Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 08/11/2022

External Evaluation Report

(Distance Learning programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution: University of Nicosia**

- **Town: Nicosia**

- **School/Faculty (if applicable): Humanities and Social Science**

- **Department/ Sector: Social Science**

- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

   In Greek:

   Programme Name

   In English:

    Criminology (1.5 years, 90 ECTS Master of Science DL

   Delivery).

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

- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating

- **Concentrations (if any): n/a**

In Greek: Concentrations
In English: Concentrations

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A. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Kate Moss	Professor of Applied Criminology	University of Derby
Rachel Armitage	Professor of Criminology	University of Huddersfield
Stylianos Hatzipanagos	Professor of Enhanced Technology Learning	University of London
Eckhard Schroeter	Professor of Public Administration	German Police University
Maria Christoforou	Student Representative	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University

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1. Study program and study program'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.*

Findings

The committee studied all the documentation beforehand. The site visit took place online on November 7th 2022 in Nicosia, Cyprus.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) comprised the following;

(Chair) Professor Kate Moss, University of Derby, UK
(Member) Professor Stylianos Hatzipanagos, University of London UK
(Student Member) Maria Christoforou, University of Cyprus
(Member) Professor Eckhard Schroter, German Police University.
(Member) Professor Rachel Armitage, Huddersfield University UK.

The University of Nicosia provided the committee with all the necessary documents. The committee had the opportunity to evaluate the premises and infrastructure and to speak to all relevant parties. The committee concludes that all the documents and presentations prepared were of high quality and discussions were open. The University of Nicosia (UNIC) was established in 2007 and currently has a dynamic and impressive urban complex with 80,000 square meters of facilities. UNIC is one of the 8 members of the European University Alliance Initiative and as a part of their commitment to internationalization they deliver a number of joint degrees with other universities across Greece and abroad including the UK, Austria, Australia, Italy and Spain.

The School of Humanities and Social Science (SHSS) has 6 departments of which social science is one and this is where the master program in criminology is based. The panel were informed that this is the only criminology master's program in Cyprus. This programme has a formal status and is publicly available. All members of the Faculty are involved in supporting all aspects of the programme. The visit enabled members of the panel to hear presentations from members of the faculty both staff and students and to ask questions about all aspects of the programme.

SHSS has 150 staff and 1650 students and within Social Science specifically there are 27 faculty staff who are well qualified with impressive CV's. They are actively engaged in teaching both F2F and with Distance Learning (DL) and in research.

The program of study is designed with program objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes – evidenced within the teaching materials for each module. The course is taught in Greek using a variety of methods using different pedagogic approaches to support student learning. The course admits approximately 60 students per year and the panel were informed that the pass and progression rate is normally close to 100%. The normal graduation time is 1.5 years for the full-time course and 4 years for the part time iteration. Students are admitted with a 2:2 degree classification or above and during their time on the program they study 3 compulsory courses which are Criminological Psychology, Theories of Crime and Criminology Research Methods in Criminology.

The electives are Criminal Justice, Victimology, Sexual and Violent Offenders, Thesis, Cybercrime, Crime Prevention and Juvenile Delinquency

The thesis element of the program is not compulsory. This is something which the panel discussed subsequently and which we will return to later in this document as we feel the element of independent learning within a masters program is important.

The program offers a variety of modules that contribute to the overall objectives of the program. It also fits well with the internationalisation strategy of the University. These are in line with modules that are taught on similar masters programmes internationally.

UNIC's quality assurance policies, its teaching and research policies are overseen by the Cypriot Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education. The quality assurance process, regulations and information are appropriate, well communicated, administered and have been followed. The program is offered in Greek to respond to the lack of post-graduate provision in criminology in Greek and for Greek-speaking students. However, students should have a good knowledge in English because a lot of the resources are in English. We noted that a previous evaluation (in 2018) noted that there is the potential for offering the program in English to enhance its international appeal. The current panel also mentioned this.

The University provides good access to on-line academic resources and databases of journals, and has the necessary software to enable results to be processed using the most up-to-date methods, both qualitative and quantitative. Ongoing provision of a specific research materials budget should be provided so that they have access to the tools and methods used in evolving psychological assessments involving forensic cohorts. Staff are well-connected to key forensic academics in other countries, and should be encouraged to continue these associations at conferences, joint research, and knowledge exchange visits. International research of impact may arise from these contacts, further promoting the impact of their course. The staff receive some support from the University executive for their research, but noted that balancing research and teaching is tricky especially during teaching semesters.

The panel met with staff who provide administrative support and this appeared to the panel to be very good. There is a good Student Welfare Service with special provision made for DL students and also for students with special needs. The University has good policies and practices in relation to this and the panel felt that policies and procedures for monitoring students' progress and needs are sufficient.

