

Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education

Republic of Cyprus

External Evaluation Report Program of Study

Institution: University of Nicosia

Program of Study: Master of Laws (LLM) Distance Learning

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Instructions.....	3
External Evaluation Committee (EEC).....	4
Introduction.....	5
Findings.....	6
Conclusions and Suggestions of the External Evaluation Committee.....	12
Document Number: 300.1.....	13

INSTRUCTIONS:

The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws of 2015 to 2016” [N. 136 (I)/2015].

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

EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE:

NAME	TITLE	UNIVERSITY / INSTITUTION
Olympia Bekou	Professor	University of Nottingham
Dora Kostakopoulou	Professor	University of Warwick
Emmanuel Voyiakis	Associate Professor	London School of Economics
Christos Panagiotakopoulos	Professor	University of Patras
Rena Savva	Student	University of Cyprus
Phivos Zomenis	Lawyer	N/A

INTRODUCTION:

I. The External Evaluation procedure

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

II. The Internal Evaluation procedure

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

The External evaluation was conducted on behalf of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, in accordance with the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Law of 2015 to 2016” [N. 136 (I)/2015].

The External Evaluation Committee consisted of the members indicated in the section above. Administrative assistance was provided by the Dr Eleni Deliyianni on behalf of the Agency.

Prior to the on-site visit, the Committee was given access to the ‘Application for Evaluation – Accreditation – New Programme of Study – Master of Laws (LLM) - Distance Learning’ document in both the English and Greek languages, as submitted to the Agency by the Institution.

Members of the Committee reviewed and analysed the document individually and three of its members met informally once, prior to the on-site visit. On the day of the evaluation, the Committee first met with representatives of the Agency to discuss the scope of the review and then conducted a 10-hour on-site visit at the University of Nicosia, where meetings were held with both the academic and admin leads of the proposed programme, as well as with two former students.

The following evidence was drawn upon:

- Full text of Application to the Agency, indicated above;
- PowerPoint presentations (Introduction to the University of Nicosia; LLM Presentation; QAA DL);
- Detailed Module Guides provided for review on the day of the evaluation;
- Meetings with the University’s Rector, Vice Rector, Dean of Law; Associate Dean, Head of Department; Programme Coordinators and other Teaching staff;
- Meeting with former students;

- Online demonstration of a sample module.
- The committee also requested and received details of former students who completed Distance Learning Modules within the School.

FINDINGS:

1. EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING WORK – AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- **Organization of Teaching Work**
- **Teaching**
- **Teaching personnel**

The Committee feels that the proposed LLM has the potential of being popular. It could form an important part of the University's expanding portfolio of Distance Learning postgraduate courses.

The teaching organisation appears to be rigorous and interesting and covers a range of subjects. The Committee notes that it has the potential of being a dynamic programme, which may also evolve in response to major legal developments and student demand. Depending on student numbers, the Committee notes that the institution would need to commit adequate resources, in terms of suitable teaching personnel, to ensure that class sizes do not exceed an appropriately agreed number for a Distance Learning course, particularly given that some modules are compulsory.

The Committee would like to focus on the following areas, which require closer consideration:

In terms of admissions, applicants to the programme are normally required to hold a degree in law or a related discipline, before commencing the course. However, where a candidate fails to reach this standard, account can also be taken of practical experience within the relevant area of study. These criteria are consistent with other prestigious universities offering Distance Learning Masters programmes of a similar nature. However, the Committee noted that no particular class of degree is formally required at the moment and would urge the institution to adopt and publicise very clear entrance requirements, in terms of the class of degree required, in the near future.

In addition, for all LLM programmes, applicants whose first language is not English are required to provide evidence of proficiency. The Committee noted a discrepancy between the Greek and English texts of the accreditation application on that point (p.15). The Greek version does not include the English language requirement, which the Committee considers as essential to the programme.

Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the Distance Learning LLM programme webpage should include a specific tab on admission requirements

(currently, admission requirements are only available on the general admissions website, and not on individual programmes).

In terms of assessments, the committee strongly feels that a system of anonymous assessment ought to be put in place, in order to reduce the possibility of bias. Although it emerged in the discussion in the course of the on-site visit that the local practice does not require the anonymisation of exam scripts/essays, the Committee recommends that this be looked at as a matter of priority, with the view to adopting policies consistent with what is standard international practice.

