

Doc. 300.3.2

Higher Education Institution's Response

(Departmental)

Date: Date

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

Programme 1

In Greek:

Πτυχίο Νομικής

In English:

Degree in Law LL.B.

Programme 2

In Greek:

Μεταπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα Νομικής

In English:

Magister Legum – LLM – Master of Laws

Programme 3

In Greek:

Διδακτορικό Πρόγραμμα στη Νομική

In English:

Doctorate in Law Ph.D

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

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 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

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, without changing the format of the report:*
 - *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

1. Department's Academic Profile and Orientation

1.1.6. The panel suggests that in developing strategy and particularly in the developments in the curriculum and modules the department could have closer cooperation with professional and scientific associations.

The Department fully endorses the EEC's recommendation for greater consultation with professional bodies in Cyprus resulting in deepened integration of theory and practice. To that effect, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Department are prepared to meet with relevant professional bodies such as the Legal Council and the Pancypriot Bar Association with a view to engaging in fruitful dialogue and closer cooperation, and exploring the possibility of obtaining exemptions for its graduates taking the Bar exams, as per the Committee's suggestion. The Department will request a meeting as soon as the situation regarding movement restrictions in Cyprus due to the COVID-19 pandemic allows.

There is a high level of coherence and compatibility of LL.B., LL.M. and Ph.D. programs within the law school. We have noticed the LL.M.s strong orientation on EU law throughout the programs. The panel appreciated the fact that staff member only teach subject they also do research on. The different departments within the faculty cooperate in efforts to broaden their teaching, and students can follow electives in other departments.

The Department pledges to continue pursuing a high level of coherence and compatibility of its LL.B., LL.M. and Ph.D. programs and the strong orientation on EU law in its LL.M. program. We are also determined to continue our established policy that our teaching staff only teach subjects they also do research on.

1.2.3. Members of the Department are extremely active in advisory boards and committees and creating strong links with the government, international bodies and civil society. Through those links they can assess needs and demands of society, such as the lack of Text books on Cyprus law and the lack of commentary on judicial decisions. They have sought to address this laguna and more text books and legal commentary are forthcoming. 1.2.4. The department has an informative website and Twitter account and in the presentation it was made clear that the Department is creating a platform for alumni.

The Department pledges to maintain its strong links with society including governmental and non-governmental bodies.

The Department maintains and promptly updates its website and Twitter account.

The alumni platform is under construction and is expected to be functional by the end of 2020.

1.3.1. Being a public university the Department has to teach in Greek language. The Department has expressed the need to also be able to teach in English, since they offer some elective courses in English

so as to attract students from other countries. **1.3.4. The funding process is transparent but is not seen as adequate for the needs of a very active and young law Department that is willing to expand and to make important contributions to society, the national and international reputation of the university and Cyprus law.**

The Department will continue to offer elective courses in English and is seriously considering, in coordination with the University authorities, to offer its future LLM program(s) in English. In view of the recent very successful call for applications for our LLM and PhD programs (the Department received 82 applications, 66 for the LLM program and 16 for the PhD program), the Department has further increased its intake (50 LLM students and 10 PhD students), which entails increased revenue to the Department, which should be sufficient to fund and sustain its various local and international activities.

Findings

The Department of Law was established in 2006, it aims at excellence in teaching and research. Its mission is to provide high quality legal education to students and the legal community of Cyprus, to Greece and the broader region. It also wishes to contribute to the development of Cyprus law, the study of European systems and European integration, including their impact on Cyprus law, as well as to develop the methodological research and writing skills of the students. It aims to be an outstanding contributor to Cypriot society. The economic empowerment of the Department through its elevation to a School of Law would enable solidification, growth and competitiveness.

The Department pledges to maintain its commitment to excellence in teaching and research and to continue fulfilling its mission by, inter alia, contributing to the development of Cyprus law and being an outstanding contributor to Cypriot society.

The Department fully agrees with the Committee's observation that its elevation to a School of Law will enable solidification, growth and competitiveness. This remains the vision and main strategic goal of the Department in the mid-term. However, such decision will have to be taken by the competent University bodies and will not be an easy one. The Department believes that its constant commitment to excellence in research, teaching and contribution to society and its constant growth in terms of teaching staff and students (particularly LLM and PhD students) will create the conditions necessary for a positive decision to that effect in the mid-term.

