Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education

Republic of Cyprus

External Evaluation Report

Program of Study

Institution: University of Nicosia (UNIC)

Program of Study: MA in International Relations and European Studies (Distance Learning).

Concentrations a) Energy and International Security and b) Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean Studies

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INSTRUCTIONS:

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 2016" [N. 136 (I)/2015].

The document is duly completed by the External Evaluation Committee for each program of study. The ANNEX (Doc. Number 300.1) constitutes an integral part of the external evaluation report for the external evaluation accreditation of a program of study.

EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE:

NAME	TITLE	UNIVERSITY / INSTITUTION
Pierre Vercauteren	Professor Faculty of Economic, Social, Political and Communication Sciences	Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium
Panagiotis Grigoriou,	Professor of International and European Institutions, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences	The University of the Aegean
Papadakis Nikolaos,	Professor, Department of Political Science,	University of Crete
Angelique Dimitracopoulou ,	Professor, Design of Technology Based Learning,	The University of the Aegean
Maria Xiari,	Student,	University of Cyprus

INTRODUCTION:

I. The External Evaluation procedure

- *Short description of the documents that have been studied, of the on site visit meetings, and of the on site visit to the infrastructures.*

The documents studied by the EEC included:
- The UNIC Application for Evaluation- Accreditation of the DL MA on International Relations and European Studies and all the relevant documents included in.
- The ppt Presentation of the UNIC DL MA in IR & ES, by Dr Michalis Kontos, Programme Coordinator.
- Study Guides of all courses
- Samples of Dissertations and monthly Assignments
- Samples of Students' Evaluation on Courses taught
- Samples of written exams, provided on site
- The Handbook for Students with Special Needs
- The recently adopted DL Student evaluation questionnaire

as well as, reference material provided by the DIPAE, namely:
- The Criteria for the Distance Learning Programmes of Study
- The Hannover Research Council Best Practices in Online Teaching Strategies
- The SOU DEC Best Practices

EEC On Site visit, included meetings with:
- The Rector of UNIC and the UNIC Authorities
- The Dean of Faculty, the Head of the Dept and the MA Programme Coordinator
- The members of the Academic Staff, teaching in the MA
- The Institution's Internal Evaluation Committee
- The IT experts
- Students

Additionally we proceeded in an online visit to the MA learning environment and relevant facilities, given that the specific MA is a DL one.

II. The Internal Evaluation procedure
- *Comments concerning the quality and the completeness of the application submitted by the institution of higher education (Doc. Number 200.1), as well as concerning the overall acceptance of and participation in the quality assurance procedures, by the institution in general and by the program of study under evaluation in particular.*

The UNIC application for the DL MA in IR & ES, was complete, well presented and detailed.

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ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

FINDINGS:

1. EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING WORK – AVAILABLE RESOURCES
- **Organization of Teaching Work**
- **Teaching**
- **Teaching personnel**

The EEC has a general positive stance/ view on the UNIC DL MA IR&ES.
- ✓ The MA programme is undoubtedly an interesting, contextually- embedded well- structured and organized in terms of teaching work.
- ✓ The personnel includes experienced colleagues, with proven expertise (both in terms of research and teaching) in the field and significant experience in both conventional and DL BA and MA programmes.
- ✓ The Academic Staff is strongly motivated, dedicated and dynamic. Initiatives such as international collaborations, research- based and consultancy- oriented networking is a clear indication of a dynamic and devoted personnel.
- ✓ Availability in Human Resources (Academic Staff and Administrators as well as IT experts) and Infrastructure is satisfactory.

The EEC points out some improvements dimensions on teaching approaches, learning activities and assessment types inventory.

2. PROGRAM OF STUDY AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

- **Purpose and Objectives and learning outcomes of the Program of Study**
- **Structure and Content of the Program of studies**
- **Quality Assurance of the Program of studies**
- **Management of the Program of Study**
- **International Dimension of the Program of Study**
- **Connection with the labor market and the society**

The UNIC DL MA in IR&ES is a well- advanced one, in terms of purpose and objectives as well as the competence- based anticipated learning outcomes. In fact, it mirrors in a certain extent the pre-existing conventional Programme.
- ✓ Objectives include diverse sets of general and specific, that facilitates the learning process.
- ✓ Learning outcomes are detailed, clear enough and reflect the focus on International Relations.
- ✓ Given its specialization- concentration in International Relations (with certain focus on security and energy) it has a remarkable originality.
- ✓ Yet the second part is clearly weaker and not equally supported in terms of courses provided. Indeed the broad title of the MA programme doesn't reflect

its content and teaching priorities, while it doesn't highlight its originality. The actual focus of the Curriculum should be reflected in the MA title.