In addition, in highlighting that dissertations are not compulsory for the proposed LL.M, the Committee felt that students who choose not to undertake a dissertation ought to be clearly informed that this choice may limit their chances of admission to a PhD degree in many academic institutions.

Based on the sample module that the Committee was able to see during the on-site visit, the Committee recommends that students must achieve at least a minimum number of credits in the essay component of the summative assessment in order to be allowed into the examination component. This is in order to avoid instances, because of weighting of individual components, where students fail to submit essays in the course of the modules, yet they are allowed to go straight to the final examination.

In addition, it is recommended that course leaders produce written indicative answers and generic feedback on how the class as a whole performed, identifying general themes, common mistakes etc., not least because this could be useful both to current but also future cohorts.

The Distance Learning nature of the LLM should be taken into consideration when structuring the teaching materials. The committee recommends that it is important (a) to structure the material in small, easy-to-assimilate sections, and (b) to incorporate activities in each stage, using multimedia/polymorphic materials. Due care should be taken in using up-to-date materials. The Committee inspected the modules guides that were supplied on the day of the on-site visit and found that some course materials had not been updated for quite some time.

Finally, based on the discussion during the on-site visit, it transpired that not enough credit is currently given to teaching personnel setting up distance learning modules and the Committee would therefore recommend, given the intensity of the task, that this is appropriately weighted in the teaching allocation.

2. PROGRAM OF STUDY AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

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

The Committee reviewed the purpose and objectives as well as the learning outcomes of the proposed Programme of Study as outlined in the Application and discussed them during the on-site visit. The Committee feels that these are appropriate.

In terms of content of the programme, the Committee sought to clarify the number and structure of the proposed compulsory modules. This issue was discussed at length during the site visit and clarifications were sought on the content and structure of the existing European comparative law and politics module. The Committee felt that providing a distinct course on International Human Rights (or similar course covering global and regional systems and institutions) ought to be strongly considered.

The committee observed that there were inconsistencies in the length and depth of the reading lists and materials for the different courses. Moreover, several of the reading lists reviewed required considerable updating. Furthermore, specific activities ought to be prepared for each of the modules, as these were not available at the time of the review.

To ensure consistency of reading lists and materials, the Committee recommends putting a system in place, in addition to the current practice where the Dean is responsible for final review. We felt that perhaps having a committee or peer review mechanism might be useful in that respect. The process should also take into account the Distance Learning nature of the course and solicit appropriate input from experts in that field.

Following discussions during the on-site visit, it emerged that it is not always clear on the module description who the member of staff teaching on the module would be, particularly if students need to be split into groups. The Committee therefore recommends that the institution take appropriate measures to inform students that course leaders may not always be available to teach specific course groups, especially in popular courses. This can take the form of distinguishing between course leaders and course teachers.

Overall, the structure and delivery of the programme is as described in the programme specifications. These are appropriate to the aims of the course.

The quality, management and connection with the local labour market and society were deemed to be appropriate. The committee cannot comment on the international dimension of the programme, as none is currently envisaged.

3. RESEARCH WORK AND SYNERGIES WITH TEACHING

- Research Teaching Synergies

The Committee acknowledges that postgraduate programmes make a significant and valuable contribution to the University's core activities of research and teaching. They ought to do much to raise the academic profile of the institution as an internationally renowned centre of excellence in teaching and research. Postgraduate students enrich the research culture of the School of Law, as well as playing a central role in the career development of many members of staff, who are provided with unparalleled opportunities to teach high quality students in their areas of specialist expertise.

In terms of research content, the Committee felt that whilst the provision of a research methods module is positive in itself, including specific training on research ethics would be welcome.

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

- **Administrative Mechanisms**
- **Infrastructures / Support**
- **Financial Resources**

The committee is confident that the institution's processes with regard to administration, student welfare and support of teaching work are robust. It would only emphasise the need to be proactive with respect to students who face personal problems, and who may feel inhibited from coming forward on their own initiative.

The Committee also emphasises the need for uniformity in terms of depth and length of materials (see also comments above). A School Committee would have the responsibility for monitoring and evaluating that quality and standards are applied across the board.