Strengths

The Department is a leader in Cyprus, the faculty is proficient and enthusiastic. It has popular and high quality programs and it attracts excellent students. They make a very contribution to society and it has strong international presence. It is very active in organising events and seminars and its staff participates in various committees and advisory bodies. They have managed to build an expanding Ph.D program in addition to excellent LL.B. and LL.M. programs.

The Department is thankful to the EEC for acknowledging its leadership in Cyprus, its proficient and enthusiastic faculty, its popular and high quality LL.B., LL.M. and Ph.D programs, excellent students, contribution to society and strong international presence.

The Department pledges to continue working hard along the same path.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The panel recommends that more funding is allocated from the university to allow the Department to achieve its mission, more administrative support to the Department, and better and more effective recognition of the specific needs of a very active law department.

The Department constantly reminds the University authorities of the need for more administrative support to sustain and further improve its multifarious activities and efficiently manage its increasingly popular programs. In periods of excessive or supplementary administrative workload, the Department hires auxiliary staff on a temporary basis with funding provided by the University.

2. Quality Assurance

Sub-areas

- 2.1 System and quality assurance strategy
- 2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study

2. Quality Assurance

The panel noted the requirements of the quality assurance policy of the University of Cyprus, their strategic plan 2016-2025 of the University of Cyprus, the Department's institutional assessment by the Cyprus Agency of quality assurance in 2016 and 2018 and all the specific provisions which are outlined on page 89 et seq of the application. Those provisions contain a detailed explanation and assessment of all measures or policies undertaken by the Department as well as effective feedback mechanisms following regular reviews of the activities of the Department. The panel believes that all quality assurance processes are effectively implemented. The panel appreciated the effort, the time and the commitment of the members of the department in producing all the relevant documentation for external evaluation purposes.

The Department is thankful to the EEC for finding that all quality assurance processes are effectively implemented as well as for appreciating the Department's efforts, time and commitment in producing student handbooks and all relevant documentation for external evaluation purposes.

The University systematically collects data on student performance which is regularly communicated to the head of Department. The University also collects employability records of graduates but this data is not communicated to the head of Department. Greater synergy between the Department and the University is needed with respect to both student performance data and student employability data. The Department would benefit from having access to the employability data and from regular assessments of such data in view of their plan to expand and increase student numbers. The panel also felt that a written departmental policy on regular assessments of student performance data would be beneficial.

The University has echoed the calls for greater synergy with the Departments regarding student and graduates' data and has reached out for closer cooperation and coordination. As to undergraduate data, the Department has decided to consider and discuss them during the departmental board meeting that follows their annual release by the University. When it comes to graduates' data, the Department has initiated its own alumni platform that will provide the Department with necessary data on graduates' performance and employability, that are tailored to the specificities of the Law Department.

2.2.15. The panel noted that the number of students per each permanent teaching member is adequate, but found the requirement of one annual meeting between advisee and adviser to be inadequate. The panel recommends that advisers meet advisees at least once per term and that this requirement is communicated to both members of staff and students.

In compliance with the recommendation of the EEC, the Department has already decided to change its policy and provide for meetings between advisers and advisees at least once per term in accordance with the following procedure: All students will be reminded at the beginning of each term by an e-mail sent by the Secretariat to contact

their advisors and request a meeting. In case they have not done so by the third month of each term (by mid-November or by mid-April) the advisers will reach out to them individually and invite them for a meeting during their office hours.

2.2.18. The Department expressed its wish to make funds available for the conference activity of Doctoral students in the future. Such student support is now provided on an ad hoc basis, and the panel recommends the establishment of a procedure on this and the availability of University funding.

The Department fully shares the EEC's concerns on the (un)availability of funds for conference activities of PhD students and endorses the Committee's recommendations. The Department did not have any own income until the beginning of 2020 and was unable to fund any PhD student activities by its own means. This situation has now changed. In view of the successful LLM and PhD programs, the Department is gradually acquiring its own income, which is expected to increase considerably in the short term and thus enable such funding. As soon as the Department's own income figures become available to the Department from the University's financial services (there has been a delay due to the coronavirus pandemic), the Department will decide on a minimum flat rate to be available to PhD students for conference activities as of 2021. The idea will be to have two calls for applications for interested students and provide funding according to available funds. Such funds are expected to considerably increase in the coming years.