✓ Further improvement needs to be carried out on the issue of research methodology (recommendation: compulsory, taught in an earlier term).

✓ Additionally, dissertation should be compulsory as well, which is the European practice in 2nd Cycle studies especially in European Studies (see TUNING Project, European Studies Template, 2009, pg 32).

✓ The internationalization is relevant to the objectives and content of the programme, however this could further developed with regard to the European dimension. Internationalization shouldn't be limited to attracting foreign students. Further, it should aim at establishing thematic synergies with experienced Professors and Experts, as well as Research Centers and International Organizations.

✓ The management of the Program of Study is effective and efficient, due to the productive cooperation between the Dean, the Dept Head, the MA Coordinator and the Academic personnel. The key actor, namely the MA Programme Coordinator, is aware of the relevant flow chart and the cooperation with the other internal stakeholders seems effective enough. The fact that Academic Staff Personnel participates the Senate documents the EEC's statements on a effective management combined with multi-actor participation in decision making process and governing bodies.

✓ The content and the structure of the MA Programme is in line with the labour market needs. Yet, the relevant labour market needs of the targeted area, namely the East Med. one, should be assessed in order to harmonize in terms of their specificities and subsequently be contextualized in the Cyprus and the broader Region (East Med., Middle East).

3. RESEARCH WORK AND SYNERGIES WITH TEACHING
- **Research Teaching Synergies**

Academic Staff's research work is tentative and efficient, while it enhances and results from established international networks and subsequently reflects into teaching. What is recommend it is to clarify which research synergies out of the established ones could enhance and promote the European dimension in the teaching aspect. Probably further research synergies with EU MS Universities, not limited just in ERASMUS mobility (i.e participation in research consortia for Grants as well as in EU Networks).

4. ADMINISTRATION SERVICES, STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT OF TEACHING WORK
- **Administrative Mechanisms**
- **Infrastructures / Support**
- **Financial Resources**

The EEC has a positive view on the quality of the administrative services. There is a clear student welfare policy, while teaching work is efficiently supported by IT experts and administrative staff. The EEC has not enough data provided in order to evaluate the adequacy of financial recourses. Yet, the increase of financing sources via Institutional Partnerships, EU Research Grants, EEA Financing Mechanism, UNDP etc should be examined as an option of multiplying fund-raising initiatives and access to additional recourses.

5. DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS

With regards to the DL approach, the EEC acknowledges the adequacy and quality of the infrastructure.

There is a well- defined general model of distance education, online technologies, well-advanced administrative structure and a distance learning Unit with appropriate infrastructure. There are well- developed polices for all the key dimensions. However the Institution should develop a Pedagogical Planning Unit for DL Programmes in order to meet the requirements of DIPAE. The involved Academic Staff in UNIC DL MA Programme, assessed would be much supported in its teaching tasks via the provision of an advanced Teacher Training Programme on DL approaches and activities. According to the UNIC Authorities, they are in process to start the establishment of such a Unit. This would contribute to:

(1) Design and Develop a structured Pedagogical Training Approach, as well as corresponding material, applying a rich variety of training methods (workshops, mentoring, peer tutoring, etc)

(2) Produce a rich variety of learning activities examples, according to the DIPAE indicated best practices, increasing students' interactivity, as well as cooperative and collaborative learning.

(3) Produce a wide range of assessment types for: (i) Self-assessment, (ii) formative assessment, (iii) summative assessment.

6. DOCTORAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY

Note: EEC was entitled to evaluate just the DL MA Programme.

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CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE[1]

- The present situation of the program, good practices, weaknesses that have been detected during the external evaluation procedure by the external evaluation committee, suggestions for improvement.

The EEC would like to express its gratitude to the UNIC Authorities for the warm welcome. Furthermore, the EEC has a generally positive evaluation of the MA Programme assessed. Given its specialization- concentration in International Relations (with certain focus on security and energy in the East Mediterranean Area) the assessed Programme has a remarkable originality.
With regards to the DL approach, the EEC acknowledges the adequacy and quality of the infrastructure.

However, the EEC would like to stress against the following points, analytically presented in the present report:

1. The need to improve the coherence between the European Dimension and the IR aspects of the MA Programme, more specifically related to the issues of security and energy.
2. The need to include the obligation of a final dissertation at the end of the Master Programme.
3. The need to provide a compulsory course of Methodology, which is to be organized and provided in the first semester of the Programme.
4. The need to provide detailed pedagogical material and support in order to (a) enrich learning activities and assessment procedures, (b) assist- support teachers' strategies and procedures, related to ICT- based teaching.