Given also that this LLM is delivered through distance learning, the Committee would encourage the institution to make the training in Distance Learning methodology compulsory.

The Committee has no reason to question the availability of financial resources. However, as we have not received such information, and the application form does not require the Institution to provide such evidence, we are unable to comment on this particular point.

5. DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS

Given the intrinsic nature of the Distance Learning Programmes, the Committee wishes to reiterate the need for detailed feedback, indicative answers etc. which we have identified in the sections above, as well as making training on Distance Learning compulsory. Including experience in distance learning in future job profiles associated to this programme, as a desirable attribute would also be appropriate.

Moreover, as discussed above, introducing research ethics and anti-bias training for all staff, would further strengthen the proposed programme.

With regard to providing guidance and support, including but not limited to reviewing course reading lists, the committee wishes to reiterate its finding above that appropriate formal mechanisms ought to be put in place to ensure consistency.

Monitoring student performance throughout the process would also be important. In that respect, requiring students to obtain a minimum number of credits in the essay component before being allowed to sit the examination component, would help in that direction and has also been discussed above.

The Committee notes that the proposed Distance Learning programme does not currently envisage an opportunity for a face-to-face meeting. The Committee feels that the programme would be further strengthened if there were an opportunity for staff and students to meet face-to-face, on a voluntary basis, at least once in the duration of the programme.

Finally, the DL unit is encouraged to make full and systematic use of student evaluations and the available analytics in assessing the effectiveness of its provision. The committee recommends that the provision of clear information on the complaints procedures available is ensured.

6. DOCTORAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY

N/A

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE¹

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

On the basis of the documentation provided in advance of and during the visit, as well as the discussions with staff and students during the on-site visit, the Committee holds the view that the proposed Distance Learning LLM programme is well designed, with clear and coherent aims and learning outcomes, good management and mechanisms of delivery, and, above all, designed and delivered by qualified, committed and enthusiastic academic colleagues.

We are also satisfied that the new programme is well integrated in the University's and the Law School's strategic development plans, and increases the Law School's potential to become an important intellectual hub in the relevant fields of research.

We have noted a number of areas in which the new programme can be improved. These include:

- being more specific about the class of degree requirement for the purposes of admissions;
- including a further course on International Human Rights, and making it compulsory for the relevant specialization;
- ensuring consistency in the length and depth of course materials by means of appropriate formal review mechanisms;
- providing compulsory Distance Learning teaching training;
- anonymizing summative assessments, and specifying a minimum credit in the essay component for a student to be allowed to take the exam component;
- providing more by way of indicative answers to coursework questions and generic feedback to the cohort;
- giving sufficient recognition to the large workload involved in setting up a new Distance Learning course, by making appropriate adjustments to the teaching allocation.

In conclusion, in the view of the Committee, the proposal is clear, precise and sufficiently thought through with the relevant resources in place for a successful delivery.

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

Quality Standards and Indicators

External Evaluation of a Program of Study

Institution: University of Nicosia.....
Program of Study: ...Master of Laws (LLM) Distance Learning.....
Duration of the Program of Study: ... 1.5 years (3 semesters).....
Evaluation Date: ...25 May 2017.....

The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws of 2015 to 2016”.

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

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

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

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

Members of the External Evaluation Committee

NAME	TITLE	UNIVERSITY / INSTITUTION
Olympia Bekou	Professor	University of Nottingham
Dora Kostakopoulou	Professor	University of Warwick
Emmanuel Voyiakis	Associate Professor	London School of Economics
Christos Panagiotakopoulos	Professor	University of Patras
Rena Savva	Student	University of Cyprus
Phivos Zomenis	Lawyer	N/A

Date and Time of the On-Site Visit: ...25 May 2017.....

Duration of the On-Site Visit:10 hours.....

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

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

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

On 1.1.1: While we recognize that the programme is new, and do not object to the element of discretion inherent in the admissions process, especially with regard to professionals seeking a postgraduate qualification, we would urge the institution to adopt and publicise very clear entrance requirements, in terms of the class of degree required, in the near future. We also noted a discrepancy between the Greek and English texts on that point (p.15). The Greek version does not include the English language requirement, which we regard as essential to the programme.

