a stronger focus is placed on the possibilities of e-learning technology for reaching the educational goals of the program.

A plan for promoting and advertising the program to students from different countries, cultures and interests could be very important in order to secure satisfactory future participation.

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.*

The EUC's MA program in Hellenic Studies is a strong program that has proven its viability in the past years and is expected to sustain itself and to grow in the near and longer-term future. The faculty is highly qualified and very committed to the program. The MA program concentration on heritage management is quite unique. They deliver high-quality work in research as well as in teaching and their commitment to student contact and support is evident—and much appreciated by the students. The students see the value of the program for career purposes as well as for their general enrichment and deliver good results. A distinct strength of this MA program is the compulsory thesis.

The faculty and administration have responded well to the recommendations made five years ago, as we could establish by reading the older report and by assessing the progress made since. We hope that they will take the current recommendations to heart as well.

Recommendations for a viable future and for expansion:

- Implement an equitable and transparent salary and merit pay system.
- Develop an advertising and marketing strategy for the whole Eastern Mediterranean and the East, in particular, with an emphasis on English-language course offerings
- Develop the summer school as a recruiting tool for the MA program. Support for this marketing strategy needs to come from the upper echelons of the EUC. Develop specialty topics such as 1) numismatics and 2) history and archaeology of Cyprus. Allow two such accelerated summer courses (maximum two) to count towards the electives of the MA, which then give the student a head-start and additional incentive to pursue the full MA degree.
- The teacher training component can still benefit from a stronger focus on pedagogical aspects.
- The faculty should continue to support and augment learning procedures that formalize and enhance student-student interaction and cooperation.



## E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
<b>Gonda Van Steen</b>	
<b>Iordanis Kavathatzopoulos</b>	
<b>Jan C.A. Kolen</b>	
<b>Ioannis Xydopoulos</b>	
<b>Nikandros Savvides</b>	

**Date:** 2 March 2023