Findings

Effective quality assurance processes and mechanisms exist in the Department. There is regular evaluation of existing curricula, the teaching provision, the performance and career advancement and performance of teaching research staff, a policy on plagiarism, course assessment, quality standards for LL.B., LL.M. and Doctoral Dissertations, an annual strategic plan review, clearly communicated student admission criteria, student performance and grievance procedures. The building and library facilities are excellent and all classrooms are equipped with the correct technological infrastructure. There is a clear policy on disability and the student welfare provision is adequate.

The Department is thankful to the EEC for its finding and pledges to continue working hard along the same path.

Strengths

The above findings were confirmed during the several meetings with students, members of staff and the secretary of the Department. The panel congratulated the Department on the establishment of a successful LL.M. program and a doctoral program which have resulted in a high level of student satisfaction. Erasmus students and other visiting students expressed a complimentary assessment of their teaching and learning experience in the Law Department. Members of staff are quite accessible and display a high level of pastoral care. The student handbooks written by the Department are excellent. They contain clearly articulated admission criteria, learning aims and outcomes, and information on modules and plagiarism.

The Department is thankful to the EEC for its very positive findings and evaluation and pledges to continue working hard along the same path.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The panel noticed that the information provided on the teaching staff is relatively short and it should be complemented by a brief description of the professional qualifications, expertise and their signature publications. The panel also recommends the establishment of a clear procedure on both academic advising (there should be at least one meeting per term between advisees and advisers) and on funding for doctoral candidates' conference activities.

The Department fully complies with the University and CYQAA guidelines. The webpage of the Department includes adequate description of the professional qualifications, expertise and signature publications of all teaching staff, including adjunct and visiting staff.

As to the clear procedure on academic advising see above our comments on 2.2.15

As to the funding for doctoral candidates' conference activities see above our comments on 2.2.18.

3. Administration

3. Administration

3.3. The panel noted the excellent job that the present secretary of the Department is doing, but also felt that additional administrative support is urgently needed in order to relieve her exceptionally high workload and to support the department's various expanding activities. The panel has serious concerns about the sustainability of the present situation and strongly recommends the employment of a second secretary.

The Department fully shares the Committee's concern. However, hiring staff does not depend on the Department. The Department constantly reminds the University authorities of the need for more administrative support to sustain and further improve its multifarious activities and efficiently manage its increasingly popular programs. In periods of excessive or supplementary administrative workload, the Department hires auxiliary staff on a temporary basis with funding provided by the University.

Findings

The administrative structure of the Department is well articulated (see pg. 127-128) and quite efficient. There are established procedures, transparency, mechanisms for the prevention of misconduct, plagiarism, staff and student complaints and minutes of committee discussions are kept. The only secretary of the Department is highly committed, professional and willing to make personal sacrifices in order to serve the needs of the Department. The panel believes that the Department ought to have more administrative support.

The Department is thankful to the EEC for finding the Department compliant and for finding that the administrative structure of the Department is well articulated and efficient. The Department greatly appreciates the EEC's recommendation for the urgent employment of a second secretary. As noted above, the Department constantly reminds the University authorities of the need to employ a second secretary and generally more administrative support to sustain and further improve its multifarious activities and efficiently manage its increasingly popular programs. Until this materializes, in periods of excessive or supplementary administrative workload, the Department hires auxiliary staff on a temporary basis with funding provided by the University.

Strengths

Highly dedicated members of staff sharing a great deal of administrative responsibilities. A highly dedicated secretary serving the Department. Clearly articulated procedures displaying a commitment to sound administration, discipline, transparency and accountability. The manner in which the Department operates is efficient as well as effective.

The Department is thankful to the EEC for its very positive findings and evaluation and pledges to continue working hard along the same path.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The panel believes that the Department ought to have more administrative support. The employment of a second secretary is urgently needed in order to relieve the existing secretary and the members of staff, who have a number of administrative responsibilities.

The Department greatly appreciates the EEC's recommendation for the urgent employment of a second secretary. As noted above, the Department constantly reminds the University authorities of the need to employ a second secretary and generally more administrative support to sustain and further improve its multifarious activities and efficiently manage its increasingly popular programs. Until this materializes, in periods of excessive or supplementary administrative workload, the Department hires auxiliary staff on a temporary basis with funding provided by the University.

