



Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 31/1/2023

## External Evaluation Report

### (Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

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

#### In Greek:

Διδασκαλία της Ελληνικής ως Δεύτερης/Ξένης  
Γλώσσας (1,5 χρόνια, 90 ECTS, Μάστερ)

#### In English:

Teaching Greek to Speakers of Other Languages (1,5  
years, 90 ECTS, Master of Arts)

- Language(s) of instruction: Greek
- Programme's status: Currently not provided
- Concentrations (if any):



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

**In Greek:** Concentrations

**In English:** Concentrations



## A. Introduction

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

The relevant documentation was delivered in time for the evaluation. A full-day conventional and virtual site visit was conducted on the 20th of January 2023. Dr Maria Mitsiaki participated online as she was tested positive for COVID-19. Dr Santi Caballé Llobet also participated in an online session. In addition to the material provided in advance, the on-site presentations offered insights into the University, Faculty, Department and program under evaluation. The meetings with (a) the Rector and Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, (b) the members of the Internal Evaluation Committee, (c) the Head of the Department, (d) the teaching staff, (e) the administrative staff, and (f) the students were held in a warm and positive atmosphere.

Prior to the visit the EEC was provided with:

- Document 200.1, the application for evaluation-accreditation submitted by the program of studies, including CVs of all the involved staff.

During the site visit the EEC additionally received:

- Professional brochures of the university.

At the end of the visit the EEC received:

- (a) Slides of the presentations given during the evaluation meeting, (b) evaluation indicators on the academic staff and the courses and materials.

The documentation was helpful, a reference source which we used as and when required.

In general, we had the impression of a well-organized and supportive process that has enabled us to comment constructively on the program. We would like to thank Costas Constantinou for his help in organizing our visit.



## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
<b>Georgia Andreou</b>	Chair, Professor	University of Thessaly
<b>Alicia Morales Ortiz</b>	Member, Professor	University of Murcia
<b>Maria Mitsiaki</b>	Member, Associate Professor	Democritus University of Thrace
<b>Foivi Christodoulou</b>	Student, Member	Open University of Cyprus



### C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

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

#### **Findings**

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

#### **Strengths**

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

#### **Areas of improvement and recommendations**

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

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



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

### **Sub-areas**

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

### **1.1 Policy for quality assurance**

#### Standards

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

### **1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**

#### Standards

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



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

### 1.3 Public information

#### Standards

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

### 1.4 Information management

#### Standards

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



You may also consider the following questions:

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





### Findings

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

**1.1 Policy for quality assurance:** The University of Nicosia has a well-established Quality Assurance Policy that involves all Schools, Departments and Study Programs and is in line with the European Guidelines and Standards for Quality Assurance and other regulations and laws. Responsible for this internal Quality Policy at the University is the Internal Quality Assurance Committee, composed of the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, representatives of all Schools, Faculty members, staff and students. In addition, each Department has its own committee made up of the Head of the Department, one Faculty member and one student.

**1.2. Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review:** In designing the Study Programme (which has not admitted any students yet), a well-established process was followed, including consultations with external experts (primarily the Greek Language Centre, the institution responsible for the accreditation of Greek language proficiency) and the approval of the various university bodies (Department, School Council, Senate and University Council).

The Programme of Study under evaluation is designed with general objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and it has also specific learning outcomes. It follows international standards for studies in the field of teaching languages as a foreign language. Moreover, the ECTS system is applied and the programme is clearly structured: students must take a total of 90 credits in 18 months, of which 60 are compulsory and 30 are elective. In this regard, there seems to be a true correspondence between credits and student workload.

**1.3. Public information:** Students are expected to participate in the Study Programme evaluation through electronic satisfaction questionnaires.

**1.4. Information management:** Basic information about the Programme is published on the Department's website and information about admission, career path, learning outcomes, faculty members and CV etc. is easily accessible.

