Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 08/11/2022

External Evaluation Report

PhD

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

- **Town: Nicosia, Cyprus**

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

- **Department/ Sector: Social Science**

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

  In Greek:

  PhD Criminology 3 years full-time 180 ECTS

  In English:

  PhD Criminology 3 years full-time 180 ECTS

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

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

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations

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A. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Kate Moss	Professor of Applied Criminology	University of Derby
Rachel Armitage	Professor of Criminology	University of Huddersfield
Eckhard Schroeter	Professor of Public Administration	German Police University

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

Sub-areas

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

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

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

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

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

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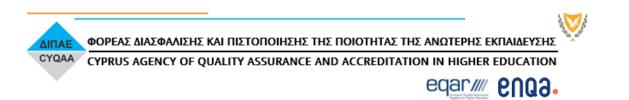
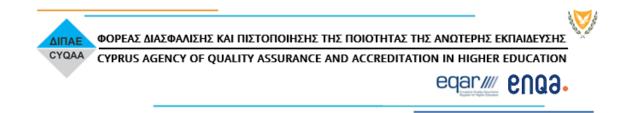## 1.3 Public information

Standards

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
  - *key performance indicators*
  - *profile of the student population*
  - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
  - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
  - *learning resources and student support available*
  - *career paths of graduates*

- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

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Findings

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

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) comprised the following;

(Chair) Professor Kate Moss, University of Derby, UK.
(Member) Professor Eckhard Schroeter, German Police University.
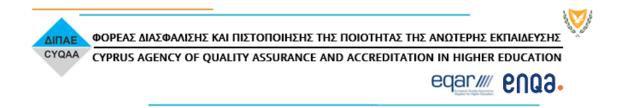(Member) Professor Rachel Armitage, Huddersfield University UK.

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

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

SHSS has 150 staff and 1650 students and within Social Science specifically there are 27 faculty staff who are well qualified with impressive CV's.

UNIC's quality assurance policies, its teaching and research policies are overseen by the Cypriot Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education. The quality assurance process, regulations and information are appropriate, well communicated, administered and have been followed

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

executive for their research but noted that balancing research and teaching is tricky especially during teaching semesters.

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

The panel were also able to meet online with a former PhD student who has completed impressive empirical research in prisons in Cyprus and this information was also helpful.

The panel found that there was a particular approach to the undertaking of the PhD programme which is very proscriptive – being split up into semesters with credits being allocated at each semester based on tasks undertaken. The panel are not familiar with this approach, and this has raised for us a number of concerns which we will detail in sections 4 and 6 of this document. Notably a potential issue of non-compliance with program design and approval – see section 4 (page 11) and Annex 6 Code of Practice and Regulation (page 166) NC6 University Regulations for PhD programs University of Nicosia.

Strengths

The staff were hard working and committed to their students.

We met very enthusiastic and highly committed staff across both the academic and administrative departments.

The whole team appear committed to providing the best learning experience for the students. Pastoral and welfare assistance is in place. Resources are good and tutors and administrative staff are helpful.

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The panel spent some time considering the philosophy of this program and elements of this will be returned to later in this document. The panel felt that the University may wish to think more about what its overarching philosophical aims are and what the implications of this might be. In particular, we feel that in keeping with an overall aim to deliver the best quality criminology PhD program, that the University may wish to consider increasing its staff expertise in mainstream criminology but also the way in which the PhD is currently structured with credit points being allocated for individual elements of the PhD progress. This is something that we will return to later in this document.
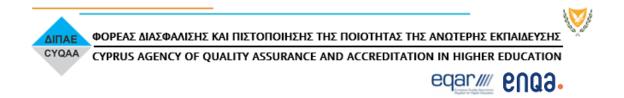
Although current staff are qualified in their particular specialisms social sciences is somewhat psychology heavy and we feel that the faculty may wish to consider increasing staff expertise in relation to mainstream criminology. We feel this would have great benefits for the appeal of the course. Given that they need to be sure of a subject specialism match prior to accepting an application, the panel felt that broadening their expertise would enhance recruitment.

The panel felt that the program could be improved by the provision of much more detailed information on the curriculum and structure of the program including how the elements of the PhD are assessed, and the transparency of progression which in particular may be of note for the University, should there be issues of appeal over progression.

