

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 26 September 2022

# 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:** Department of Languages and Literature

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

**In Greek:**

Διδασκαλία της Αγγλικής ως Ξένης Γλώσσας

**In English:**

PhD in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)

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

- **Programme's status:** Running

- **Concentrations (if any):**

**In Greek:** Concentrations

**In English:** Concentrations

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

## A. Introduction

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

The committee visited the University of Nicosia online on Thursday 22 September 2022. To evaluate the PhD Programme in TESOL the committee met with members of the senior management team, the Faculty and Department management teams, teachers on the programme, administrators and students.

The student member of the committee did not attend.

The committee was provided with all the relevant documentation before the meeting. Further, updated, documentation was provided towards the end of the visit.

The Chair asked the committee members to compile a list of questions before the remote visit to ask the various groups. The committee met before the evaluation visit and discussed the procedure for the day. George Aletraris from CYQAA outlined the procedure for the visit, and he also attended the meetings.

The committee was not able to visit the learning, teaching, and accommodation facilities. However, a video-based tour was provided.

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Professor Bas Aarts	Professor of English Linguistics	University College London
Professor Ilse Depraetere	Professor of English Linguistics	University of Lille
Professor Anastasios Tsangalidis	Professor of English Linguistics	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Sotiris Pigiotis	Absent	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.*

- The programme consists of 180 ECTS with two taught components: 'Research Methods' (15 ECTS; PhD-700) and the 'Research Proposal' (15 ECTS; PhD-710), to be followed by the Thesis (150 credits; PhD-100). The course can be taken full-time or part-time.
- The programme is well-designed and coherent, with clear aims and objectives.
- The committee found the procedures for quality assurance to be sound.
- Learning objectives and outcomes are appropriate for a doctoral programme.
- The programme is small at present but aims to expand in the future.
- The programme is rigorously monitored internally and externally.
- Public information about the programme is available and clearly presented on a website (in both English and Greek).
- The programme information is effectively managed online and in a handbook.

### Strengths

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

- The admissions and selection procedures are rigorous and adhere to high standards.
- The policies for quality assurance concerning the study programme, design and development are well-documented.
- Courses are monitored internally and externally according to international standards.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- Although the programme makes use of robust progress procedures, these are still paper-based. It would be desirable for student progress to be monitored in an online system.
- More specific learning objectives and outcomes (after the first semester) are not defined at any level of detail, and cannot be objectively certified or recognised.
- Expanding the programme such that teachers can have up to five students each may prove challenging for faculty workloads.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

## 2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

### Sub-areas

**2.2 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**

**2.3 Practical training**

**2.4 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.*

- The process of teaching and learning is flexible and student-centred.
- The roles of the supervisors and examiners are clearly specified.
- A Research Methodology course is taught by the student's supervisor in the first year of the programme after which students are directed in their research progress in the following years.
  - The programme is not delivered online, but we found it to be compatible with e-learning delivery. During the pandemic it was smoothly run by distance.
  - Assessment criteria for doctoral study are clearly spelled out, and there are procedures ensuring that these are adhered to.
  - There is a very good technical infrastructure which is updated regularly, allowing smooth communication and cooperation, as well as access to necessary materials and literature.

### Strengths

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

- Student progress is monitored and documented at different levels
- Students receive excellent and tailored support from dedicated staff.
- Students receive training at supra-departmental levels (see also section 4).

### 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 exact number of times that students meet with supervisors should be explicitly mentioned in the student handbook. Meetings are currently only specified as taking place 'regularly'.
- The table on pages 186-7 of the application document needs to be improved in line with the discussions that were held.
- The committee wondered whether the Research Methods course should perhaps be offered as a generic stand-alone course for all PhD students, as described in the application document. Currently student numbers are small and the course is delivered by supervisors to their students, but if student numbers increase this may be unsustainable.
- It would be useful to make explicit the opportunities that are offered to the students in terms of pedagogical workshops organized for staff that are relevant to TESOL, and/or participation in the organisation of conferences, funding opportunities for conference participation, etc.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	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.*

*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.*

- The team of potential supervisors consists of 10 academic staff, as presented in the application. They are all highly qualified and research-active scholars that all have an international experience, having been trained at various institutions abroad. Their domains of expertise are mainly in the field of TESOL, with a wide range of research strands being covered.
- There is no doubt that this team has the standard that enables them to coach PhD students in areas of research that are up-to-date and that reflect the current state-of-the-art in the field. Their track records and presence in leading journals reflect the same high standard. The PhD topics are accepted only if they are clearly in line with the supervisors' area of expertise. This makes the experience

mutually beneficial to the parties involved: the student benefits from expert advice; the supervisors are likewise inspired by the fresh ideas that the young scholars bring to their areas of research.