### Strengths

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

- The student/teacher ratio expected is quite good, which allows for student-centred teaching and more individualized support and monitoring. However, as a negative element, it should be noted that only 5 are full-time professors. In proportion, the number of visiting and part-time Faculty members seems very high.
- Students are expected to receive technical and teaching support to enable them to reconcile their studies with their personal and work life.
- As a strong point, it should be emphasized that the program is unique in its kind in the field of studies of teaching Greek as a foreign language. It fills a gap in the needs of the labour market and offers its graduates a wide variety of employment opportunities.
- The program has a well-trained and experienced faculty in this area of study.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- It would be advisable for the Department to increase the number of full-time faculty members.



- The completion of a thesis in the last semester of studies is not mandatory. It would be desirable to encourage students to prefer an MA thesis instead of other elective courses.
- The lack of practical training is clearly a gap in the training of future students. In the case of the conventional (face to face) Study program, its implementation should be considered in the future.
- Data collection and analysis could be improved, especially in relation to the profile of students, their progress and success rates, and their career paths. The Committee should note that we do not have information on how the success of its graduates in the labor market will be evaluated or how feedback will be obtained.
- Finally, the Committee is well aware of the difficulties of implanting a culture of quality and participation among students. As already mentioned, students are expected to participate in evaluating the program through satisfaction questionnaires. The Department should continue its efforts to achieve greater student and stakeholders participation in Quality processes.

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	Partially 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.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

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



### Findings

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

**2.1. Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology:** The program is adapted to the needs of professionals working in schools and other institutions that offer Greek as a second language to children, adolescents, and adults. It defines adequately its objectives and learning outcomes and combines compulsory and elective courses.

Various teaching approaches are to be implemented (e.g. group work and discussion). Feedback on assignments will be provided by both teachers and peers. Students will be encouraged to actively participate in the teaching and learning process. The teaching approaches align with the learning outcomes.

The regulation for academic advising is published at the general Student Handbook available at the UNIC's website. The program is expected to be evaluated by all students (course and material, faculty).

**2.2. Practical training:** No practical training is included in the program. The emphasis is mainly on the development of knowledge and skills, however not applied in a realistic teaching context.

**2.3. Student assessment:** The program (90 ECTS) can be completed in 3 semesters (30 ECTS each). All courses are scheduled for 3 hrs a week, for 13 weeks. Students attend 6 compulsory courses related to Second Language Acquisition Theories, Lesson Planning and Design, Research Methodology, Teaching Greek to Younger Students, Teaching Grammar, and Second Language Assessment. They can also choose 3 out of 5 elective courses (ICT in Education, Teaching Greek Literature, Intercultural Education, Special Education in Language Learning, and Teaching Vocabulary, 10 ECTS each) or undertake 1 elective course and a Master Thesis (20 ECTS). Students will choose their individual learning path after consulting their Academic Advisor.

There are mismatches between the titles of the courses as they appear on pages 35 and 36 of the application that was sent to us and the titles that appear in the course descriptions. For example, on p. 35 the first course has the title Theories of Language Acquisition while on p. 57 it appears as Language Acquisition Theories in L2/FL. Then, the title of the second course on p. 35 is Lesson Design while on p. 61 it appears as Course Design. Also, the elective course on p. 36 Issues of Special Education in Language Learning appears as Special Education Topics in Second Language Learning on p. 84 and finally the elective course Teaching Vocabulary on p. 36 appears as Teaching Vocabulary and Dictionary Use on p. 87.

The course Teaching Grammar, the content of which is described on p.67, is very theoretical. Those who are going to teach Greek as second/foreign language need to know which aspects of Greek grammar are expected to cause difficulties to their students and need to have deep knowledge on that. Therefore, the emphasis should be given on morphology, as Greek is a language with rich morphology and not on linguistic theories.

The course Issues of Special Education in Language Learning is very theoretical and does not contain literature that connects second/foreign language to specific categories of disabilities such as language delay, stuttering, learning disabilities/dyslexia, Down syndrome and autism spectrum disorders. The course should also provide knowledge on how to make interventions and adaptations for those students.

