ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

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

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Doc. 300.3.2

Date: 07.06.2024

Higher Education Institution's Response

(Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution: University of Cyprus**
- **Town: Nicosia**
- **School/Faculty: Faculty of Humanities**
- **Department: Department of French and European Studies**
- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

Programme 1
In Greek:
Γαλλικές και Ευρωπαϊκές Σπουδές
In English:
French and European Studies

Programme 2
In Greek:
Μάστερ στη Διδακτική της Γαλλικής ως Ξένης Γλώσσας (E-Learning / Blended Learning)
In English:
Master in French as a Foreign Language (E-Learning / Blended Learning)

Programme 3
In Greek:
Διδακτορικό στις Γαλλικές Σπουδές
In English:
PhD in French Studies

- **Department's Status: Currently Operating**

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.3.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the department in each assessment area.*

- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, <u>without changing the format of the report</u>:*

  - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
  - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*
  - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*

- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.3.1).*

- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

Sub-areas

1.1 **Mission and strategic planning**
1.2 **Connecting with society**
1.3 **Development processes**

● The EEC strongly recommends that at least one of the current professorial members of staff is replaced directly at professorial level so that appropriate leadership of the Department remains in place

The Department warmly thanks the EEC for its valuable comments and suggestions.

Although recommended actions are beyond the decision-making sphere of the Department, it will underline these needs to the University decision-makers through the internal processes.

● For the BA in French & European Studies the EEC strongly recommends that the University of Cyprus invest in additional staffing to help develop the programme in a way that can make it the strongest programme in the region in this domain

Although recommended actions are beyond the decision-making sphere of the Department, it will underline these needs to the University decision-makers through the internal processes.

● The BA in French & European Studies programme could be enhanced by courses on power structures, role of bureaucracies and power politics within the European Union, quantitative methodologies and skills development
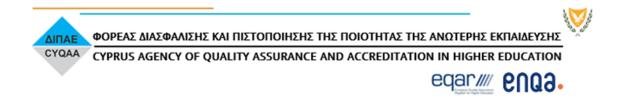
The BA programme (please refer to Annex 1) offers two compulsory courses from the Department of Social and Political Sciences – SPS 266 Political System of the European Union and SPS 251 The Political System of Cyprus (please refer to Annex 2)

● The EEC strongly recommends that the Department should run the MA in FLE in only one mode and the EEC would further recommend this mode be blended learning

The Department Council decided the following at its meeting dated 29/05//2024: To run the MA in FLE in only one mode per academic year (for the year 2024/2025 MA will be operated in blended mode).

● The EEC strongly recommends that PhD thesis supervision be formally recognised and accounted for within the workload allocations of academic staff in Department

Although recommended actions are beyond the decision-making sphere of the Department, it will underline these needs to the University decision-makers through the internal processes of the University.

● The EEC strongly recommends that the specification of entry requirements for PhD programmes be devolved to Faculties

The specification of entry requirements for PhD programmes is devolved to our department (See Annex 3 and our website) https://www.ucy.ac.cy/frml/ph-d-in-french-studies/?lang=en

Further recommendations are as follows:

● For both BA programmes the EEC recommends increased scope for independent research through longer essays and ideally a compulsory BA thesis in order to foster and cement skills of independent research and thinking and to ensure students are in a position to progress to postgraduate programmes across Europe

BA thesis was compulsory for years when the Academic staff counted 11 members and had less Ph.D. to supervise. This policy proved difficult to pursue because of reduced staffing (retirement, etc.). BA thesis remains, however, open for students having an average mark over 7+180 ECTS. The Department will examine the possibility of re-introducing a compulsory BA thesis for all students after taking to account students' feedback. The meetings will begin in September and the final decision will be made by the end of the Fall Semester 2024.

● In order to accommodate a compulsory BA thesis in staff teaching workloads elements of the thesis course could include a dissertation seminar and peer review alongside a reduced number of one-to-one supervisions

This issue is related with University Policy about thesis supervision. The recommendation will be forward to the University decision making bodies for further actions.

● Bibliographies in some courses in the BA in French Language & Literature could benefit from include more recent scholarship from the 2010s and 2020s and work by Anglophone scholarship in French & Francophone Studies

Bibliographies have been updated (Please see Annex 4). The Department Council decided the following at its meeting dated 29/05/2024: Provide access to digital databases that include up-to-date research and publications. Organize seminars and guest lectures by leading scholars, including those from Anglophone regions, to expose students to diverse perspectives. Encourage students to explore recent scholarship through research projects and presentations. Engage with faculty members and experts in the field to recommend contemporary texts and influential Anglophone

scholars whose work should be included. It was decided to reexamine the issue at the begging of the next academic year and make final decision by the end of the Fall semester 2024.

● There should be greater standardisation of the length of the MA thesis to c. 60-80 pages without annexes

To apply the rule recommended by the EEC about greater standardisation of the length of the MA thesis to c. 60-80 pages without annexes. Students will be informed before the beginning of the academic year 2024-25 (See Annex 5).