- Academic staff can supervise up to 5 PhD students as primary supervisors. The current number of 9 PhD students entails a total of 27 supervisors being involved in the process, so an average of 2.7 students per academic. There is scope for additional supervision, but an increase in the number of students, given the workload involved in the intensive follow-up, as it is put in place in this programme, will establish the need to consider a reduced teaching load for the staff who supervise, for instance, 2 or more students, as primary supervisors.
- There are partnerships with foreign universities and colleagues: the second or third supervisor can be a foreign academic with expertise in a narrowly-focused area relevant to the PhD topic. In this way, the PhD students can benefit from the advice of an international scholar working in a different environment.
- The teaching staff are offered professional and teaching-skills training and development.
- The supervision of PhD students as it is put place in this programme is labour-intensive, involving regular meetings and written feedback to the students. Also, the supervisor is required to document the process and write progress reports of each meeting. The main supervisor keeps a record of meetings, decisions taken and work submitted, and this information is shared with the Doctoral Programme Coordinator and the Office of the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research.

### Strengths

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

- The programme director does an excellent job in running the programme in all respects, from admitting students to supporting them in their research trajectories.
- The students benefit from a very careful and tailor-made follow up of their PhDs, all along the various steps in the process.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- PhD supervision currently does not impact on the teaching load. It is important to consider a system that does. PhD supervision should definitely be taken into account in the context of promotion of the staff, as well as in the attribution of sabbatical (paid) semesters.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
3	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.*

- Student admission criteria are listed on the website and every effort is made to ensure clarity and consistency. The footnote on the disciplines regarded as relevant is particularly helpful. The list of English language proficiency qualifications is very thorough, though it is not clear whether it is meant to be exhaustive.
- Little information is available concerning the organization of the studies and student progression after the first semester, in which the two taught courses are expected to be held. Precisely because this is a programme leading to a PhD dissertation it is not easy to describe individual stages in a meaningful generic way.
- Recognition and certification of prior qualifications seems to be in place; however, it would not be easy to provide any concrete description of particular skills and competences achieved at any point after the first semester.

### Strengths

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

- The descriptions of the content of each admission criterion is an instance of excellent practice.
- The listing of equivalent English language proficiency qualifications is both informative and accurate.

### 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 requirement of a Bachelor's degree in a related discipline (specifically defined as "Social Sciences, Humanities or Education") can probably be relaxed in view of the requirement for an even more specialized Master's degree ("in TESOL, or Applied Linguistics, or English Language/Linguistics").
- The list of English language qualifications might be characterised as indicative or exhaustive, depending on whether it is meant to include the total number of relevant requirements.
- Some indication of the weight of each criterion towards the eventual decision on an applicant's admission (perhaps in the form of percentages assigned to each towards the factoring of the overall score) may contribute to the transparency of the procedure.
- At the PhD level, student progression is not easy to measure in a concrete way. As predicted by the system itself, reference to ECTS units needs to take this into account. As described in the relevant documentation, after the first semester, there are no specific milestones that could be referenced concerning learning outcomes and/or student progression. It might be worth considering introducing particular requirements that could then be certified accordingly in cases of students who interrupt their studies.

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

Sub-area		<i><b>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</b></i>
4	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant



4.4	Student certification	Compliant
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## 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.*

- Suitable teaching and learning resources are readily available, including library and IT facilities. Students can request materials, software, etc. if these are currently not available.
- The numbers of students and supervisors can guarantee adequate and appropriate research conditions, as also current students have testified. The programme has been running for the past 5-6 years and the first theses to be completed are expected within this sixth year. Given that most PhD students are also concurrently employed in educational institutions, it is expected that they should exceed the minimum duration of three years.
- The programme was run smoothly during the pandemic, which affected not only the university and all universities, but also the actual work, experiments etc. of the students (whose research was also education related).
- Both the University and the Department have made arrangements to facilitate student progression and student-teacher interaction. Both students and teachers have expressed their satisfaction with most of the procedures.