Since the course Issues of Special Education in Language Learning is elective, and hence not all students will attend it, aspects of Special Education should be included in all compulsory courses. Second language teaching professionals

should be able to select and adapt their teaching material by taking into consideration the special educational needs of their students.

Assessment is typically a mix of educative and alternative assessment (i.e. testing, small assignments, peer assessment, discussions etc.). The assessment types align with the learning outcomes included in the course outlines. The assessment methodology is consistent and will be fairly applied to all students. However, the provision of more complex forms of assessment to assess complex competences and skills, such as critical thinking and teamwork should be considered.

Formative assessment of the courses will be based on submitted essays and reports with provision of personalized feedback during the course while summative assessment will be based on a mandatory final exam. The assessment procedure during the course will be completed with a number of quiz-based assignments.

### Strengths

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

- **Student-centred teaching methodology:** Two important assets of the program are flexibility and adaptiveness. Students consult their Academic Advisor and can direct their own learning path. The literature for most courses is updated depending on national and international developments. Course teaching in groups of 30 students (the most) facilitates teacher-student and student-student interaction. The methodology applied attends to the diversity of students and their needs.
- **Assessment:** A variety of types of educative and alternative assessment will be used, which allows for reviewing personalized learning in terms of skills and knowledge. Students' academic skills (debating, presenting, academic writing) are integrated into the courses.

### 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 assessment criteria are not clearly described for each course in the course outlines.
- Ensuring awareness of education issues in schools and other learning settings via practical training in public or private providers might benefit those Master students who do not have a teaching background/experience.
- The program's website should be enriched with more information on the learning and assessment process (e.g. alternative ways of assessment, marking criteria, differentiated teaching, the methodology of thesis supervision and evaluation criteria). This is important because student-centered methodology presupposes clear access to the learning and teaching process.
- Although in the application the student complaints procedure is explicitly mentioned, no regulation was found to be publicly available. This is also an important part of student-centred learning.

**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	Partially compliant



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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



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2.2	Practical training	Not applicable
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant



### 3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

#### **Sub-areas**

#### **3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development**

#### **3.2 Teaching staff number and status**

#### **3.3 Synergies of teaching and research**

#### **3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development**

##### **Standards**

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

#### **3.2 Teaching staff number and status**

##### **Standards**

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

#### **3.3 Synergies of teaching and research**

##### **Standards**

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





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

*You may also consider the following questions:*

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

### Findings

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

During recruitment of faculty members, candidates are required to possess high qualifications. The teaching personnel are expected to be provided with training opportunities in teaching methods, in adult education, and in new technologies. The University of Nicosia faculty members are offered two series of professional development workshops relevant to education and pedagogy: one ran by the ePSU (eLearning Pedagogical Support Unit) and one by the PSU (Pedagogical Support Unit). Both ePSU and PSU workshop series are hands-on and faculty members are encouraged to work on their course material and teaching methods during relevant workshop activities. The Pedagogical Advisory Board consists of internal and external to the University of Nicosia pedagogy, media, educational technology and distance learning experts and provides nonbinding strategic advice to the ePSU and PSU.

Course/faculty evaluation questionnaires are expected to be conducted every semester (at a minimum) and analyzed and feedback to be provided to all stakeholders. Feedback will be analyzed and answers will be provided within set deadlines. "Board of studies" meetings allow students to interact with their instructors at the beginning and halfway through the semester to discuss issues pertaining to their studies.

**3.2. Teaching staff number and status:** Regarding the number of teaching staff and their status, HEI consists of 26 members: 7 full-time and 19 special teaching personnel. The university accepts no more than 300 Greek-speaking students world-wide while the maximum number of students allowed per class/section is 30 and are taught by one lecturer. Each instructor can teach up to two such sections or up to two different courses each semester.