On 1.1.2: While it emerged from discussion that the expected number of students per semester would be 25-30 per course, the Committee notes that, given the proposed programme intake of 90 students per semester (section 11, p.26 of application), and the fact that some courses are compulsory, the institution would need to commit adequate resources to ensure that class sizes do not exceed the number stated in discussion.

On 1.1.3.2: Our mark applies to disclosure only, as the programme has not run yet.

On 1.1.3.4.: The students we saw were not altogether clear about the word limit for dissertations, so it would be good to signpost it more clearly.

On 1.1.3.5: (a) The committee feels that it is very important for the institution to put in place a system of anonymous assessment in order to reduce the possibility of bias. This is virtually uniform practice in good foreign academic institutions. While we understand that this may not be local practice, and that the institution is acting under existing University regulations, we feel that the case for changing that practice is compelling. (b) It is important that the institution make very clear to students that choosing not to do a dissertation as part of their degree may prejudice their chances of being admitted to a PhD degree in many academic institutions.

On 1.1.3.6: It would be good for the feedback forms to include an open comments section.

On 1.1.6: The committee recognises that course leaders will provide oral feedback to students as a group, in addition to individual written feedback. However, we would also recommend that course leaders produce written indicative answers and generic feedback on how the class as a whole performed, identifying general themes, common mistakes, and so on. This may be useful to future students too, who will be able to see those reports and draw appropriate guidance, in combination with access to past (or, in the case of a new programmes, mock) exam papers, exemplars of good essays by past students, and so on.

Note, additionally:

α) the expected number of Cypriot and International Students in the program of study.

25-30 per course; 90 per semester in whole

β) the countries of origin of the majority of students.

Cyprus; Greece

γ) the maximum planned number of students per class-section.

20

1.2	Teaching	1	2	3	4	5
1.2.1	The methodology utilized in each course is suitable for achieving the course's purpose and objectives and those of the individual modules.					X
1.2.2	The methodology of each course is suitable for adults.				X	
1.2.3	Continuous-formative assessment and feedback are provided to the students regularly.					X

1.2.4	The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance, are clear, adequate, and known to the students.				X	
1.2.5	Educational activities which encourage students' active participation in the learning process, are implemented.				X	
1.2.6	Teaching incorporates the use of modern educational technologies that are consistent with international standards, including a platform for the electronic support of learning.					X
1.2.7	Teaching materials (books, manuals, journals, databases, and teaching notes) meet the requirements set by the methodology of the program's individual courses, and are updated regularly.				X	
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p>On 1.2.2 Given the likely profile of DL students, many of whom will be professionals with limited time, it is important (a) to structure the material in small, easy-to-assimilate sections, and (b) to incorporate activities in each stage.</p> <p>On 1.2.4 The committee recommends that students must achieve at least a minimum number of credits in the essay component of the summative assessment in order to be allowed into the examination component.</p> <p>On 1.2.5 The committee strongly favours the use of multimedia/polymorphic material in DL contexts, and would encourage course leaders to pay particular attention to this in designing course content.</p> <p>On 1.2.7 The committee notes that some of the course materials we saw had not been updated for quite some time, and it is vital that this is closely reviewed every year.</p>						
1.3	Teaching Personnel	1	2	3	4	5
1.3.1	The number of full-time academic personnel, occupied exclusively at the institution, and their fields of expertise, adequately support the program of study.					X
1.3.2	The members of teaching personnel for each course have the relevant formal and fundamental qualifications for teaching the course, as described by the legislation, including the following:					X

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

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

On 1.3.9 The committee is concerned that setting up a DL course is very demanding, and would therefore recommend that this is appropriately weighted in the Department's teaching allocation.

2. PROGRAM OF STUDY AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS						
2.1	Purpose and Objectives and learning outcomes of the Program of Study	1	2	3	4	5
2.1.1	The purpose and objectives of the program of study are formulated in terms of expected learning outcomes and are consistent with the mission and the strategy of the institution.					X
2.1.2	The purpose and objectives of the program and the learning outcomes are utilized as a guide for the design of the program of study.					X
2.1.3	The higher education qualification and the program of study, conform to the provisions of their corresponding Professional and Vocational Bodies for the purpose of registration to these bodies.					X
2.1.4	The program's content, the methods of assessment, the teaching materials and the equipment, lead to the achievement of the program's purpose and objectives and ensure the expected learning outcomes.				X	
2.1.5	The expected learning outcomes of the program are known to the students and to the members of the academic and teaching personnel.					X
2.1.6	The learning process is properly designed to achieve the expected learning outcomes.					X
2.1.7	The higher education qualification awarded to the students, corresponds to the purpose and objectives and the learning outcomes of the program.					X
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p>On 2.1.4 The committee recommends that the institution give serious consideration to providing a distinct course on International Human Rights (or a similar course covering the various global and regional humans systems and institutions, and the source of international human rights law), and make that course compulsory for students in the Human Rights stream. With regard to methods of assessment and teaching materials, see comments in sections above.</p>						

