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Date: Date.

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
American University of Cyprus
- **Town:** Larnaca
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Arts & Humanities
- **Department/ Sector:** Law
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

## In Greek:

ΜΕΤΑΠΤΥΧΙΑΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΣΠΟΥΔΩΝ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΕΘΝΩΝ  
ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΣΕΩΝ Ή ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΝΑΥΤΙΛΙΑΚΩΝ ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΣΕΩΝ

## In English:

MASTER'S DEGREE IN LAW (LLM) IN EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL  
BUSINESS LAW OR EUROPEAN AND SHIPPING BUSINESS LAW (ONLINE)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek & English
- **Programme's status:** Online
- **Concentrations (if any): 2**  
**In Greek:** Ευρωπαϊκό Δίκαιο β) Ναυτιλιακές Σπουδές  
**In English:** a) European Law b) Maritime studies



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 External Evaluation Committee (EEC) conducted a site visit to the American University of Cyprus (AUCY) on June 16, 2025, in accordance with the procedures established by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA). The purpose of the visit was to evaluate two academic programmes under the Department of Law, with a specific focus on the Master's Degree in Law (LLM) in European and International Law or European and Shipping Law, delivered through distance learning (e-learning).

The EEC consisted of five members with expertise in European Law, Labour Law, e-learning, and legal education, as well as a representative of the professional legal community and a student representative. The evaluation process followed the standards and guidelines set forth by CYQAA and aligned with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015).

The site visit was structured to include:

- Introductory sessions with the Rector, Dean, and Heads of Department;
- Presentations and Q&A sessions with the programme's academic and pedagogical coordinators;
- Evaluation of the programme's design, implementation, learning outcomes, assessment methods, and alignment with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF);
- Separate discussions with teaching staff, students, graduates, administrative personnel, and external stakeholders.

The LLM programme under evaluation aims to provide a postgraduate legal education in either European and International Business Law or European and Shipping Business Law. According to the submitted documentation, it is structured over three semesters and offers a total of 90 ECTS credits. It leverages the Moodle learning management system and combines synchronous and asynchronous online teaching to provide a flexible and engaging learning environment. Particular attention was paid to pedagogical approaches, student support, assessment strategies, digital infrastructure, and the qualifications of the teaching staff.

The evaluation process was, interactive, and collegial. The institution provided full access to documentation, course materials, the virtual learning platform, and stakeholders. The findings and recommendations presented in this report are based on the documentation submitted, the observations made during the visit, and the discussions held throughout the evaluation day.

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University/institution</i>
Xavier Groussot (Chair)	Professor	Lund University
Christine Kaddous	Professor	University of Geneva
Dimitrios Vlachopoulos (e-learning expert)	Associate Professor	Erasmus University Rotterdam
Vera Pavlou	Senior Lecturer	University of Glasgow
Victoria Christodoulidou	Lawyer	Member of the Cyprus Bar Association
Neta Neofytou	Student (Law)	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 AUCY has in place an institutional quality assurance policy that is formal, published, and aligns with national and European frameworks. The programme's internal quality assurance system is supported by dedicated academic and administrative staff and overseen by a central quality assurance committee. Responsibilities are assigned, and processes such as internal evaluations, student feedback collection, and curriculum reviews are implemented.

Mechanisms are in place to uphold academic integrity and prevent academic fraud, particularly relevant in the e-learning context through measures such as Turnitin (with AI detection included) and monitored assessments. The programme claims that promotes inclusivity and respect for diversity. There is evidence of some level of stakeholder involvement in quality assurance procedures, though external stakeholder engagement appears to be mostly limited to industry consultations.

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

The programme is designed in alignment with the university's strategic orientation and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF level 7). The programme includes clear learning outcomes, aligned assessments, and ECTS credits that reflect the expected student workload. However, in the submitted proposal, the programme appears to be of 90 ECTS with a duration of 2 semesters, which is not possible due EU standards which don't allow more than 60 ECTS per academic year. The university representatives confirmed that this was a mistake and the actual duration of the programme is 3 semesters. This is why in the introduction section of this report, it is written that the duration is 3 semesters and 90 ECTS, confirming that the AUCY representatives that this is a 3 semester programme. Content is academically rigorous, up to date, and reflects recent developments in law, European policy, and shipping regulations.