The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study. Almost all faculty members have recognized academic qualifications at the highest-level Doctoral Degree or terminal degree as required by the Law for programmes such as Fine Art, Architecture, Music and Dance. The majority of teaching personnel hold a doctorate in the programme of study. At the beginning of each semester, lecturers are required to submit/ re-submit the course materials. The university student:staff ratio approximates 1:20 which is considered quite good for international standards.

Furthermore, the HEI attracts visiting staff with qualifications equivalent to those of the Research Faculty of the University and they are characterized by their contribution and international recognition in their field of study. Their association with the university may be on a full-time or part-time basis for a fixed period of time with possibility for renewal. Visiting staff and part time faculty are hired through the same hiring process as the full-time ones and thus are subject to the same selection criteria.

**3.3. Synergies of teaching and research:** The overall research activities of the academic personnel involved in the programme are satisfactory. Research and scholarly activities are considered for the faculty members' ranking and promotion. This is one of the main criteria for their career advancement and development. All faculty is committed to (i) presenting and disseminating their research findings at international conferences, (ii) publishing their work in peer reviewed journals and (iii) getting engaged in research funded projects (both locally and EU/internationally). The concept of Research Time Release is also available for all faculty that is active in research. All Schools at the University of Nicosia have an impressive publications' record which is well respected by international academic standards.

Full-time faculty are engaged in research projects, the results of which are communicated through publications in peer-reviewed journals, conferences and book chapters. The teaching staff also undertake the supervision of students' dissertations and doctoral theses. Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged as all faculty members are expected to be involved in research as part of their duties. The research interests of the faculty are in the context of the thematic modules taught in the programme. The teaching staff publications are within the discipline as the research interests and expertise of the faculty are linked to the courses in the program and in the provision of updated and new knowledge to the students. Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses. Taught material is supported by references to published papers and books, as well as, providing the students a list of up-to-date resources at the end of each lecture.

### Strengths

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

- Faculty members are soundly trained since they are offered two series of professional development workshops relevant to education and pedagogy: one ran by the ePSU (eLearning Pedagogical Support Unit) and one by the PSU (Pedagogical Support Unit).
- Another good practice of the HEI is the e-Learning Pedagogical Support Unit (ePSU) in collaboration with the Pedagogical Support Unit (PSU), the School of Education and the Technology Enhanced Learning Centre (TELC) that offer the 36-hour professional development seminar, in the areas of contemporary teaching methods, new technologies in learning and online education.
- All faculty members involved in research as part of their duties and it is important that training and workshops for distance learning are carried out.
- The course/faculty evaluation questionnaires, that are expected to be conducted and analyzed every semester (at a minimum) so that feedback is provided to all stakeholders, is a very good practice for the HEI.



- In conclusion, it is very important that the HEI attracts visiting staff with qualifications equivalent to those of the Research Faculty of the University as well as the cooperation with Greek universities and with the Center for the Greek Language.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- It is suggested that the courses assigned to the special teaching personnel should be directly related to their scientific field of study and research interests.
- Some mismatches are observed between the teachers' studies and research interests and the courses they have been assigned that could be avoided with a careful distribution of courses among the teaching staff.
- Also, greater participation of faculty in research projects and more frequent active participation in conferences will benefit and further strengthen faculty at all levels academically.
- It is important for the teaching staff to be able to provide their students each semester with up-to-date information on research practices and literature, which can only be acquired through the active participation of faculty in research and conferences in universities in Cyprus, Greece and around the world.
- It is suggested to organize conferences at the university itself, as well as to undertake research projects with or without funding.
- Finally, it was observed that the visiting staff number exceeds the number of permanent staff and therefore, an increase in the number of permanent staff is strongly suggested.