Specific remarks, comments and recommendations are provided within the different chapters and subsequent justifications of the partial assessment- grading.

The EEC strongly believes that the implementation of its recommendations and comments can provide a real opportunity for the teaching and research in this original field.

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[1] It is highlighted, at this point, that the External Evaluation Committee is expected to justify its findings and its suggestions on the basis of the Document num.: 300.1. The External Evaluation Committee is not expected to submit a suggestion for the approval or the rejection of the program of study under evaluation. This decision falls under the competencies of the Council of the Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation of higher education.

Doc. Number: 300.1

Quality Standards and Indicators

External Evaluation of a Program of Study

Institution: … **University of Nicosia (UNIC)**...........................

Program of Study: …**MA in International Relations and European Studies (Distance Learning). Concentrations a) Energy and International Security and b) Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean Studies** ……………………

Duration of the Program of Study: ……1,5 year (3 terms)…………………….

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The document describes the quality standards and indicators, which will be applied for the external evaluation of programs of study of institutions of higher education, by the External Evaluation Committee.

DIRECTIONS: Note what is applicable for each quality standard/indicator.

1. Applicable to a minimum degree
2. Applicable to a non satisfactory degree
3. Applicable to a satisfactory degree
4. Applicable to a very satisfactory degree
5. It applies and it constitutes a good practice

It is pointed out that, in the case of standards and indicators that cannot be applied due to the status of the institution and/or of the program of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted and a detailed explanation should be provided on the institution's corresponding policy regarding the specific quality standard or indicator.

Members of the External Evaluation Committee

NAME	TITLE	UNIVERSITY / INSTITUTION
Pierre Vercauteren	Professor Faculty of Economic, Social, Political and Communication Sciences	Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium
Panagiotis Grigoriou,	Professor of International and European Institutions, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences	The University of the Aegean
Papadakis Nikolaos,	Professor, Department of Political Science,	University of Crete
Angelique Dimitracopoulou ,	Professor, Design of Technology Based Learning,	The University of the Aegean
Maria Xiari,	Student,	University of Cyprus

Date and Time of the On-Site Visit: ……3 July. 08.45

Duration of the On-Site Visit: ……8,5 hours (08.45- 17.15)…………

	1. EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING WORK – AVAILABLE RESOURCES					
1.1	**Organization of teaching work**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1.1.1	The student admission requirements to the program of study, are based on specific regulations which are adhered to in a consistent manner.				x	
1.1.2	The number of students in each class allows for constructive teaching and communication, and it compares positively to the current international standards and/or practices.				X	
1.1.3	The organization of the educational process safeguards the quality implementation of the program's purpose and objectives and the achievement of the learning outcomes. Particularly, the following are taken into consideration:				x	
1.1.3.1	The implementation of a specific academic calendar and its timely publication.					x
1.1.3.2	The disclosure of the program's curricula to the students, and their implementation by the teaching personnel				X	
1.1.3.3	The course web-pages, updated with the relevant supplementary material			x		
1.1.3.4	The procedures for the fulfillment of undergraduate and postgraduate assignments / practical training				X	
1.1.3.5	The procedures for the conduct and the format of the examinations and for student assessment				X	
1.1.3.6	The effective provision of information to the students and the enhancement of their participation in the procedures for the improvement of the educational process.				X	
1.1.4	Adequate and modern learning resources, are available to the students, including the following:					
1.1.4.1	facilities				x	
1.1.4.2	Library					x
1.1.4.3	Infrastructure					x

	1.1.4.4	student welfare				X
	1.1.4.5	academic mentoring			X	
1.1.5		A policy for regular and effective communication, between the teaching personnel and the students, is applied.			X	
1.1.6		The teaching personnel, for each course, provide timely and effective feedback to the students.				X
1.1.7		Statutory mechanisms, for the support of students and the communication with the teaching personnel, are effective.				X
1.1.8		Control mechanisms for student performance are effective.			X	
1.1.9		Support mechanisms for students with problematic academic performance are effective.			X	
1.1.10		Academic mentoring processes are transparent and effective for undergraduate and postgraduate programs and are taken into consideration for the calculation of academic work load.				
1.1.11		The program of study applies an effective policy for the prevention and detection of plagiarism.				X
1.1.12		The program of study provides satisfactory mechanisms for complaint management and for dispute resolution.				X

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

The teaching work is efficiently organized, adequate resources are available, good practices are in place (such as in the cases of combating plagiarism, provision of timely and effective feedback to the students, innovative statutory mechanisms, for the support of students and the communication etc).