Strengths

The staff were hard working and committed to their students. This was evidenced particularly by the student feedback which the panel gained at the meeting with students and graduates who were very complimentary about their tutors on this course.

This is a unique masters program in Criminology within Cyprus. We met very enthusiastic and highly committed staff across both the academic and administrative departments.

The whole program team appear committed to providing the best learning experience for the students. It is a relatively small cohort so this is manageable. Pastoral and welfare assistance is in place. Resources are good and tutors and administrative staff are helpful .

The committee is pleased to see that support mechanisms for students and teachers are established. The organization is providing support for special needs of students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The panel spent some time considering the philosophy of this program and elements of this will be returned to later in this document. The panel felt that the University may wish to think more about what its overarching philosophical aims are and what the implications of this might be. In particular, two issues are of note.

First the policy within this masters program that the thesis elective is not compulsory. Having discussed this in detail the panel feel that at masters level, some independent learning is essential and that on most masters programs this is evidenced by way of the thesis. Whilst we acknowledge that – as with many masters degrees – there are students who are continuing to work throughout the time of their study, we do not feel that this should negate the necessity to undertake some independent learning, since this is really what distinguishes postgraduate work from study at the undergraduate level. Additionally we are of the opinion that students who are still working can often undertake thesis projects that are of a real benefit to their professional lives (for example police officers).

Second, we feel that in keeping with an overall aim to deliver the best quality criminology masters program, that the University may wish to consider increasing its staff expertise in mainstream criminology. Current staff are very well qualified and we acknowledge both this and their levels of hard work and commitment. However, the faculty of social sciences does appear to be somewhat psychology heavy and we feel that the faculty may wish to consider increasing staff expertise in relation to mainstream criminology. We feel this would have great benefits for the appeal of the course.

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

Sub-area	*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*

1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Partially compliant
1.3	Public information	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

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

Standards

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

2.2 Practical training

Standards

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

2.3 Student assessment

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

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

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Findings

The EEC's discussion with students indicated satisfaction with their experience while studying the programme. Students were also satisfied with the support they received from their tutors and support staff. Their only apprehension was that peer learning was not embedded widely in the program.

The general programme documentation and the student guides demonstrate constructive alignment, explicitly linking the teaching and assessment approaches with the overall programme objectives and learning outcomes. The sample exam papers provided some examples of these links.

Individual courses use essay-type assignments (e.g. Research Methods in Criminology CRIM-503) – about 3.000 words in length – which could, in principle, help paving the way to more independent learning and the graduate student research work. In particular, this option for graduate research work applies to students who decide to write a master's thesis. However, student research experience, which can be seen as an integral part of postgraduate education at university level, is not a mandatory requirement of the program.

In terms of practical training, the study program has proven very attractive to practitioners and experienced professionals in fields relevant to the multidisciplinary area of criminology. However, prior professional experience is not a requirement for admission to the program. The curriculum of the study program does not make any explicit mention of compulsory (or recommended) internships or equivalent practical work experience.

Strengths

- A suitable e-learning platform and methodology are in place.
- Committed teaching staff who are respected by their students.

- Quality of the course guides – appropriate level of detail in the study guides clearly benefits students.
- Support infrastructure for students with special needs, with emphasis on success in a DL environment.
- A week-by-week structure of the curriculum is planned and is made visible in the VLE.
- The availability of synchronous and asynchronous activities enhances student engagement with the program.
- It is a strength of the program that is has been successful in attracting a large number of experienced professionals, who bring extensive practical experience to the program. We would like to encourage the University to capitalize on this important resource by using existing connections into the law enforcement, social work or criminal justice communities to do graduate research work (e.g. in the form of project work, thesis writing) or do engage in service learning projects.

Areas of improvement & recommendations

- Greater clarity on how research is linked to teaching, particularly with regards to how students benefit directly and indirectly from staff involvement in research activities and the research culture of the university. In the EEC's discussion with staff, members of the program team offered examples where the synergy between research and teaching work in practice in their sessions.
- The study program still has a great potential to exploit the gains from combining theoretical and practical studies. For academic education at Master's level, the involvement of graduate students in their own research projects is the preferred avenue of achieving this goal. In doing so, we see room for improvement in directing a larger percentage of students, if not all of them, towards writing a Master's thesis.
- In lieu of thesis work, other forms of capstone projects that bring theoretical instruction to fruition in a practical way and manner may be applicable (such as multidisciplinary projects or engagement in service learning projects, which involve students in solving hands-on problems for partner organizations).
- Need to provide further opportunities for skills development in professional practice contexts. Placement and internship is an area where such skills can be developed. Or if that is not practical, short professional practical experiences as practical training possibilities need to be adapted to the geographical diversity of a DL program.