**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.*

- **4.1. Student admission, processes and criteria:** The student admission requirements for the program are based on regulations and criteria that are in line with local and international practices. The admission requirements to the program are transparent. The students' prior education assessment includes several aspects that include relevant background (BA), recommendation letters, and a personal statement (instead of an interview).
- **4.2. Student progression:** As mentioned in the application, the program has established formal procedures to ensure the student progression. Academic advisors will monitor the academic progress of students and provide personalized guidance and support. This information is useful to identify students at risk so that the lecturers can intervene with corrective measures. The EEC would like to note that students benefit from a very good student-teacher ratio and student feedback is very positive.

As the Master Thesis is elective, no specific information was given to the EEC members on the dissertation standards or guidelines (nor is it publicly available to the students). During our discussion with the Head and the Dean, it was argued that most students may be employed teachers and they cannot afford the workload of writing a thesis, which is a highly demanding task. However, such a choice might affect their engagement in research practices, especially when the institutional strategy prioritizes research.

Students' feedback will be collected through an anonymous survey for evaluating the quality of courses and materials, the teaching quality of their tutors, and the e-learning infrastructure. Students' data are said to be taken into consideration, so that training workshops and seminars are designed for the academic staff. In this way, academic staff is supported on topics that students consider as weak and improve their skills and knowledge.

- **4.3. Student recognition:** The cooperation with the Centre of Greek Language in Greece ensures coherent recognition across and beyond the country. The EEC members did not receive explicit reference to the system of recognition, i.e. whether the program applies the general regulations of the University for recognition of credits from the students' prior education at other institutions. In the application it is mentioned that the University of Nicosia has been ranked in first place in terms of mobility numbers amongst the private universities in Cyprus during the last three academic years. However, information on Erasmus+ mobilities for the program's students is missing.
- **4.4. Student certification:** The program draws on the thematic pillars used in the certification program of the Centre of Greek Language. The degree awarded is a Master of Arts in Teaching Greek to Speakers of Other Languages (1,5 years/90 ECTS). The level, scope of credits and learning outcomes are in line with the European Standards for a Master's Program.

### Strengths

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

- The department's academic staff has a diverse profile and should be capable of assessing candidates' educational backgrounds and their fit with the programme. They could also manage issues related to the recognition of course credits from courses taken at other institutions.
- There are policies for the provision of accessible and inclusive study environments for all students

### 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.*

- Taking into consideration the ambition to attract a diverse and international student group, the Department should invest efforts to ensure that there is consistency in the evaluation of students from different countries and from different backgrounds and educational systems. For instance, according to the admission requirements "Candidates from other disciplines may be considered, if they have teaching experience in teaching Greek to speakers of other languages". It is not clear from what other disciplines students are considered and, most importantly, in what ways (e.g. academic counselling) they keep up with the pace of students with a BA in philological or education subjects.
- Issues related to student progression, recognition, and certification should be made more explicitly available in the program's website.
- A systematic data collection on future student-related issues (diversity and employability) can help improve the program.
- Issues related to the students' admission, progression, recognition, and certification should be documented in the Students' Handbook. However, the program's Student Handbook is missing. Instead, in the application a link to the general Student Handbook (for all Schools/Departments at the University of Nicosia and for both undergraduate and postgraduate courses, <https://www.unic.ac.cy/useful-resources/student-handbook/>) is given.



- Interviews with the applicants might shed more light in their motivation and competences.
- The Master Thesis guidelines and standards should be made explicitly available to the students.

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	Partially compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant



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

### Sub-areas

#### 5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

#### 5.2 Physical resources

#### 5.3 Human support resources

#### 5.4 Student support

### 5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

#### Standards

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

### 5.2 Physical resources

#### Standards

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

### 5.3 Human support resources

#### Standards

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





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

## 5.4 Student support

### Standards

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

*You may also consider the following questions:*

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

### Findings

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



**5.1. Teaching and learning resources:** The proposed courses have a syllabus that includes relevant information: objectives, expected learning outcomes, materials to use (including lecturer's notes), activities to perform, complementary bibliographic references, and a summary.

**5.2. Physical resources:** The University has a suitable infrastructure for teaching, comprising a high-quality library and campus accommodation.