The programme was developed with internal staff input mostly from people with a PhD and professional experience but also people dedicated in Academia in the field of Law, Sociology and Arts. However, there is limited evidence of structured student or external stakeholder co-design. There is a clear internal approval process, and mechanisms for periodic monitoring exist, although the frequency and use of external reviewers for curriculum updates are not extensively documented.

### 1.3 Public information

The programme's core information—including entry criteria, qualifications awarded, programme structure, learning outcomes, and assessment strategies—is not publicly available via the university website and in programme brochures. Information is presented clearly and accessibly for prospective and current students in the submitted documents and they were confirmed in the conversations with the university stakeholders.

### 1.4 Information management

AUCY collects data on student enrolment, progression, and completion, though these are managed internally and not widely published. The programme uses student evaluations and LMS analytics to track learning engagement. However, systematic reporting on career outcomes, dropout rates, and post-graduation employment is still developing. There is evidence that internal stakeholders (faculty and administration) use this information for improvements, but student involvement in data interpretation and follow-up activities is limited, despite the fact that one student, during the students' session, mentioned that concrete actions have taken after students submitted recommendations and proposals for change to the university. Career services appear to offer ad hoc rather than structured feedback on graduate trajectories. Data on pass rates, graduate employment outcomes, or student satisfaction indicators are either not visible or only available upon request. The university does not yet provide a public dashboard or annual fact sheet for its programmes.



### Strengths

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

#### 1.1 Policy for quality assurance

- Clear, institutionalised quality assurance policy aligned with European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).
- Formal procedures for internal evaluations and data-driven improvement.
- Mechanisms for academic integrity adapted to an e-learning environment.
- Structured support for teaching and administrative staff in quality processes.

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

- Programme objectives aligned with EQF and ESG standards.
- Integration of labour market relevance, particularly through the Shipping Law stream.
- Designed for student progression and flexible e-learning engagement.
- Courses are coherent and sequenced logically to avoid overlap and ensure academic scaffolding.

#### 1.3 Public information

- The AUCY hasn't published any information about the programme, prior to its accreditation.
- No misleading information was found in any of the materials provided to the EEC on the accreditation status of the programme.

#### 1.4 Information management

- Active use of data analytics for student support within the LMS.
- Collection of internal quality and performance data across the programme lifecycle.

### 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.*

#### 1.1 Policy for quality assurance

- Strengthen the engagement of external stakeholders beyond consultation by involving them in regular programme reviews.
- Clearer organizational chart of the quality assurance people within the e-learning unit (with presentation of the current staff but also vacant positions that will be filled once the programme is accredited).

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

- Formalise stakeholder and student participation in curriculum development and review processes.
- Include documented review cycles and revision logs to demonstrate responsiveness to societal and academic developments..

#### 1.3 Public information

- Publish up-to-date performance indicators such as pass rates and employment statistics to align with ESG expectations.
- Consider the development of a programme-level factsheet or public quality report.

#### 1.4 Information management

- Strengthen mechanisms to evaluate graduate employment and feed insights into programme updates.
- Provide structured, anonymised reporting of dropout and progression trends with explanatory analysis as practice for all programmes, including online programmes.

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

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

**2.5 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities**

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

#### Standards

- *The e-learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.*
- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*
- *A specific plan is developed to safeguard and assess the interaction:*
  - *among students*
  - *between students and teaching staff*
  - *between students and study guides/material of study*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the students focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of e-learning delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the e-learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*
- *For distance learning programs, the number of students in both undergraduate and Master's level postgraduate programs does not exceed 30 students per class.*

### **2.2 Practical training**

#### Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*

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

## 2.3 Student assessment

### Standards

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

## 2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

### Standards

- *A study guide for each course, fully aligned with e-learning philosophy and methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:*
  - *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*
  - *Presentation of course material, and students' activities on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)*
  - ***Weekly schedule of interactive activities and exercises (i.e. simulations, problem solving, scenarios, argumentation)***
  - *Clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
  - *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
  - *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
  - *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
  - *Synopsis*