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

On 2.2.6 The committee noted inconsistencies in the length and depth of the reading lists and materials for different courses, and recommends that the institution reviews the matter very closely. We could not assess the content of the activities for each course, as that information is not yet available.

On 2.2.8 The committee is happy with this, but would also draw attention to the earlier point about keeping course materials and reading lists annually updated.

On 2.2.9 The committee is happy with the degree of flexibility provided at course level. Flexibility at programme level will likely improve as the number of courses grows.

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

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

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

		1	2	3	4	5
2.4	Management of the Program of Study					
2.4.1	Effective management of the program of study with regard to its design, its approval, its monitoring and its review, is in place.			X		
2.4.2	It is ensured that learning outcomes may be achieved within the specified timeframe.					X
2.4.3	It is ensured that the program's management and development process is an academic process which operates without any non-academic interventions.					X
2.4.4	The academic hierarchy of the institution, (Rector, Vice-Rectors, Deans, Chairs and Programs' Coordinators, academic personnel) have the sole responsibility for academic excellence and the development of the programs of study.					X
2.4.5	Information relating to the program of study are posted publicly and include:					X
2.4.5.1	The provisions regarding unit credits					X
2.4.5.2	The expected learning outcomes					X
2.4.5.3	The methodology					X
2.4.5.4	Course descriptions				X	
2.4.5.5	The program's structure					X
2.4.5.6	The admission requirements				X	
2.4.5.7	The format and the procedures for student assessment					X
2.4.6	The award of the higher education qualification is accompanied by the Diploma Supplement which is in line with the European and international standards.					X
2.4.7	The effectiveness of the program's evaluation mechanism, by the students, is ensured.				X	
2.4.8	The recognition and transfer of credit units from previous studies is regulated by procedures and regulations which ensure that the majority of credit units is awarded by the					

	institution which awards the higher education qualification. NOT APPLICABLE					
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p>2.4.1 The Committee recommends that the institution put in a place a system to ensure the consistency of reading lists and materials across courses, in both depth and length. This could take the form of a committee of peer review, or some other structure. In addition, it is important that the institution solicit input from an expert in DL in designing, implementing, and reviewing its proposed courses.</p> <p>2.4.5.4 The Committee recommends that the institution take appropriate measures to inform students that course leaders may not always be available to teach specific course groups, especially in popular courses. This can take the form of distinguishing between course leaders and course teachers.</p> <p>2.4.5.6. The committee recommends that the DL LLM programme webpage should include a specific tab on admission requirements (currently, admission requirements are only available on the general admissions website). See also our previous comment on admission requirements.</p> <p>2.4.7 See our comments on open-ended comment section in student feedback forms.</p> <p>In the case of practical training, note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The number of credit units for courses and the number of credits for practical training - In which semester does practical training takes place? - Note if practical training is taking place in a country other than the homecountry of the institution which awards the higher education qualification 						
2.5	International Dimension of the Program of Study	1	2	3	4	5
2.5.1	The program's collaborations with other institutions are compared positively with corresponding collaborations of other departments / programs of study in Europe and internationally. NOT APPLICABLE					
2.5.2	The program attracts Visiting professors of recognized academic standing. NOT APPLICABLE					
2.5.3	Students participate in exchange programs. NOT APPLICABLE					
2.5.4	The academic profile of the program of study is compatible					X

	with corresponding programs of study in Cyprus and internationally.					
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p>Also, comment on the degree the program compares positively with corresponding programs operating in Cyprus and abroad in higher education institutions of the same rank.</p>						
2.6	Connection with the labor market and the society	1	2	3	4	5
2.6.1	The procedures applied, so that the program conforms to the scientific and professional activities of the graduates, are adequate and effective.					X
2.6.2	According to the feasibility study, indicators for the employability of graduates are satisfactory. WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED A FEASIBILITY STUDY, AND THE APPLICATION FORM DOES NOT APPEAR TO REQUIRE ONE.					
2.6.3	Benefits, for the society, deriving from the program are significant.					X
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p>						