Note A: 1.1.10. EEC didn't identify a mechanism of estimation/ calculation of the workload of Academic Staff DL.

Note, additionally:
α) the expected number of Cypriot and International Students in the program of study.
Not available data
β) the countries of origin of the majority of students.
The origin of the majority of students is Greece and Cyprus.
γ) the maximum planned number of students per class-section.
30
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1.2	Teaching	1	2	3	4	5
1.2.1	The methodology utilized in each course is suitable for achieving the course's purpose and objectives and those of the individual modules.			x		
1.2.2	The methodology of each course is suitable for adults.				X	
1.2.3	Continuous-formative assessment and feedback are provided to the students regularly.			X		
1.2.4	The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance, are clear, adequate, and known to the students.				X	
1.2.5	Educational activities which encourage students' active participation in the learning process, are implemented.			X		
1.2.6	Teaching incorporates the use of modern educational technologies that are consistent with international standards, including a platform for the electronic support of learning.				X	
1.2.7	Teaching materials (books, manuals, journals, databases, and teaching notes) meet the requirements set by the methodology of the program's individual courses, and are updated regularly.					X

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

There is a well- defined general model of distance education, online technologies, well- advanced administrative structure and a Distance Learning Unit with the appropriate infrastructure. There are well- developed polices for all the key dimensions. However, the UNIC should effectively develop a Pedagogical Planning Unit for DL Programmes, in order to meet the requirements of DIPAE. The involved Academic Staff in UNIC DL MA Programme, assessed, would be much supported in its teaching tasks, via the provision of an advanced Teacher Training Programme on DL activities and assessment types.

EEC has identified areas of improvements, such as:

    (a) Conceive more appropriate learning activities, according to the nature of the subject matter (e.g. collaborative problem solving activities, and/or collaborative argumentation activities, for conflict resolutions cases)

    (b) Conceive a rich variety of self-assessment exercises

    (c) Conceive a rich variety of assessment activities (e.g. short answer tests, collaborative writing projects)

It is to be noted that the UNIC Authorities informed the EEC, during the on-site visit, that the University has already decided to recruit experts so as to formally develop the Pedagogical Planning Unit (see related pubic announcements on UNIC website).

1.3	Teaching Personnel	1	2	3	4	5
1.3.1	The number of full-time academic personnel, occupied exclusively at the institution, and their fields of expertise, adequately support the program of study.					X
1.3.2	The members of teaching personnel for each course have the relevant formal and fundamental qualifications for teaching the course, as described by the legislation, including the following:					X
1.3.2.1	Subject specialization, preferably with a doctorate, in the discipline.					X
1.3.2.2	Publications within the discipline.					X
1.3.3	The specializations of Visiting Professors adequately support the program of study.				X	
1.3.4	Special Teaching Personnel and Special Scientists have the necessary qualifications, adequate work experience and specialization to teach a limited number of courses in the program of study.				X	

						X
1.3.5	In every program of study the Special Teaching Personnel does not exceed 30% of the Teaching Research Personnel.					X
1.3.6	The teaching personnel of each private institution of tertiary education, to a percentage of at least 70%, has recognized academic qualification, by one level higher than that of the program of study in which he/she teaches.					X
1.3.7	In the program of study, the ratio of the number of courses taught by full-time personnel, occupied exclusively at the institution, to the number of courses taught by part-time personnel, ensures the quality of the program of study.					X
1.3.8	The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching personnel is adequate for the support and safeguarding of the program's quality.					X
1.3.9	The academic personnel's teaching load does not limit the conduct of research, writing, and contribution to the society.				X	
1.3.10	Future redundancies / retirements, expected recruitment and promotions of academic personnel safeguard the unimpeded implementation of the program of study within a five-year span.					
1.3.11	The program's Coordinator has the qualifications and experience to efficiently coordinate the program of study.					X

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

The academic personnel consists of experienced, remarkably qualified, colleagues, with proven expertise (both in terms of research and teaching) in the field and significant experience in both conventional and DL and MA programmes. The full-time academic personnel meets all the requirements of a highly standardized MA Programme and subsequently adequately support the program of study. However, we should mention that there is just one Visiting Professor, while some Special Teaching Personnel (according to the application provided), are presently full- time academics.