- *Study guides, material and activities are appropriate for the level of the programme according to the EQF.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

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

### Findings

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

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

The LLM programme is well-suited for e-learning delivery, with Moodle as the central platform for all learning activities. Teaching is conducted through a blend of asynchronous content and synchronous teleconferences that

serve for Q&A, student presentations, and live guidance. Weekly sessions are planned and structured, and interactive tools are in use to facilitate discussion and engagement.

Interaction is supported through discussion forums, teleconferences, individual and group projects and ongoing communication between students and instructors. While study guides outline expectations for interaction and tasks, there is limited evidence of structured peer collaboration or co-creation of learning content. The teaching approach allows flexibility for students with varied schedules and encourages autonomous learning.

Training and support in using the LMS are provided, particularly at the start of the programme, and student orientation includes specific guidelines for e-learning participation. The diversity of students and their needs is taken into consideration to some extent through flexible timelines and assessment methods.

## 2.2 Practical training

Practical training is not a central element of the programme, which is appropriate given its legal and theoretical focus. However, there is an emphasis on the practical application of legal theory through case studies, simulations, and legal argumentation exercises embedded in course activities. There is no formal placement component, but courses incorporate tasks that simulate legal practice (e.g., drafting legal opinions, solving legal problems). These activities align with programme outcomes and are adequate for a legal Master's.

## 2.3 Student assessment

The assessment framework is aligned with the e-learning model. Each course outlines its own methods of continuous and summative assessment, including essays, problem-solving tasks, and final examinations, which are proctored. Criteria are communicated in advance through the study guides and Moodle.

Student assessments are linked to intended learning outcomes, and feedback is provided after each assignment. Use of Turnitin aims to ensure academic integrity, and there are formal policies for dealing with mitigating circumstances and student appeals. While double marking is encouraged, it is not consistently documented.

## 2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

Each course includes a detailed study guide structured to support asynchronous and synchronous e-learning. Study guides define course objectives and outcomes, include weekly plans, activities, bibliographic resources, and self-assessment tools. Interactive activities such as forum discussions, case analyses, and scenario-based questions are embedded.

The guides also outline instructions for assignments and submissions, promote interaction through scheduled discussion prompts, and align with EQF level 7 standards. Material is presented using a variety of formats, including PDFs, multimedia, and recorded lectures.

## Strengths

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

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

- Use of a robust LMS (Moodle) that supports interactivity and learning analytics.
- Combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning provides meaningful student-staff interaction.
- Clear structure and expectations in the learning process that support autonomous learning.
- Flexibility in delivery format accommodates diverse student needs.

## 2.2 Practical training

- Integration of legal practice simulations supports the development of applied competencies.
- Practical examples and case law enhance understanding of theoretical content.

## 2.3 Student assessment

- Clear and transparent assessment procedures aligned with learning outcomes.
- Continuous assessment supports student engagement and tracks progression.
- Provisions in place for appeals and mitigation.

## 2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

- Comprehensive study guides that align with e-learning philosophy.
- Use of varied formats and tools enhances accessibility and engagement.
- Inclusion of self-assessment activities supports student reflection.

### 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.*

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

- Increase structured opportunities for peer-to-peer interaction and collaborative learning.
- Create text about the pedagogical model of the programme (duration of each course, synchronous and asynchronous learning components, formative and summative assessment, feedback strategies, etc.). This is also a necessary element for the marketing and sales of the programme to help the prospects understand the expectations in terms of workload and structure.
- Monitor and enhance consistency in how teaching staff use the LMS and adapt pedagogies to learning outcomes.

## 2.2 Practical training

- Consider expanding how real-world legal analysis or practitioner engagement (e.g., expert webinars, mock trials) are taking place.
- Provide clearer information to students (prospects) on how practical legal competencies are developed through the coursework.