4. Learning and Teaching

Sub-areas

- 4.1 Planning the programmes of study
- 4.2 Organisation of teaching

4. Learning and Teaching

4.1 Although all the programs of study integrate effectively theory and practice, and the department's philosophy is to promote the teaching of Law in context, greater consultation with professional bodies in Cyprus would result in deepened integration of theory and practice.

The Department fully endorses the EEC's recommendation for greater consultation with professional bodies in Cyprus resulting in deepened integration of theory and practice. To that effect, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Department are prepared to meet with relevant professional bodies such as the Legal Council and the Pancypriot Bar Association with a view to engaging in fruitful dialogue and closer cooperation, and exploring the possibility of obtaining exemptions for its graduates taking the Bar exams, as per the Committee's suggestion. The Department will request a meeting as soon as the situation regarding movement restrictions in Cyprus due to the COVID-19 pandemic allows.

4.2 Although the students the panel spoke to were very positive about the feedback they received and their many open book exams, the department could explore further options for student-centered learning.

The Department pledges to consider the EEC's recommendation to explore further options for student-centred learning, particularly as teaching shifts to e-teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and is in constant consultation with the students and their representatives and the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs to that effect.

Findings

The staff is committed to high quality teaching, they are accessible for students, and learning and teaching are very well organised.

The Department is thankful to the EEC for its finding and evaluation that its staff is committed to high quality teaching, is accessible for students, and that learning and teaching are very well organised and pledges to continue working hard along in this direction.

Strengths

High quality teaching, small class size, enthusiastic teachers, highly motivated students, events and extracurricular activities such as moot courts, moot competitions, internships, research meetings, student-led academic journal, excursions, summer courses, lectures by visiting professors, all create a vibrant learning environment. The provision of Law Textbooks and the excellent library facilities enhance students' learning experience.

The Department is thankful to the EEC for its very positive findings and evaluation that it offers a vibrant learning environment and pledges to continue working hard along in this direction.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

If the Department increases the number of incoming students, tutorials might be beneficial. At present, the panel does not feel they are necessary. Concerning scholarships, the panel recommends the exploration of more options for scholarships and partial scholarships for those Ph.D. students who are in employment.

The Department fully agrees with the EEC recommendation on more scholarship options for employed PhD students. In fact, the number of scholarships is determined by the University and depends on various factors including the number of PhD students. Since the number of the Department's PhD students has grown, the number of available scholarships has also grown to two full scholarships, which can however be substituted for three partial scholarships each, and two partial scholarships. Since the overwhelming majority of the Department's doctoral students are in employment, the Department will consider offering eight partial scholarships or one full and five partial scholarships. The decision will be made at the upcoming departmental board which will examine all scholarship applications.

5. Teaching Staff

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The number of full time teaching staff members is too small. Although it has grown to 11 members since this year some subjects such as Family Law, Tax Law, Civil Procedure Law and Maritime Law can only be covered with the help of external teaching staff. Overall the workload of the professors is very high. This is partly due to the fact that they have only one administrative staff member for the entire department. This means that, in addition to their tasks in research and teaching, the professors have to deal with a number of administrative tasks which should be handled by administrative staff.

The Department employs 11 faculty members (see pg. 148-150), 3-5 special teaching staff (see pg. 152), 2 visiting professors (see pg. 151).

Findings

During the site visit the panel met highly committed members of staff. Student satisfaction (the cohort we met in the afternoon) confirmed this. However, the number of full time teaching staff members needs addressing. Although it has grown to 11 members since this year, some subjects such as Family Law, Tax Law, Civil Procedure Law and Maritime Law can only be covered with the help of external teaching staff. Overall, the workload of the professors is very high. This is partly due to the fact that they have only one administrative staff member for the entire department. This means that in addition to their tasks in research and teaching the professors have to deal with administrative tasks which should be handled by administrative staff.

The Department is thankful to the EEC for the very positive findings and evaluation that the Department's teaching staff is compliant, highly committed and well qualified. The Department pledges to continue working hard along the same path.

The Department fully agrees with the EEC finding that additional members of staff are needed and constantly reminds the University authorities of this urgent need and the benefits for the University. The Department has grown in numbers from 7 teaching staff members in 2017 to 11 in 2019, plus an Emeritus Professor. The Department further notes that the increase in numbers of LLM and PhD students will result in an increase in new positions allocated to the Department, as per University criteria, and only hopes that the process will not be obstructed by the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strengths

Highly committed well qualified staff, good training opportunities, financial support in settlement of new staff members, small distance between professors and students. It is crucial for the Law Department to be in the vicinity of the excellent library because students and staff members need to be able to consult different books and resources.