**5.3.-5.4.: Human support and student resources:** At the Department level, the University of Cyprus has adopted a mechanism of providing an academic advisor to each student. The Academic Advisor is crucial as student mentor guiding students through their programme. Each student receives planning and academic counselling from the academic counsellors, the Head of Department and the Program Coordinator. The academic officer/counsellor assists students in pre-registration and registration, counsels them with regard to the student's schedule and degree requirements, in case they cannot utilize the on-line services. As for student support at the University level, there are services offered by the Centre for Research and Counselling Services, the Student Affairs Department, Academic Advising and Support Departments.

### Strengths

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

- UNIC's infrastructure: the campus, libraries, and study facilities facilitate an excellent learning atmosphere.
- The services of the Centre for Research and Counselling Services, the Student Affairs Department, and the Academic Advising and Support Departments are responsive to student needs.
- The Department's administrative staff are efficient and effective.

### 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 recommends to include more information to effectively guide students through the courses, such as a detailed learning methodology and outcomes, self-assessment exercises, and recommended study time.
- In addition, the EEC suggests that some considerations should be taken into account to the provision of entire volumes as basic materials and identify the relevant parts of these volumes for the study in order to adapt these materials to part-time students who need to learn effectively and in a timely fashion.
- The EEC would like to draw the attention on this point in order to update the course outlines following these recommendations.

**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	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

## 6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

### Sub-areas

#### 6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

#### 6.2 Proposal and dissertation

#### 6.3 Supervision and committees

### 6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

#### Standards

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

### 6.2 Proposal and dissertation

#### Standards

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

### 6.3 Supervision and committees

#### Standards

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

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

### Findings

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

### Strengths

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

### 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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Choose answer
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Choose answer
6.3	Supervision and committees	Choose answer

## 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 EEC is thankful for the trust placed in us. The opportunities to observe and talk with the students, faculty, and staff have been eye-opening. Teaching Greek to Speakers of Other Languages is an ambitious programme between the University of Nicosia in Cyprus and the Centre of the Greek Language. UNIC has a clear vision for internationalization and research. However, the programme is entirely in Greek because the coordinators decided to address mainly the Greek market. The quality assurance evaluation reveals a well-designed Master's Program, though not launched yet. The academic staff of the programme have sound academic records and are engaged in ongoing international research projects. Despite these conclusions, the EEC wishes to provide the Faculty and University with a few recommendations, should the programme be implemented in the future, including:

- to provide students with clearer study guides on the expected workload as well as the relevant study materials; to adapt these materials to part-time students who need to learn effectively and in a timely fashion;
- to ensure that forms of interaction and collaboration among students are sustainable in the future years;
- to reinforce the collaborative learning activities and formative continuous assessment through written assignments during the course, to prevent having to rely on onsite examination;
- to consider introducing more sophisticated forms of learning analytics mechanisms;
- to collect data about the added value of the program in terms of the students' access to the labor market;
- to increase the number of full-time faculty members.
- to encourage students to prefer an MA thesis instead of other elective courses;
- to consider the implementation of practical training in the future;
- to offer public access to the completed theses at the program's website;
- to enrich the program's website with more information on the learning and assessment process (e.g. alternative ways of assessment, marking criteria, differentiated teaching, the methodology of thesis supervision and evaluation criteria, complaints regulation, student progression, recognition, and certification etc.), if student-centred learning and teaching is to be clearly supported;
- to assign courses to academic staff based on their specialization/scientific field/research interests;
- to ensure participation of the faculty in research projects (with their students) and frequent participation in conferences;
- to update the course outlines that are publicly available;
- to organize conferences at the university itself as well as to undertake research projects;
- to increase the number of full-time/permanent staff;
- to invest efforts to ensure that there is consistency in the evaluation of students from different countries and from different backgrounds and educational systems.



### E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	
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Maria Mitsiaki	
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Date: 31/01/2023