## 2.3 Student assessment

- Clarify the use of second markers for final or high-stakes assessments.
- Expand feedback quality and depth, linking it explicitly to improvement in learning and digital participation (also in the document in the 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet point of 2.1 section).
- Include a policy for academic integrity and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence. Please note that this should not be a programme-focused policy but an institutional policy which should be applied in all programmes of study, including the online programmes.

## 2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

- Re-structure the information of the study guides for each course, including all components (introductory remarks, description, objectives, learning outcomes, annotated bibliography, formative and summative



activities (including synchronous teleconferences and self-assessment activities), approximate workload for the student per week, etc as per CYQAA guidelines: <https://dipae.ac.cy/index.php/en/news-and-events/announcements/693-04-05-2020-enimerosi-axilogisi-distance-programme-2-en>

- Increase the use of multimedia and simulations to further diversify learning modes and the development of practical skills.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Complaint
2.3	Student assessment	Partially compliant
2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	Partially compliant

### 3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

#### **Sub-areas**

**3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development**

**3.2 Teaching staff number and status**

**3.3 Synergies of teaching and research**

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

##### **Standards**

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

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

##### **Standards**

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

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

##### **Standards**

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*
- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

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

### Findings

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

#### 3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Both during the visit and in the submitted documentation it appears that the university follows a formal and transparent recruitment process for academic staff, including for the e-learning LLM programme. Teaching staff must possess a relevant doctoral degree, as well as research output aligned with the programme's subject areas. Faculty CVs indicate qualifications in international law, shipping law, and European studies, meeting the academic and professional profile required to deliver the programme effectively. Professional development is encouraged, and some staff have participated in e-learning-related training. However, systematic pedagogical training specific to distance education appears to be at an early stage. While there is innovation in teaching, particularly in course design and legal simulations, a formal framework to support ongoing instructional design skills and peer observation is not fully developed. On a positive note, a recent hire in instructional design (at Professor level) is tasked to finalize this process.

Visiting staff from local and international institutions contribute to the programme, some of them with already experience in teaching online are expected to enhance the programme's relevance and diversity.

### 3.2 Teaching staff number and status

While employment conditions include fair recognition of teaching duties, there are no actual hires yet but only "memoranda of understanding" which don't clarify whether these are full-time permanent academic staff or simply part-time teaching collaborators. During the visit the vast majority of teaching staff belonged in the second category. However, the university leadership ensured the EEC that they will fully align with the promised hires in the submitted documentation and the requirements of CYQAA in relation to the number and the type of academic and teaching staff to be recruited. Moreover, the AUCY ensured that no e-learning class will exceed the 30-student cap, which is suitable for the teaching staff's workload. The EEC was assured that the ratio of permanent to visiting staff will comply with regulatory requirements, and staff loads allow adequate preparation, student interaction, and research engagement.

### 3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

According to the University leadership, academic staff involved in the programme will be research-active and will contribute scholarly work relevant to the LLM specialisations (European law, maritime law, international trade law). Teaching materials will be enriched with their current academic literature and legal developments, and assignments will often encourage students to engage with ongoing legal debates. Opportunities for students to be partially employed in academic staff's or university's projects were also mentioned. However, structured synergies with external research institutions or legal practices are limited. While faculty collaborate within the university and maintain professional affiliations, opportunities for online students to participate in research activities or conferences are not systematically integrated into the programme.

## Strengths

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

### 3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

- Academically qualified staff (PhD holders) with relevant research and professional profiles have already signed memoranda of understanding for future employment.
- Use of visiting lecturers enhances the academic breadth of the programme.
- Commitment to academic freedom and transparent hiring procedures was highlighted by the Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities.

### 3.2 Teaching staff number and status

- Adequate staff-to-student ratio is described in the submitted documentation in line with e-learning standards.
- Balanced composition of permanent and visiting faculty is expected to support programme quality.

### 3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

- More than 40 possible candidates were presented as potential teaching staff with profiles closely aligned with course content and programme focus.
- Opportunities for students to be involved in research projects was mentioned.
- Erasmus opportunities and collaborations with other institutions have been initiated.