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

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

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

> ### Sub-areas
> **2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
> **2.2 Practical training**
> **2.3 Student assessment**

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

Standards

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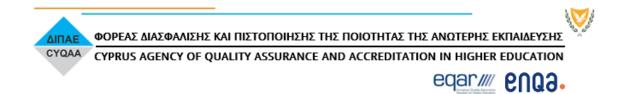
2.2 Practical training

Standards

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

2.3 Student assessment

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

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

Findings

The panel found from the documentation (see p 11 of the application) that the impetus for the mode of study in the main lies with the relationship between students and their supervisor(s). 'Encouragement' to complete DOS forms is a concern if students omit to do this. The knock-on effect of this is that there may be no paper trail evident should the need arise to revisit this (for example in the case of an appeal).

The panel were uncertain where such documents would be lodged or which member of staff took responsibility for this.

There is no opportunity for us to evaluate how the system of assessment throughout the PhD is managed and how the credits are allocated to students.
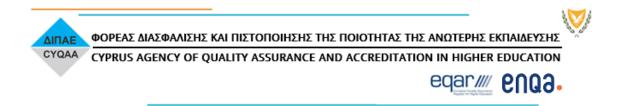
Strengths

Staff are competent to supervise doctoral students and the criteria of having 3 supervisors is commendable.

The system in place for final examination of the thesis is strong.

Areas of improvement & recommendations

Based on our comments in the findings section we would strongly advise the University to move to an online system of PhD student management where all records can be kept, managed and accessed by the student, supervision team and the research office.
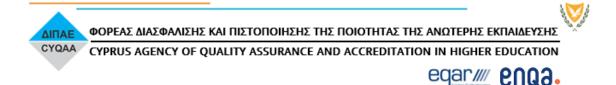
Although we are impressed by the calibre of the staff available to supervise doctoral theses, we remain somewhat unconvinced that UNICS is availing itself of all the opportunities of doctoral

registrations that might come its way if some staff were qualified to supervise more mainstream criminology topics.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Non-compliant
2.2	Practical training	Not applicable
2.3	Student assessment	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.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*
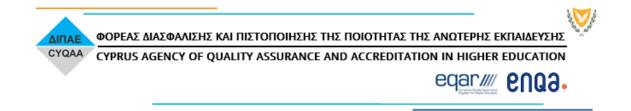
3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

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

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

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

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

Findings

There are 12 staff that contribute to the PhD program, including three Lecturers, seven Associate Professors and two Professors.

Staff contributing to this program have strong and sustained research profiles with publications, including peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, books and conference proceedings. Staff profiles show active engagement in practice (policing, law, voluntary sector) as well as indicators of esteem, such as invitations to sit on expert groups relevant to their specialist subjects.

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

Strengths

Many of the staff have strong academic profiles with sustained and high-quality publications, research activity and esteem.

Staff are engaged with relevant professional organisations and contribute to training, committees, and expert groups.
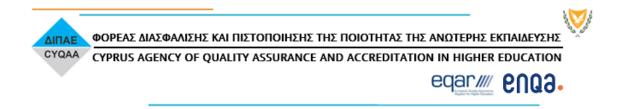
Staff are incentivised to publish in Scopus indexed journals, and to attend relevant conferences.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

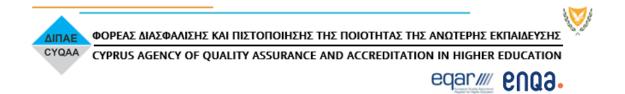We recommend several areas for improvement in relation to the program staff.

Whilst most staff have strong academic profiles, there seems to be an over-representation of psychology-based expertise. We feel the program would be strengthened (in research and collaboration) with the recruitment of mainstream criminologists. We have some concerns that there is no core criminology focus which is an issue for a department who wish to develop this area. If this is the case UNIC need to consider a readjustment of their staff profiles towards a strengthened criminology team.

Staff publications are strong, but activity appears have slowed in recent years. This may be a matter of CVs not being up to date, but it does suggest that staff may not be allocated sufficient research time.
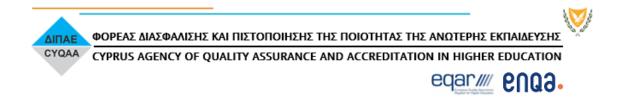
Training is provided to all staff, but we suggest that the University considers introducing additional teaching qualifications such as the Higher Education Academy.

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

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

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

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

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria**
> **4.2 Student progression**
> **4.3 Student recognition**
> **4.4 Student certification**

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
  - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
  - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

Findings

The University has a set of regulations in place regarding the admission, recognition, progression, and certification of students. The regulations are pre-defined and published.