3. RESEARCH WORK AND SYNERGIES WITH TEACHING						
3.1	Research - Teaching Synergies	1	2	3	4	5
3.1.1	It is ensured that teaching and learning have been adequately enlightened by research.					X
3.1.2	New research results are embodied in the content of the				X	

	program of study.							
3.1.3	Adequate and sufficient facilities and equipment are provided to support the research component of the program of study, which are available and accessible to the personnel and the students.							X
3.1.4	The results of the academic personnel's research activity are published in international journals with the peer-reviewing system, in international conferences, conference minutes, publications etc.							X
3.1.5	External, non-governmental, funding for the academic personnel's research activities, is compared positively to the funding of other institutions in Cyprus and abroad.					X		
3.1.6	Internal funding, of the academic personnel's research activities, is compared positively to the funding of other institutions in Cyprus and abroad.							X
3.1.7	The policy for, indirect or direct, internal funding of the academic personnel's research activity is satisfactory.							X
3.1.8	The participation of students, academic, teaching and administrative personnel of the program in research activities and projects is satisfactory. NOT APPLICABLE							
3.1.9	Student training in the research process is sufficient.					X		
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p>3.1.9 Whilst the provision of a research methods module is positive in itself, the committee would also recommend including specific training on research ethics.</p>								
4. ADMINISTRATION SERVICES, STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT OF TEACHING WORK								
4.1	Administrative Mechanisms	1	2	3	4	5		
4.1.1	There is a Student Welfare Service that supports students with regards to academic and personal problems and difficulties.							X
4.1.2	Statutory administrative mechanisms for monitoring and supporting students are sufficient.							X

4.1.3	The efficiency of these mechanisms is assessed on the basis of specific criteria.						X
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p>The committee is confident that the institution's processes in that regard are robust. It would only emphasize the need to be pro-active with respect to students who face personal problems, and who may feel inhibited from coming forward on their own initiative.</p>							
4.2	Infrastructure / Support	1	2	3	4	5	
4.2.1	There are suitable books and reputable journals supporting the program.						X
4.2.2	There is a supportive internal communication platform.						X
4.2.3	The facilities are adequate in number and size.						X
4.2.4	The equipment used in teaching and learning (laboratory and electronic equipment, consumables etc) are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate.						X
4.2.5	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are adequate and accessible to students.						X
4.2.6	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are updated regularly with the most recent publications.				X		
4.2.7	The teaching personnel are provided with training opportunities in teaching method, in adult education, and in new technologies on the basis of a structured learning framework.				X		
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p> <p>4.2.6 On the basis of the materials we were provided, that is generally, but not uniformly the case. See comments above.</p> <p>4.2.7 The committee encourages the institution to make compulsory training in DL methodology.</p>							

4.3	Financial Resources	1	2	3	4	5
4.3.1	The management and allocation of the financial resources of the program of study, allow for the development of the program and of the academic / teaching personnel.					X
4.3.2	The allocation of financial resources as regards to academic matters, is the responsibility of the relevant academic departments.					X
4.3.3	The remuneration of academic and other personnel is analogous to the remuneration of academic and other personnel of the respective institutions in Cyprus. WE DID NOT RECEIVE SUCH INFORMATION, AND THE APPLICATION FORM DOES NOT REQUIRE THE INSTITUTION TO PROVIDE RELEVANT EVIDENCE.					
4.3.4	Student tuition and fees are consistent to the tuition and fees of other respective institutions.					X
<p>Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.</p>						

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

5.	DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS	1	2	3	4	5
5.1	Feedback processes for teaching personnel with regards to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.				X	