### 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.*

#### 3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

- Implement structured, mandatory and periodical training for all teaching staff on digital pedagogy, ethical use of AI and inclusive e-learning practices, under the leadership of the Director of the e-learning unit and the professor of instructional design.
- Develop a concrete framework to evaluate and improve academic staff's performance, strengthening incentives and recognition for innovation in teaching methods.

#### 3.2 Teaching staff number and status

- Ensure sufficient allocation of staff time for student support, particularly in asynchronous formats and feedback processes.
- Maintain clear documentation of workload distribution between teaching, research, and service tasks.
- Ensure that the promised in the submitted documentation hirings are made on time for the smooth start and operation of the programme.

#### 3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

- Foster stronger institutional partnerships with legal practices or international research centres to promote teaching-research-practice integration.
- Create opportunities for student involvement in academic research, legal debates, or conference participation.
- Clearer understanding of research incentives with more information about what type of publications, grants and social impact activities will be prioritised by the university.

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

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

#### 4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

##### **Sub-areas**

4.2 **Student admission, processes and criteria**

4.3 **Student progression**

4.4 **Student recognition**

4.5 **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

Admission requirements for the e-learning LLM programme at AUCY are pre-defined and consistent with postgraduate academic expectations. Candidates must hold a recognised first degree in law or a closely related field. English language proficiency is required. The application process includes submission of transcripts, a CV, and a letter of motivation, and in some cases, an interview, which is a standard process for postgraduate admission. The criteria and process are clearly stated in the submitted documentation, ensuring transparency and consistency across applicants. The exact same information is expected to be published in the university's website and programme brochures.

##### 4.2 Student progression

The programme includes defined policies for student progression. Each course outlines prerequisites, workload, and assessment expectations, all published in course guides. Student performance is tracked via the Moodle, allowing instructors to monitor engagement, submission patterns, and grades. Progression data are collected, though detailed statistics (e.g. average time to graduation, drop-out rates) were not systematically presented in the context of the already approved programmes. Academic advising will be available, and student progression issues are addressed by the academic leadership, including the Dean who is open to support students applying an "open door" policy.

##### 4.3 Student recognition



The institution has published procedures for the recognition of prior learning, and adheres to national and European guidelines, including the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Transfer of credits and recognition of previous study is handled case-by-case by the Academic Committee, in consultation with faculty. However, the recognition framework is not deeply elaborated in the documents provided. The university is in communication with national authorities and makes use of ENIC/NARIC information for foreign credential evaluation. Recognition processes appear to prioritize fairness and mobility, although students receive limited initial guidance on what documentation may be required.

#### 4.4 Student certification

Students who complete the programme receive an official degree certificate and a Diploma Supplement, in line with European standards. The supplement outlines the qualification, learning outcomes, level of study, course content, and institutional context. The documents provided by AUCY confirm that certification aligns with EQF Level 7 descriptors and includes relevant legal fields of specialization (there are 2 outlined in the submitted documentation).

### Strengths

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

#### 4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

- Clear and accessible admission criteria aligned with EQF Level 7 standards.
- Transparent and structured admissions process for both local and international applicants.

#### 4.2 Student progression

- Use of Moodle analytics to support academic monitoring and intervention.
- Academic progression rules embedded in course documentation.

#### 4.3 Student recognition

- Recognition of foreign qualifications aligned with European norms.
- Internal mechanisms for evaluating and approving prior learning

#### 4.4 Student certification

- Provision of diploma supplements aligned with European and international practices.
- Certification reflects the academic level and programme focus.

### 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.*

#### 4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

- Consider clearer guidelines or examples of acceptable qualifications from foreign institutions to support international student applications.
- Consider publishing anonymised admission statistics or profiles to increase transparency and support informed applicant decisions.

#### 4.2 Student progression

- Activate systematic tracking of cohort-level progression and completion rates.
- Use progression data more proactively to identify patterns or barriers and refine student support services accordingly.
- Ensure ethical use of student data.

#### 4.3 Student recognition

- Make recognition procedures more visible to prospective students, including documentation checklists and average response times.