● Final approval of the PhD thesis after the defence and any corrections should devolve from the University Senate to individual Faculties

According to the UCY regulations PhD. candidates must submit the final thesis endorsing and implementing any corrections indicated at the defense. The final thesis is approved by the Departments' Council, the Graduate School Council and the Senate. Please refer to the link Guidelines for Doctoral programmes (p.13-14)

2. Quality Assurance

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **2.1   System and quality assurance strategy**
> **2.2   Quality assurance for the programmes of study**

While the EEC commends the Department's commitment to its students, it recommends that members of staff find more efficient ways to support and give feedback on student work (especially at MA and PhD levels), for example by organising seminars where the students can present and discuss the current development of their work. Identifying such efficiencies can help ease staff workload pressures and ensure staff protect the time they need to pursue their research and undertake programme development

DEPARTMENT RESPONSE

The Department warmly thanks the EEC for its valuable comments and suggestions.

The Department Council decided at its meeting dated 29/05//2024 to intensify the ways to support and give feedback on student work. Although the Department offers different ways to support MA and PhD students. For example, each year the Department organizes the Doctoral Day in the first week of December in order to give the possibility to PhD students to present and discuss the development of their work (See Annex 6). The Department will discuss at the Council meetings that will start again the Fall semester 2024, to organise this event twice a year.

PhD students are obliged to register to Master's level courses each semester (See Annex 7). The courses will ensure that their research and dissertation run smoothly.

The PhD students are also attending and presenting at the conferences abroad (funded by the department) or organized by the Department.

3. Administration

No Recommendations applied

4. Learning and Teaching

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **4.1 Planning the programmes of study**
> **4.2 Organisation of teaching**

With the above point in mind, the EEC strongly recommends to the University of Cyprus that the Department should run the MA in FLE in only one mode and would further recommend this mode be blended learning
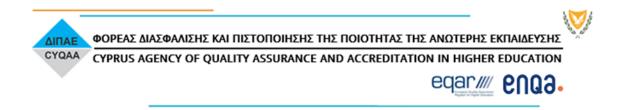
The Department warmly thanks the EEC for its valuable comments and recommendations.

The Department Council decided the following at its meeting dated 29/05//2024: To run the MA in FLE in only one mode per academic year (for year 2024/2025 blended mode). The decision for the mode will be taken by the Department's Council before the announcement of the Master's Programme places.

5. Teaching Staff

In order to ensure the long term quality of the programmes the EEC strongly recommends that at least one of the current professorial members of staff is replaced directly at professorial level so that appropriate leadership of the Department remains in place For the BA in French & European Studies it also strongly recommends that the University of Cyprus invest in additional staffing to help develop the programme.
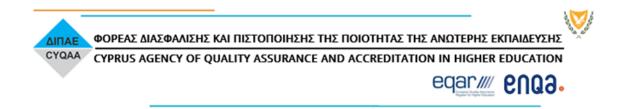
Although recommended actions are beyond the decision-making sphere of the Department, it will underline these needs to the University decision-makers through the internal processes.

6. Research

The EEC recommends that the Department focuses attention on securing European funding for its research. For this purpose it recommends inviting a research policy officer with expertise in the EU Horizon funding programmes for a seminar for two days to guide the Department through the complexities of EU funding and help it choose an appropriate funding stream. Such a project would give the possibility of providing funding for several fully-paid PhD candidates.

Inviting a research policy officer with expertise in the EU Horizon funding programmes for a two-day seminar is an excellent suggestion. Such an event would provide our faculty and researchers with valuable insights into navigating the complexities of EU funding. The seminar would also help us identify the most suitable funding streams for our projects, thereby increasing our chances of successful applications. The Department Council decided at its meeting dated 29/05/2024 that the seminar will be organised at the fall Semester in collaboration with the Research Support Service in order to seek for external research opportunities funding.

7. Resources

Through meetings and site visits the EEC has established that the Department has appropriate resources and mechanisms to fulfil its core mission, and deploys them very effectively. However the EEC notes with concern that the University has recently withdrawn the Evagoras and Praxandros scholarship programmes which risks having negative consequences for the Department's ability to attract and support postgraduate students. The EEC therefore makes a strong request to the University to reintroduce these funding programmes. In addition, the EEC strongly recommends that PhD thesis supervision should be formally recognised and accounted for within the workload allocations of academic staff in Department.

The Department will share the recommendation to the University's QA Committee for further discussion as imposed by the internal processes.

B. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC **commends in the highest terms** the work of the Department of French & European Studies at the University of Cyprus. Meetings with staff and students made very clear the strong sense of collegiality, vision and ethos that defines the Department's strategy.

The EEC was struck by the Department's ambition and desire to innovate, pioneering work in several important areas for the University, including e-Learning and the introduction of the annual doctoral students conference.

Moreover, the Department has cultivated an excellent research culture and environment which includes Masters and PhD students. It is proving to be a centre of excellence within the institution in terms of the support it provides to students at all levels and the way it fosters interdisciplinary collaboration within the institution The EEC also notes the Department's success in persuading the Cypriot Ministry of Education to introduce French as a compulsory second language at primary and secondary levels. This initiative should help sustain recruitment of students into the Department's BA programmes into the future as well as strengthening employment opportunities for its graduates. The EEC would like to thank the staff and students of the Department for their warm welcome and the quality of the discussions over the two days of its site visit.

We thank the ECC for the feedback and acknowledgement

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
FullName	Position	
FullName	Position	
FullName	Position	
FullName	Position	
FullName	Position	
FullName	Position	

Date: Click to enter date