Strengths

The University has an admission system to PhD programs in place. Admission is based on several steps and requirements, including an initial research proposal, a statement of purpose, letters of recommendation and individual interviews.
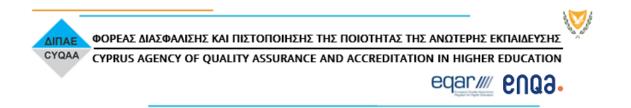
The University has a good support system for students in place, which allows the University to assist doctoral students with extensive counselling services, welfare mechanisms and academic counselling (incl. the "Student Success Centre" and student advising and support for student life on and off campus). The role of the progress committee is well defined and the significance of the "Annual Report" is appreciated by the panel.

The University also responds well to students with special needs.

Areas of improvement & recommendations

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

We understood from our visit to UNIC that the program director indicated that applications from masters students who have not completed a masters thesis would not be viewed as favourably as those who had completes a masters thesis. In relation to accepting students who have graduated from their own masters program who have elected not to do a thesis as part of this, we would recommend they provide more clarity about admission criteria on this basis.

We would discourage UNICS from accepting students with no masters thesis onto their PhD program but clearly this would have a knock on effect in terms of accepting non-thesis candidates from their own masters program.

The panel are concerned that there is a mismatch in the documentation regarding admission requirements which indicate that it is possible to undertake the criminology PhD without any previous degrees in criminology (see p 14 of the application document and also the program directors power point on this received at the site visit.) In relation to this we would like to recommend that they clarify this position and provide some justification for it.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

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

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

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

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

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

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

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

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

5.4 Student support

Standards

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

Findings

The faculty offers good resources to support PhD students (e.g., access to VLE materials, and the IT infrastructure is comprehensive). The library offers a range of resources to support student learning (access to databases and repositories of relevance to the discipline). Human support resources are adequate, both on the academic and the administrative side.
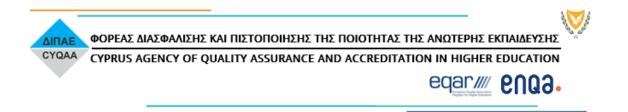
There is a very structured programme for PhD students comprising 6 semesters and specific credits assigned to the completion of each semesters work. Whilst this gives PhD students focus and perhaps a provisional timetable of work to adhere to (given that not all PhD's are the same and research sometimes has to be flexible because it doesn't always pan out quite the way we envisage!), the panel were unsure about how the allocation of ECTS at the end of each semester would be given and who makes the decision about this. We were also uncertain about whether these credits can be 'carried' should a student take time out of their doctoral studies for any reason.

Strengths

Physical and human resources are both good and provide good support to students studying at this level.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

There are a number of staff available and able to supervise PhD candidates. Existing staff have qualifications from a range of prestigious international Universities and this is to be commended.
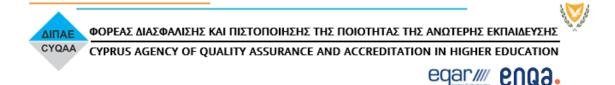
However we felt that to attract a greater number of diverse students to this PhD program, UNICS might wish to consider the profiles of its current staff – which are predominantly psychology based – and think about future investment in staff with more mainstream criminology profiles.

We would also recommend that the procedures for and basis upon which ECTS credits are given at the end of each semester of study on the PhD are revisited in order to provide greater clarity, consistency and transparency.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

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

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **6.1 Selection criteria and requirements**
> **6.2 Proposal and dissertation**
> **6.3 Supervision and committees**

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

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

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

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

6.3 Supervision and committees

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

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

Findings

The PhD program at UNICS can be undertaken over 8 semester full-time time study OR 16 semesters of part-time study. Unlike many PhD programs we have come across it has a proscriptive timetable of study. The admissions criteria includes prospective students to provide the following: 1) An accredited Bachelors degree 2) An accredited Masters degree 3) Initial Research Proposal: A one thousand (1000) word initial proposal outlining the research topic, aim and objectives, research questions and proposed research methodology. 4) Statement of Purpose: Applicants are required to submit a comprehensive outline highlighting their academic and individual competencies and state why they believe they are suitable for admission to the Programme, as well as their reflections regarding the expectations and value of the Programme for their personal advancement and career development. 5) Letters of Recommendation: Applicants must obtain two recommendation letters from individuals who have known the applicant in an educational and/or professional environment. At least one of the recommendation letters must be from an academic institution where the applicant has studied previously. 6) English Language Proficiency: TOEFL (paper based test 600, computer based test 250, internet based test 100) or IELTS 6.5. For students who graduated from an English speaking University, English language is not a requirement. Proficiency in English Language is an essential requirement even in cases where the thesis is to be submitted in Greek. 7) Previous theses/dissertations and any published work of academic relevance (if any). 8) Application form: Applicants must submit an application form for admission and enrolment to the programme. The application form requests general information about the applicant, their qualifications, relevant experience. 9) Individual Interviews:

Students are assigned a supervisor and co-supervisors. The supervisor and co-supervisor monitor the research activities of the doctoral student. The research activity of each student will be overseen by their supervisors. At the end of each academic year, students submit to the Academic Board a report on their activities. The language of the programme can be either English or Greek. At the end of their studies, in order to be awarded the PhD degree, students are required to write a Thesis (80,000 words maximum) that presents in a coherent and academically appropriate manner the research project conducted, the findings and implications arising from the study

The guidelines include a proposed structure of chapters contained in the dissertation (see "Thesis Content and Description"). The maximum of 80,000 words is given, but this statement leaves room for interpretation as to what the minimum word count would be. In fact, the regulations state that the 80.000 word limit is "not a target".

The University uses a start-of-the-art plagiarism detection software and considers plagiarism a "major offence".

The detailed, pre-defined and published regulations also include details about presentation of the dissertation, binding, and submission to the library.

Strengths

The regulations governing the PhD program include details about formal requirements, processes and formats of proposal writing and dissertation work. In doing so, the regulations provide formal directions that can be ordinarily expected from PhD programs. However, some regulatory details also point to areas of improvement and recommendations.

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

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The PhD program can benefit from clearer word count target given for the dissertation work. While the current regulations indicate a clear maximum number of words, the minimum length of the dissertation appears to be more elusive. This aspect of dissertations should be clarified using the 80,000 word count as a target.

It would also be helpful to the research process, if the "PhD Proposal Assessment Form" would emphasize the theoretical contribution of the proposed dissertation work. Significantly, the assessment form should also specifically refer to the expected contribution of the proposed research to the field of Criminology (rather than "Psychology").

It is important to see plagiarism as a "major offence", however, we recommend that the regulations refer to a more detailed process as to how any cases of alleged plagiarism (as detected by the software, for example) will be handled.

We recommend that the requirement for the examination team to have a minimum of one prior examination at PhD level should be strengthened. The examination team should have a collective experience of more than one prior examination, and where one member of the team has a lower number, this should be compensated by an experienced examiner.

This is a Criminology program and, at present, the potential supervisors are largely specialists in psychology and law. We suggest that this team be strengthened with Criminologists to ensure that supervisor expertise matches key areas of criminological study.

The seminar program is adequate and includes key topics such as methods, conducting a literature review, ethics, the viva experience (etc.). However, this is not specific to the social sciences/Criminology. We suggest that a more tailored program would benefit students.

Records of supervisions are kept by the Main Supervisor and the student. An online system that records attendance and stores notes on progress/issues would help the broader supervisory team to identify (and address) any issues and would allow transparency and accountability should the student drop out/fail.

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

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

B. Conclusions and final remarks

There are some evident strengths here in terms of some of the aspects of this doctoral program.

One of our main themes throughout this evaluation has been that whilst existing staff have strong academic profiles, there seems to be an over-representation of psychology-based expertise. We feel the program would be strengthened (in research and collaboration) with the recruitment of criminologists. We appreciate that this is not something which may be acted on immediately, but we do feel that some concrete strategic actions about how this might be rectified in the future would be advisable.

In terms of the issues we raised regarding ongoing monitoring and review (section 1.2); assessment (section 2.3) and progression (section 4.2), we would re-emphasise the following.

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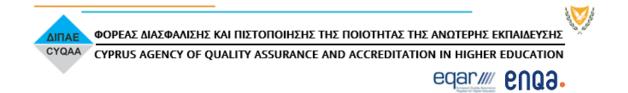
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The program could be improved by the provision of much more detailed information on the curriculum and structure of the program including how the elements of the PhD are assessed, and the transparency of progression which in particular may be of note for the University, should there be issues of appeal over progression

We would strongly advise the University to move to an online system of PhD student management where all records can be kept, managed and accessed by the student, supervision team and the research office.

We would discourage UNICS from accepting students with no masters thesis onto their PhD program but clearly this would have a knock on effect in terms of accepting non-thesis candidates from their own masters program.

The panel are concerned that there is a mismatch in the documentation regarding admission requirements which indicate that it is possible to undertake the criminology PhD without any previous degrees in criminology (see p 14 of the application document and also the program directors power point on this received at the site visit.) In relation to this we would like to recommend that they clarify this position and provide some justification for it.

If the team settles these concerns the panel feels that this would be an acceptable program.

C. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Professor Kate Moss	
Professor Rachel Armitage	
Professor Eckhard Schroeter	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 09/11/2022