Note: 1.3.10: not applicable

2. PROGRAM OF STUDY AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS						
2.1	**Purpose and Objectives and learning outcomes of the Program of Study**	1	2	3	4	5
2.1.1	The purpose and objectives of the program of study are formulated in terms of expected learning outcomes and are consistent with the mission and the strategy of the institution.					X
2.1.2	The purpose and objectives of the program and the learning outcomes are utilized as a guide for the design of the program of study.					X
2.1.3	Thehighereducationqualificationandtheprogramofstudy,conformtothe provisions of their corresponding Professional and Vocational Bodies for the purpose of registration to these bodies.				X	
2.1.4	The program's content, the methods of assessment, the teaching materials and the equipment, lead to the achievement of the program's purpose and objectives and ensure the expected learning outcomes.			X		
2.1.5	The expected learning outcomes of the program are known to the students and to the members of the academic and teaching personnel.				X	
2.1.6	The learning process is properly designed to achieve the expected learning outcomes.			X		
2.1.7	The higher education qualification awarded to the students, corresponds to the purpose and objectives and the learning outcomes of the program.			X		

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

The UNIC DL MA in IR&ES is a well- advanced one, in terms of purpose and objectives as well as the competence- based anticipated learning outcomes. In fact, it mirrors in a certain extent the pre-existing conventional Programme. Objectives include diverse sets of general and specific,that facilitate the learning process. Learning outcomes are detailed, clear enough and reflect the focus on International Relations, yet they equally refer to European Studies, which is the weaker part of the MA Programme. Further improvement needs to be carried out on the issue of research methodology. The EEC strongly recommends to add a compulsory methodology course, taught in the first semester of the Programme. The absence of an obligation of a final dissertation at the end of the programme does not meet the European standards on Master Programme. Additionally, final dissertation should be compulsory instead of elective, in order to be adjusted to the common European practice regarding the 2nd Cycle

in European Studies (see TUNING Project, European Studies Template, 2009, pg 32-attached).

2.2	Structure and Content of the Program of Study	1	2	3	4	5
2.2.1	The course curricula clearly define the expected learning outcomes, the content, the teaching and learning approaches and the method of assessing student performance.					x
2.2.2	The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is applied and there is true correspondence between credits and workload per course and per semester for the student either he / she studies in a specific program or he/she is registered and studies simultaneously in additional programs of studies according to the European practice in higher education institutions.				x	
2.2.3	The program of study is structured in a consistent manner and in sequence, so that concepts operating as preconditions precede the teaching of other, more complex and cognitively more demanding, concepts.				x	
2.2.4	The higher education qualification awarded, the learning outcomes and the content of the program are consistent.			x		
2.2.5	The program, in addition to the courses focusing on the specific discipline, includes an adequate number of general education courses.				x	
2.2.6	The content of courses and modules, and the corresponding educational activities are suitable for achieving the desired learning outcomes with regards to the knowledge, skills, and abilities which should be acquired by students.			x		
2.2.7	The number and the content of the program's courses are sufficient for the achievement of learning outcomes.			x		
2.2.8	The content of the program's courses reflects the latest achievements / developments in science, arts, research and technology.			x		
2.2.9	Flexible options / adaptable to the personal needs or to the needs of students with special needs, are provided.				x	

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

As already mentioned, learning outcomes are detailed, clear enough and reflect the focus on International Relations, yet they equally refer to European Studies, which is the weaker part of the MA Programme.Given its specialization- concentration in International Relations (with

certain focus on security and energy) it has a remarkable originality. Yet the second part (European Studies) is clearly weaker, not equally supported in terms of courses provided, while its coherence should be further developed with IR dimension. Indeed the broad title of the MA programme doesn't reflect its content and teaching priorities, while it doesn't highlight its originality. The actual focus of the Curriculum should be reflected in the MA title.

Note the expected number of students who will be studying simultaneously at another academic institution, based on your experience so far, regarding students who study simultaneously in the programs of your institution.

Now data available, not applicable.

2.3	**Quality Assurance of the Program of Study**	1	2	3	4	5
2.3.1	The arrangements regarding the program's quality assurance define clear competencies and procedures.					x
2.3.2	Participation in the processes of the system of quality assurance of the program, is ensured for					x
	2.3.2.1	the members of the academic personnel					x
	2.3.2.2	the members of the administrative personnel					x
	2.3.2.3	the students.					x
2.3.3	The guide and / or the regulations for quality assurance, provide detailed information and data for the support and management of the program of study.				x	
2.3.4	The quality assurance process constitutes an academic process and it is not restricted by non-academic factors.					x

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

The UNIC has defined adequate QA policies, according to the EU standards, including proper and very effective structure, procedures and information.