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

Sub-area	Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant

2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Partially compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. **Teaching staff** *(ESG 1.5)*

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development**
> **3.2 Teaching staff number and status**
> **3.3 Synergies of teaching and research**

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

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

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

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

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

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

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

Findings

There are six faculty members supporting the Masters program – three Lecturers and three Associate Professors. All have PhDs (Forensic Psychology, Psychology, Social Psychology, Evolutionary Psychology, Cyber, Law). The program is also supported by two adjunct staff members (one a PhD graduate from the Criminology program).

There are no formal Visiting staff, although the program does include guest lectures from esteemed academics such as Professor Ray Bull (investigative interviewing), Professor Chara Spiliopoulou (Forensic Science) and Dr. Vincent Egan (Forensic Psychology).

Teaching staff have strong and sustained research profiles with publications, including peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, books and conference proceedings.

Staff profiles show active engagement in practice (policing, law, voluntary sector) as well as indicators of esteem, such as invitations to sit on expert groups relevant to their specialist subjects. Staff teaching on this program have active research profiles, including European Commission projects. Links between research and teaching are clear, and staff discussed *how* they ensure that their own research is integrated into their teaching content.

The University has a dedicated Research and Innovation Office to support staff in research grant applications, and it was suggested that central 'top slicing' and research funds is low – providing an increased incentive for staff to apply for research funding.

The University has an improved sabbatical policy with staff offered one-year at 100% pay. The application process is transparent and fair.

The number of staff teaching on this program is adequate and it is clear that staff are competent, engaged and passionate.

Staff are encouraged to continue their research activity and outputs. Research hours are allocated, and financial incentives are offered for Scopus indexed publications. Staff are also encouraged to attend relevant conferences, with funding being provided through a transparent application process.

Policies and procedures for promotion are transparent and fair, and staff felt that this was adequately implemented.

Staff training is formalised and completion of the 12 weekly workshops leads to a certificate of attendance.

Students on the program expressed the view that feedback is incorporated into teaching improvements, and that alongside formalised feedback, staff regularly ask for suggestions for improving the program. Peer-observation of staff takes place up until tenure is secured. Staff expressed the view that peer-observation was not necessary post-tenure, and that student feedback was more important to them.

Strengths
Staff have very strong academic profiles with sustained and high-quality publications, research activity and esteem. Staff are engaged with relevant professional organisations and contribute to training, committees, and expert groups.

Staff clearly ensure that their research expertise is integrated into their teaching, and students found this interesting and engaging.

The staff contributing to this program are established academics (three of the six are Associate Professors).

Staff are incentivised to publish in Scopus indexed journals, and to attend relevant conferences.

Staff are clearly passionate about the subject and engaged with the academic and practitioner communities.

Student feedback is actively encouraged, both formal and informal, and suggestions for improvements appear to be taken on board.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
We recommend several areas for improvement in relation to the teaching staff.

Whilst staff have extremely strong academic profiles, there seems to be an over-representation of psychology-based expertise. Whilst there is no suggestion that these staff are not able to teach the criminology focused courses, we suggest that any future recruitment attempts to match expertise with the courses being delivered. We feel the program would be strengthened (in teaching, research and collaboration) with the recruitment of criminologists.

Staff publications are strong, but activity appears have slowed in recent years. This may be a matter of CVs not being up to date, but it does suggest that staff may not be allocated sufficient research time.

Training is provided to all staff, but we suggest that the University considers introducing additional teaching qualifications such as the Higher Education Academy.

Staff are allocated protected research time, but this does not appear to be formalised in a workload allocation model. The introduction of such a model would provide transparency to all staff.

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

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

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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.*

Findings

The University has a systematic and comprehensive set of regulations in place regarding the admission, recognition, progression, and certification of students. The regulations are pre-defined, published and transparent. The pre-defined processes of student admission are administered consistently. The University has well established processes and tools in place to monitor the progress of students during their course of study. The University recognizes students' higher education qualifications (including work experience, prior learning and non-formal learning) and certifies their qualifications gained and achieved learning outcomes.

The set of regulations governing the admission of students is appropriate for the study program.

Strengths

The University uses a transparent admission system, which is consistently administered. Admission is based on several steps and requirements, personal statements, references and interviews.

The University has a good support system for students in place, allowing the University to collect data on students' progress, monitor their progression and act upon it if necessary. In particular, the assignment of student advisors and the established system of student tutoring and mentoring can be considered as strengths of the program.

The University also responds well to students with special needs.

Areas of improvement & recommendations

Given the relatively large number of practitioners and experienced professionals in the student population of the study program, the University may want to consider if and how prior work experience should play a role in the admission process.