#### 4.4 Student certification

- Consider providing alumni access to certification documents for verification purposes via a secure online platform.

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

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

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

#### Sub-areas

- 5.2 Teaching and Learning resources
- 5.3 Physical resources
- 5.4 Human support resources
- 5.5 Student support

#### 5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

##### Standards

- *Weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*
- *The e-learning material and activities take advantage of the capabilities offered by the virtual and audio-visual environment and the following are applied:*
  - *Simulations in virtual environments*
  - *Problem solving scenarios*
  - *Interactive learning and formative assessment games*
  - *Interactive weekly activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities for reality reconstruction and further processing based on hypotheses*
  - *They have the ability to transfer students to real-life situations, make decisions, and study the consequences of their decisions*
  - *They help in building skills both in experiences and attitudes like in real life and also in experiencing - not just memorizing knowledge*
- *A pedagogical planning unit for e-learning, which is responsible for the support of the e-learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of e-learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

## 5.2 Physical resources

### Standards

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

## 5.3 Human support resources

### Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

## 5.4 Student support

### Standards

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

*You may also consider the following questions:*

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

### Findings

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

#### 5.1 Teaching and learning resources

The e-learning platform (Moodle) serves as the core delivery environment for the programme and is used effectively for weekly interactive activities, such as forum discussions, quizzes, case-based exercises, and video lectures. While some elements such as legal problem-solving tasks and simulations are embedded in coursework, there is limited

description of those as well as limited use of advanced interactive learning tools like formative assessment games or VR-based scenarios. The pedagogical planning and coordination of course design are handled by the Programme Coordinator and the E-learning Unit, with the support of experts in multimedia learning and educational technology, who are however to be hired. The university ensures that all learning materials are accessible and appropriate for EQF Level 7, and the design promotes autonomous and student-centred learning. Updates and adaptation of content are planned in response to technological advances and student feedback.

## 5.2 Physical resources

The university's physical infrastructure, though less central in an e-learning programme, remains an important component. Facilities include access to physical and online library resources, a legal database, and computing support. IT systems are adequate and appear to be robust enough to accommodate online students. Physical facilities also support hybrid learning and in-person academic consultations where applicable. Students have access to digital repositories and legal research tools such as HeinOnline and Westlaw.

## 5.3 Human support resources

Support staff include academic advisors, administrative staff, erasmus coordinator, registrar, marketing and admissions staff, a psychologist, a nurse and IT helpdesk personnel all available for online consultations. Student queries are typically addressed via the LMS or email within a set timeframe. Although the academic advising system is functional, proactive mentoring or structured tutoring is not prominent. IT service is promised to be 24/7 for online students with 3 shifts of 8 hours.

Student satisfaction data on support services are not systematically presented from the existing programmes, but anecdotal evidence from internal feedback during the session with existing students suggests a generally positive experience. There is no indication of resource constraints affecting the adequacy of staff-to-student ratios.

## 5.4 Student support

Support services address the diverse needs of a growing student body, including mature, employed, and international students. Flexibility in learning schedules and online access facilitates student participation across different time zones and commitments. Support for students with special needs was mentioned available upon request, though the institutional approach could be more clearly outlined and proactively communicated. The programme includes some mobility encouragement through the recognition of external credits, but structured opportunities for exchange or participation in international projects are not part of the current design, especially for online students.

## Strengths

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

### 5.1 Teaching and learning resources

- Use of a Moodle with weekly interactive tasks aligned with programme objectives.
- Teaching materials are fit for purpose and regularly reviewed for quality.
- Flexibility in delivery supports self-paced learning and digital competence development.

### 5.2 Physical resources

- Reliable IT infrastructure and access to legal databases.
- Access to online library services and legal resources.

### 5.3 Human support resources

- Administrative and academic staff appear to be available and responsive through online platforms.
- IT and LMS support mechanisms are in place and accessible 24/7 for online students.