2.4	**Management of the Program of Study**	1	2	3	4	5
2.4.1	Effective management of the program of study with regard to its design, its approval, its monitoring and its review, is in place.				x	

2.4.2	It is ensured that learning outcomes may be achieved within the specified timeframe.					X
2.4.3	It is ensured that the program's management and development process is an academic process which operates without any non-academic interventions.					X
2.4.4	The academic hierarchy of the institution, (Rector, Vice-Rectors, Deans, Chairs and Programs' Coordinators, academic personnel) have the sole responsibility for academic excellence and the development of the programs of study.					X
2.4.5	Information relating to the program of study are posted publicly and include:					
	2.4.5.1	The provisions regarding unit credits				X
	2.4.5.2	The expected learning outcomes				X
	2.4.5.3	The methodology				x	
	2.4.5.4	Course descriptions				X
	2.4.5.5	The program's structure				X
	2.4.5.6	The admission requirements				X
	2.4.5.7	The format and the procedures for student assessment				X
2.4.6	The award of the higher education qualification is accompanied by the Diploma Supplement which is in line with the European and international standards.				X	
2.4.7	The effectiveness of the program's evaluation mechanism, by the students, is ensured.				X	
2.4.8	The recognition and transfer of credit units from previous studies is regulated by procedures and regulations which ensure that the majority of credit units is awarded by the institution which awards the higher education qualification.					

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

The management of the Program of Study is effective and efficient, meeting all the relevant requirements. The key actor, namely the MA Programme Coordinator, is aware of the relevant flow chart and the cooperation with the other internal stakeholders seems effective enough. The fact that the Academic Staff Personnel participates the Senate, documents the EEC's statements on a effective management combined with multi-actor participation in decision making processes and governing bodies.

ΔΙ.Π.Α.Ε.
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Note: 2.4.8 is note applicable (not enough data available).

In the case of practical training, note:
- The number of credit units for courses and the number of credits for practical training
- In which semester does practical training takes place?
- Note if practical training is taking place in a country other than the home country of the institution which awards the higher education qualification

Not applicable.

2.5	International Dimension of the Program of Study	1	2	3	4	5
2.5.1	The program's collaborations with other institutions are compared positively with corresponding collaborations of other departments / programs of study in Europe and internationally.			x		
2.5.2	The program attracts Visiting professors of recognized academic standing.			X		
2.5.3	Students participate in exchange programs.					
2.5.4	The academic profile of the program of study is compatible with corresponding programs of study in Cyprus and internationally.				x	

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

Indeed the Program of Study has an international dimension. The internationalization is relevant to the objectives and content of the programme. However this could further be developed with regard to the European dimension. Internationalization shouldn't be limited to attracting foreign students. Further, it should aim at establishing thematic synergies with experienced Professors and Experts, as well as Research Centers and International Organizations.
Note: 2.5.3 is note applicable

Also, comment on the degree the program compares positively with corresponding programs operating in Cyprus and abroad in higher education institutions of the same rank.

2.6	Connection with the labor market and the society	1	2	3	4	5
2.6.1	The procedures applied, so that the program conforms to the scientific and professional activities of the graduates, are adequate and effective.				X	
2.6.2	According to the feasibility study, indicators for the employability of graduates are satisfactory.					

| 2.6.3 | Benefits, for the society, deriving from the program are significant. | | | | X | |

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

The content and the structure of the MA Programme is in line with the labour market needs. Yet, the relevant labour market needs of the targeted geopolitical area, namely the East Med. one, should be assessed in order to harmonize in terms of their specificities and subsequently be contextualized in the Cyprus and the broader Region (East Med., Middle East).

Note: 2.6.2 not applicable, due to the lack of available relevant data.

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3. RESEARCH WORK AND SYNERGIES WITH TEACHING							
3.1	**Research - Teaching Synergies**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3.1.1	It is ensured that teaching and learning have been adequately enlightened by research.				X	
3.1.2	New research results are embodied in the content of the program of study.				X	
3.1.3	Adequate and sufficient facilities and equipment are provided to support the research component of the program of study, which are available and accessible to the personnel and the students.				X	
3.1.4	The results of the academic personnel's research activity are published in international journals with the peer-reviewing system, in international conferences, conference minutes, publications etc.				X	
3.1.5	External, non-governmental, funding for the academic personnel's research activities, is compared positively to the funding of other institutions in Cyprus and abroad.				X	
3.1.6	Internal funding, of the academic personnel's research activities, is compared positively to the funding of other institutions in Cyprus and abroad.					
3.1.7	The policy for, indirect or direct, internal funding of the academic personnel's research activity is satisfactory.					X
3.1.8	The participation of students, academic, teaching and administrative personnel of the program in research activities and projects is satisfactory.					
3.1.9	Student training in the research process is sufficient.		X			