The multidisciplinary nature of the program and the diversity of educational and professional backgrounds of prospective students also raise questions about the adequate entry levels of study skills and prior academic knowledge, particular for candidates who may have been out of academia for a longer period of time or who may have trained and educated in areas outside of criminology.

It follows from this recommendation that it is particularly important to have regulations and procedures in place that fairly recognize any prior higher education qualifications and achievements of prospective students (including those acquired at institutions of higher learning outside of Cyprus.

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

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

5. Learning resources and student support *(ESG 1.6)*

Sub-areas

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources
5.2 Physical resources
5.3 Human support resources
5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

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

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

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

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

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

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- *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.*

Findings

The program offers satisfactory resources to support distance students (e.g., access to VLE materials, and the IT infrastructure is comprehensive). The library offers a range of resources to support student learning (access to databases and repositories of relevance to the discipline). These are electronic materials and are easily accessible by distance learners. Human support resources are adequate, both on the academic and the administrative side. Student support seems to be adequate and is organised by the distance learning unit. Students' interaction with staff including personal tutoring are essential in student support.

Technologies that support the delivery of course content and interaction between students and staff have been employed, mainly the virtual learning environment (VLE) and auxiliary technologies to enhance communication synchronous (a chat function) and asynchronous (discussion fora). The VLE is the central focus of online pedagogy and it is complemented by the use of synchronous Webex sessions. The EEC had the opportunity to review the VLE materials for the Criminal Psychology course. These consisted of narrated PPTs, links to references and an impressive number of online resources, plus activities and exercises. It was not always clear how interactivity was supported in the course.

Assessment approaches in the distance learning mode employ a model where end of term exams are the key assessment event in the student journey, in addition to other summative activities and formative tasks such as self-evaluation activities. The EEC reviewed the UNIC-Distance-Learning-Pedagogical-Model, where space has been given in articulating the assessment strategy. Dissertations are optional and they can be replaced by a number of electives that the students could opt for instead.

There is an infrastructure that supports the quality assurance development and delivery of Distance Learning. At UNIC related initiatives are coordinated by the Distance Learning Unit , the e-PSU (e-Learning Pedagogical Support Unit) and complemented by faculty training and development.

Strengths

- The personnel (both academics and administrators) are well trained in DL delivery.
- The use of formative assessment and activities to support self-evaluation and reflection is commendable in the distance learning delivery.
- The virtual learning environment offers opportunities for interaction.
- Online exams are the norm in the program. This supports the flexibility aspect of the program and is certainly a good practice element in the program design. Staff are keen on diversifying assessment by offering alternative and authentic forms of assessment. In discussion with the EEC, staff discussed their approaches to assessment and feedback in their courses.
- The use of open book exams (supported by a Proctorio), is optional but represents good distance learning practice . In discussion with the EEC, it was argued that open book exams might not be appropriate for some courses.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Learning design:

- Further attention should be given to enhancing the interactive elements to provide personalised feedback to student input. This is done up to a point but the program team should consider the use of innovative technologies that support immersion and decision making, e.g., adoption of innovative technologies that transfer students to real-life situations, such as computer simulations and serious games. Technologies such as social media (wikis) were discussed by the program team, however the EEC has not seen examples of wiki use in the program.

Assessment:

- We recommend the use of open book exams for all courses of the program as they can provide better authentic assessment opportunities. They can also support academic integrity by combining assessment format redesign and a proctoring system. This is subject of course to professional and regulatory bodies' agreement.

- There should be further emphasis on choosing the dissertation as an option at the end of the programme rather than the electives. This will be in alignment to the research focus that the institution has.
- A student facing assessment and feedback strategy document would enhance clarity and help students to achieve learning outcomes.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Partially compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Not applicable
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

Conclusions and final remarks

Overall the program is well structured and there are synergies between and among the modules and the overall aims and objectives of the program. The learning outcomes are appropriate.

The courses and their compulsory and/or elective character may need to be reviewed. In particular the panel feel that UNIC should consider making the thesis a compulsory element of the master's program.

Staffing of the masters program appears to be good but the panel noted that although the profiles of existing staff are excellent, there are not many members of staff who could be called 'mainstream criminologists' and a much heavier bent in favour of staff with psychology specialisms. Whilst this is adequate to run the program, the University may want to review its academic staffing provision in order to expand and diversify the program to be more in line with mainstream criminology and to allow for the appropriate supervision of post graduate theses in mainstream criminology topics.

We have also made recommendations for improvement in the sections of this report for the consideration of the program team.

B. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Kate Moss	
Rachel Armitage	
Stylianos Hatzipanagos	
Eckhard Schroter	
Maria Christoforou	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 08/11/22