### 5.4 Student support

- Individualised accommodations are available upon request (in case of illness, disability, etc.)
- Academic advisors, nurse and psychologist available for online consultation

## 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.*

### 5.1 Teaching and learning resources

- Establish a formal organizational chart of the e-learning unit with all the existing people's names and the vacant positions which will be filled as soon as the programme is accredited.
- Clarification of the role of the professor of instructional design (Prof. Y. V.) within the organizational structure of the e-learning unit.
- Consider investing more in further integrating simulations, scenario-based learning, and real-life legal applications using digital tools.
- Promote co-creation opportunities where students contribute to knowledge construction through peer-driven activities.
- Create student handbook and cheat sheets for students on time management, academic writing, IT and navigation in the platform.

### 5.2 Physical resources

- Periodically evaluate the adequacy of IT systems as student numbers change, with contingency planning for scalability.

### 5.3 Human support services

- Develop a more formal academic mentoring or tutoring framework, especially to support international and part-time students. This framework can be included in the student handbook or as a cheat sheet as mentioned above.
- Collect periodically and analyse structured feedback on human support services to inform improvements.

### 5.4 Student support

- Formalise student support pathways (student handbook) for online student and for special needs students and proactively communicate them.
- Strengthen internationalisation by promoting mobility options and cross-institutional virtual learning opportunities.
- Constantly evaluate support services to ensure they meet the needs of online students
- Include in the student support services academic writing, referencing, time management and ethical use of AI.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
5	Teaching and Learning resources	Partially compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Partially 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 Master of Laws (LL.M.) programme in European and International Business Law / European and Shipping Business Law offered via distance education by the AUCY demonstrates a strong alignment with the principles of the EQF, particularly Level 7, which emphasizes advanced knowledge, critical understanding, and the ability to solve complex legal issues.

The programme is well-structured and effectively delivered through a Moodle e-learning platform, complemented by synchronous sessions and comprehensive study guides. The programme design, teaching methodologies, and assessment practices reflect a coherent commitment to academic standards, legal relevance, and learner autonomy. The legal content is current, aligned with the demands of the global and European labour market, and incorporates aspects of real-world legal practice through case-based and applied learning approaches.

The teaching staff to be hired are promised to be academically qualified, research-active, and engaged in the thematic areas of the programme. Recruitment and staff development policies are transparent, though further structured training in digital pedagogy and inclusive teaching practices would strengthen the implementation of student-centred learning.

The programme is supported by adequate digital infrastructure, library resources, and administrative systems. Student support services address the needs of diverse learners, including mature, working, and international students, although more formal mechanisms for academic mentoring and special needs support are recommended. The availability of a diploma supplement and adherence to the Lisbon Recognition Convention ensures recognition and mobility of graduates. To further enhance the quality and impact of the programme, the following overarching recommendations are proposed:

- Establish a clear organizational structure of the e-learning unit, and properly describe the pedagogical model that will be applied in order for prospects to gain clear understanding of the expectations of the programme.
- Expand the integration of advanced digital tools, including simulations and scenario-based learning, to strengthen experiential learning.
- Systematise the collection and analysis of data on student progression, feedback, and satisfaction, using it to inform quality assurance and teaching improvement.
- Enhance internationalisation through virtual mobility opportunities and cross-institutional collaboration.
- Formalise student support pathways (student handbook & cheat sheets) for online student and for special needs students and proactively communicate them.
- Execute the promised hirings of academic and professional staff as described in the documentation and in line with the CYQAA requirements.
- Restructure the information in the study guides as per <https://dipae.ac.cy/index.php/en/news-and-events/announcements/693-04-05-2020-enimerosi-axilogisi-distance-programme-2-en>
- Establish a university-wide policy for ethical use of AI, which must be adopted by the online LLM

Overall, the programme is compliant with the quality standards set by CYQAA and contributes to postgraduate legal education in a flexible online format, equipping graduates with the analytical, research, and legal reasoning skills required at EQF Level 7.

## E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Xavier Groussot (Chair)	
Christine Kaddous	
Dimitrios Vlachopoulos (e-learning expert)	
Vera Pavlou	
Victoria Christodoulidou	
Neta Neofytou	



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



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**Date:** 18 June 2025