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

Academic Staff's research work is tentative and efficient, while it enhances and results from established international networks and subsequently reflects into teaching. What is recommended it is to clarify which research synergies out of the established ones could enhance and promote the European dimension in the teaching aspect. Probably further research synergies with EU MS Universities, not limited just in ERASMUS mobility (i. e participation in research consortia for Grants as well as in EU Networks) could substantially contributo on that. .
Regarding to the Students' Training to research process, the MA Programme has a certain deficit. As already mentioned, further improvement needs to be carried out

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on the issue of research methodology. The EEC strongly recommends the addition of a compulsory methodology course, taught in the first semester of the Programme.

Note: 3.1.6 and 3.1.8 are not applicable, given the lack of data available.

4. ADMINISTRATION SERVICES, STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT OF TEACHING WORK

4.1	Administrative Mechanisms	1	2	3	4	5
4.1.1	There is a Student Welfare Service that supports students with regards to academic and personal problems and difficulties.					X
4.1.2	Statutory administrative mechanisms for monitoring and supporting students are sufficient.					X
4.1.3	The efficiency of these mechanisms is assessed on the basis of specific criteria.			x		

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

Even though the administrative mechanisms concerning Student Welfare and relevant services are adequately in place, specific criteria should be presented in order to evaluate the efficiency of this mechanism.

4.2	Infrastructure / Support	1	2	3	4	5
4.2.1	There are suitable books and reputable journals supporting the program.					X
4.2.2	There is a supportive internal communication platform.				X	
4.2.3	The facilities are adequate in number and size.					X
4.2.4	The equipment used in teaching and learning (laboratory and electronic equipment, consumables etc) are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate.				X	
4.2.5	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are adequate and accessible to students.					X

		1	2	3	4	5
4.2.6	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are updated regularly with the most recent publications.				X	
4.2.7	The teaching personnel are provided with training opportunities in teaching method, in adult education, and in new technologies on the basis of a structured learning framework.			X		

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

The existing infrastructure substantially supports the teaching- learning process, at all its facets. However, the EEC recommends the academic staff to be provided with special extra training on DL procedures and methods, not just limited to technical aspects. .

4.3	**Financial Resources**	1	2	3	4	5
4.3.1	The management and allocation of the financial resources of the program of study, allow for the development of the program and of the academic / teaching personnel.				X	
4.3.2	The allocation of financial resources as regards to academic matters, is the responsibility of the relevant academic departments.				X	
4.3.3	The remuneration of academic and other personnel is analogous to the remuneration of academic and other personnel of the respective institutions in Cyprus.					
4.3.4	Student tuition and fees are consistent to the tuition and fees of other respective institutions.				X	

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

The EEC has not enough data provided in order to evaluate the adequacy of financial recourses. Yet, the increase of financing sources via Institutional Partnerships, EU Research Grants, EEA Financing Mechanism, UNDP etc should be examined as an option of multiplying fund-raising initiatives and access to additional recourses.

Note. 4.3.3 is not applicable, due to the lack of comparative data required to respond in this specific question.

The following criterion applies additionally for distance learning programs of study.

5.	DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS	1	2	3	4	5
5.1	Feedback processes for teaching personnel with regards to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.				X	
5.2	The process and the conditions for the recruitment of academic / teaching personnel, ensure that candidates have the necessary skills and experience for long distance education.				X	
5.3	Through established procedures, appropriate training, guidance and support, are provided to teaching personnel, to enable it to efficiently support the educational process.			X		
5.4	Student performance monitoring mechanisms are satisfactory.				X	
5.5	Adequate mentoring by the teaching personnel, is provided to students, through established procedures.				X	
5.6	The unimpeded long distance communication between the teaching personnel and the students, is ensured to a satisfactory degree.				x	
5.7	Assessment consistency, its equivalent application to all students, and the compliance with predefined procedures, are ensured.				x	
5.8	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) comply with the requirements provided by the long distance education methodology and are updated regularly.			X		
5.9	The program of study has the appropriate and adequate infrastructure for the support of learning.				X	
5.10	The supporting infrastructures are easily accessible.					X
5.11	Students are informed and trained with regards to the available educational infrastructure.					X
5.12	The procedures for systematic control and improvement of the supportive services are regular and effective.				X	