### Strengths

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

- Modern facilities and open-minded attitudes contribute to a well-run programme. Students expressed their satisfaction with the programme practices and their supervisors' support.
- The system of multi-membered supervisory and examining committees seems to ensure high quality academic support, at least for the student numbers expected in the foreseeable future.
- The University's Pedagogical Support Units, both conventional and electronic, provide teachers with adequate support.
- Likewise, the series of seminars for PhD students offered at the University level seem to be useful and remain available for students to refer back to them.
- Provisions are in place for rapid psychological support and other needs that may arise; neither students nor staff expressed any worries in this respect.
- International connections contribute to both recruitment and the setup of research questions, experiments, etc. The programme benefits from a number of international collaborations and is in itself a major step in student mobility and development.

### 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.*

- Financial support is available for students who participate in conferences. However, the information about this funding scheme does not seem to be widely publicized (to students) or available to all supervising staff. The university and the department might also consider exploring ways of contributing towards long- or short-term fellowships, conference participation, research expenses, publication costs, etc.
- The number of teaching staff members appears to be adequate for the moment, but can clearly benefit from further appointments that will allow for more time for faculty to spend on their supervisory, research and other duties.
- The need for regular sabbatical opportunities is an essential ingredient for research-oriented institutions and programmes. Sabbaticals should be available to all research-active staff, and not based on Faculty quotas.
- The procedures are well defined, with all the necessary steps in the progression of the dissertation, some of which may be facilitated by instituting an electronic student progress system.

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

Sub-area		<i><b>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</b></i>
<b>5</b>	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
<b>5.2</b>	Physical resources	Compliant
<b>5.3</b>	Human support resources	Compliant
<b>5.4</b>	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.*

- Admission criteria are clearly laid out and are set at a high level, as is appropriate for a doctoral programme.
- The handbook of regulations and procedures that pertains to the PhD in TESOL contains very clear and unambiguous descriptions of the admission criteria and the various requirements of the PhD programme.
- The same applies to the guidelines that pertain to the contents, the overall structure and the lay-out of the PhD.
- A system is in place that detects plagiarism.
- The handbook also describes the role and responsibilities of the supervisory team, and the PhD student. It describes the student's trajectory through the course. The students meet on a regular basis with their first supervisor. The meetings with the second and (especially the) third supervisor are less frequent.
- The examination procedure is also clearly laid out to ensure fair and academically appropriate assessment.

### Strengths

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

- Admission criteria are applied rigorously.
- The students receive very clear and detailed information about the various steps in the PhD process, and they can count on a team of very professional, dedicated and highly qualified supervisors. In the conversations we had with the PhD students, it became clear that they all appreciated the very student-centered approach which is typical of the PhD in TESOL programme, with attention being paid to both high academic standards as well as student well-being.

### 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 English language requirements are perhaps set too low.
- It could be useful to add further details, in the handbook of regulations and procedures that pertain to the PhD, of the various research activities that the students can become involved in, be it references to the conferences organized by the Department or elsewhere.

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

Sub-area		<b>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</b>
6	Selection criteria and requirements	Compliant
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Compliant
6.3	Supervision and committees	Compliant

### **D. Conclusions and final remarks**

*Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.*

- The Department of Languages and Literature at the University of Nicosia offers an attractive PhD programme in TESOL which is well-conceived.
- It offers students expert supervision in the field throughout their research trajectory.
- Potential students are expected to be involved in the field of TESOL and clearly have a high level of proficiency in English.

- Many combine their research and professional experience, and can expect to develop their careers further through successful completion of the programme. Applications of the research results can then have beneficial societal impact.
- To ensure the smooth running of the programme in the future, the Department should minimise bureaucracy and make sure that staffing levels are adequate should the programme expand, as is the intention.

## E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Professor Bas Aarts	
Professor Ilse Depraetere	
Professor Anastasios Tsangalidis	

**Date:** 26 September 2022