5.2	The process and the conditions for the recruitment of academic / teaching personnel, ensure that candidates have the necessary skills and experience for long distance education.					X	
5.3	Through established procedures, appropriate training, guidance and support, are provided to teaching personnel, to enable it to efficiently support the educational process.					X	
5.4	Student performance monitoring mechanisms are satisfactory.					x	
5.5	Adequate mentoring by the teaching personnel, is provided to students, through established procedures.						X
5.6	The unimpeded long distance communication between the teaching personnel and the students, is ensured to a satisfactory degree.						X
5.7	Assessment consistency, its equivalent application to all students, and the compliance with predefined procedures, are ensured.						X
5.8	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) comply with the requirements provided by the long distance education methodology and are updated regularly.					x	
5.9	The program of study has the appropriate and adequate infrastructure for the support of learning.						X
5.10	The supporting infrastructures are easily accessible.						X
5.11	Students are informed and trained with regards to the available educational infrastructure.						X
5.12	The procedures for systematic control and improvement of the supportive services are regular and effective.					X	
5.13	Infrastructure for distance education is comparable to university infrastructure in the European Union and internationally.						X
5.14	Electronic library services are provided according to international practice in order to support the needs of the students and of the teaching personnel.						
5.15	The students and the teaching personnel have access to the necessary electronic sources of information, relevant to the program, the level, and the method of teaching.						X

5.16	The percentage of teaching personnel who holds a doctorate, in a program of study which is offered long distance, is not less than 75%.					X
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Justify the answer you have provided and note the additional comments you may have on each standard / indicator.

5.1 See comments above about the insertion of an open comment section in the feedback form.

5.2. See our previous comment on making DL training compulsory. Consider including experience in DL as a desirable attribute in the job description in further recruitment. In addition, consider introducing research ethics & anti-bias training.

5.3 The committee recommends that the institution put in place appropriate formal mechanisms, e.g. a committee, for that purpose, perhaps combining it with the mechanisms of peer-review of course reading lists that the committee recommended above.

5.4. See our previous point about requiring students to obtain a minimum number of credits in the essay component before being allowed to sit the examination component.

5.6 The committee feels that the programme would be further strengthened if there were an opportunity for staff and students to meet face-to-face, on a voluntary basis, at least once in the duration of the programme.

5.12 The DL unit is encouraged to make full and systematic use of student evaluations and the available analytics in assessing the effectiveness of its provision. The committee recommends that the provision of clear information on the complaints procedures available is ensured.

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

The maximum number of students per class-section, should not exceed 30 students.	√
The conduct of written examinations with the physical presence of the students, under the supervision of the institution or under the supervision of reliable agencies which operate in the countries of the students, is compulsory.	√
The number of long distance classes taught by the academic personnel does not exceed the number of courses taught by the teaching personnel in conventional programs of study.	√

The following criterion applies additionally for doctoral programs of study.

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

FINAL REMARKS – SUGGESTIONS

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

The committee is grateful to the Law Department and the University of Nicosia as a whole for their gracious hospitality, the thoroughness of the documentation they put before us, and their openness in discussing every aspect of their application. We have found the proposed Distance Learning LLM programme to be well designed, with clear and coherent aims and learning outcomes, good management and mechanisms of delivery, and, above all, designed and delivered by qualified, committed and enthusiastic academic colleagues. We are also satisfied that the new programme is well integrated in the University's and the Law School's strategic development plans, and increases the Law School's potential to become an important intellectual hub in the relevant fields of research.

We have noted a number of areas in which the new programme can be improved. These include being more specific about the class of degree requirement for the purposes of admissions; including a further course on International Human Rights, and making it compulsory for the relevant specialization; ensuring consistency in the length and depth of course materials by means of appropriate formal review mechanisms; providing compulsory DL teaching training; anonymizing summative assessments, and specifying a minimum credit in the essay component for a student to be allowed to take the exam component; providing more by way of indicative answers to coursework questions and generic feedback to the cohort; and giving sufficient recognition to the large workload involved in setting up a new DL course, by making appropriate adjustments to the teaching allocation.

In sum, we found the proposal to be well articulated, innovative, and adequately resourced. The committee remains at the disposal of DI.PA.E. for any further clarifications and comments, and it grateful for the Agency's support in this process.

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

Name:	Signature:
Olympia Bekou	
Dora Kostakopoulou	
Christos Panagiotakopoulos	
Emmanuel Voyiakis	
Phivos Zomenis	
Rena Savva	

Date: ...26/05/2017...