5.13	Infrastructure for distance education is comparable to university infrastructure in the European Union and internationally.				X
5.14	Electronic library services are provided according to international practice in order to support the needs of the students and of the teaching personnel.				X
5.15	The students and the teaching personnel have access to the necessary electronic sources of information, relevant to the program, the level, and the method of teaching.				X
5.16	The percentage of teaching personnel who holds a doctorate, in a program of study which is offered long distance, is not less than 75%.				X

Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

There is a well- defined general model of distance education, online technologies, well-advanced administrative structure and a distance learning Unit with appropriate infrastructure. There are well- developed polices for all the key dimensions. However the UNIC should develop a Pedagogical Planning Unit for DL Programmes in order to meet the requirements of DIPAE. The involved Academic Staff in UNIC DL MA Programme, assessed, would be much supported in its teaching tasks via the provision of an advanced Teacher Training Programme on DL approaches and activities. It is to be noted that the UNIC authorities informed the EEC, during the on-site visit, that the University has already decided to recruit experts so as to formally develop the Pedagogical Planning Unit (see related public announces on UNIC website).
Such a Unit could:
  (a) Prepare appropriate teaching training methods and material for advanced teaching methods, that (i) increase interactivity between distance learning students, (ii) are more appropriate for the specificities of the learning material.
  (b) Support teachers to produce a rich variety of learning activities and assessment methods
  (c) Support teachers on how to effectively manage interactive activities (e.g. web-conferencing with multiple actors, forum asynchronous discussion, chat-like synchronous discussion).

If the following apply, note "√"in the appropriate space next to each statement. In case the following statements do not apply, note what is applicable:

The maximum number of students per class-section, should not exceed 30 students.	√
The conduct of written examinations with the physical presence of the students, under the supervision of the institution or under the supervision of reliable agencies which operate in the countries of the students, is compulsory.	√

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The number of long distance classes taught by the academic personnel does not exceed the number of courses taught by the teaching personnel in conventional programs of study.	√		

The following criterion applies additionally for doctoral programs of study.

Note by the EEC: Not applicable

6.	DOCTORAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY	1	2	3	4	5
6.1	The provision of quality doctoral studies is ensured through Doctoral Studies Regulations.					
6.2	The structure and the content of a doctoral program of study are satisfactory and they ensure the quality provision of doctoral studies.					
6.3	The number of academic personnel, which is going to support the doctoral program of study, is adequate.					
6.4	The doctoral studies' supervisors have the necessary academic qualifications and experience for the supervision of the specific dissertations.					
6.5	The degree of accessibility of all interested parties to the Doctoral Studies Regulations is satisfactory.					
6.6	The number of doctoral students, under the supervision of a member of the academic personnel, is apt for the continuous and effective feedback provided to the students and it complies with the European and international standards.					
6.7	The research interests of academic advisors and supervisors are satisfactory and they adequately cover the thematic areas of research conducted by the doctoral students of the program.					
Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator. Note the number of doctoral students under the supervision of each member of the academic personnel of the program and the academic rank of the supervisor.						

FINAL REMARKS – SUGGESTIONS

Please note your final remarks and suggestions for the program of study and/or regarding particular aspects of the program.

The EEC would like to express its gratitude to the UNIC Authorities for the warm welcome. Furthermore, the EEC has a generally positive evaluation of the MA Programme assessed. Given its specialization- concentration in International Relations (with certain focus on security and energy in the East Mediterranean Area) the assessed Programme has a remarkable originality.

With regards to the DL approach, the EEC acknowledges the adequacy and quality of the infrastructure. However, the EEC would like to stress against the following points, analytically presented in the present report:

1. The need to improve the coherence between the European Dimension and the IR aspects of the MA Programme, more specifically related to the issues of security and energy.
2. The need to include the obligation of a final dissertation at the end of the Master Programme.
3. The need to provide a compulsory course of Methodology, which is to be organized and provided in the first semester of the Programme.
4. The need to provide detailed pedagogical material and support in order to improve teaching approaches, enrich learning activities and offer a variety of assessment procedures.

Specific remarks, comments and recommendations are provided within the different chapters and subsequent justifications of the partial assessment- grading.

The EEC strongly believes that the implementation of its recommendations and comments can provide a real opportunity for the teaching and research in this original field.

Names and Signatures of the Chair and the Members of the External Evaluation Committee:

Name:	Signature:
Pierre Vercauteren	
Panagiotis Grigoriou	
Nikolaos Papadakis	
Angelique Dimitracopoulou	
Maria Xiari	

Date: …4 July 2017…………………………

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