The Department is thankful to the EEC for the positive findings and evaluation.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Additional members of staff would be needed to provide teaching in areas that are in demand and not currently covered.

As noted above, the Department fully agrees with the EEC finding that additional members of staff are needed and constantly reminds the University authorities of this urgent need and the benefits for the University.

6. Research

6. Research

Staff members are very productive and they integrate their research into teaching. They have a broad publication profile and they wish to maintain a leadership position in a competitive market. The level of external funding is comparable to that attained by other European law schools of the same size. The internal policy of basic support for research activities is generous.

The Department is thankful to the EEC for its very positive findings and evaluation that the Department is strong in research and in the integration of research into teaching, and that staff members are very productive and have a broad publication profile. The Department pledges to work hard to maintain its leadership position in Cyprus.

Findings

For a relatively young Law Department which has grown rapidly and which had to start from scratch, with even basic text books lacking, the research activity is impressive. There are now 11 staff members engaging in teaching, admin, societal impact and research. In line with the university policy, research is seen as a central pillar, which was also evident during the site visit. The staff is highly committed to extend the academic knowledge internationally and they do so successfully. Yet, from the start, the Law department has also focused on strengthening the Greek-language literature on the Cyprus legal system. As there was and is a huge gap in the literature in this respect, the committee feels this is a major societal task which deserves more recognition in output-assessments and promotion procedures that now seem to focus primarily on English-language publications in peer review Journals, whereas the discipline of law also needs critical legal commentaries and text books. The University has a Department which is a leading actor in research and development of Cyprus law and critical legal thinking in their midst. The panel advises the University to adapt some of their procedures and mechanisms to its needs.

Teaching and research generally go hand in hand. All staff members teach on subjects that they also write about, which is not always the case in other Law Schools across Europe. Moreover, courses are clearly being updated to reflect recent developments in the various fields, while at the same time the academic staff develop new courses or content based on their research interests. Staff members also organise a large number of events and extracurricular activities that ensure the transfer of findings to students and to the professional field (6.6)

The University as a whole has adopted policies to respect Academic Ethics in Research and Teaching and the department of law is compliant. The fact that the research methodology is largely a legal methodology relying on doctrinal research and the use of open sources implies that there is little need at the moment to have an active ethics committee. The staff is aware, however, of the requirements should this change in the future. The expertise is present and the chair of the Department was a member of the Cyprus National Bioethics Committee.

In terms of securing funding for research, the Department is doing well, especially when considering all other tasks that they have to perform and do perform. They rank somewhere in the middle compared to other Departments which is very good for a Law School.

Staff members receive start-up funding for their research and they receive extra means to fund research activities such as attending conferences or events and hiring some assistance (6.9). This is partially merit-based and the committee is positive about these provisions.

Based on their research the Department of Law greatly contributes to society and to the legal field in Cyprus. They regularly advise on legal matters and actively participate in governmental bodies. To a large extent these activities, that tie in directly with the aims of the university, seem to fall outside the criteria of research evaluation as a result of using evaluation measures that are more effective in other

disciplines (maybe strengthened by the fact that the voice of the Department is not always heard when it comes to decision making at the faculty-level or University-level)

The Department is thankful to the EEC for its very positive findings and evaluation. The Department particularly appreciates the Committee's acknowledgment of the significance of the Department's focus on strengthening the Greek-language literature on the Cyprus legal system to fill the existing huge gap.

Strengths

The Department is strong in research and in the integration of research and teaching. They deploy high standards, not only on paper, but also in reality as students, former students and exchange students expressed during the site visit.

Department members are top experts in their field in Cyprus, educated in a variety of countries including Greece, UK, US, Germany, and France. They have a strong research record and they are visible nationally and internationally. The Department has a very good reputation.

The committee was impressed by the enthusiasm, energy and commitment of the staff members. Within a relatively short time frame they have managed to publish internationally, secure funding and also write major Text books on the mixed legal system of Cyprus. In this respect, their publication culture appears to differ from the other disciplines in the School.

The Ph.D program is still young but already expanding and the Ph.D students the committee spoke to were very happy with the research environment they were working in.

The Department is thankful to the EEC for its very positive findings and evaluation. The Department pledges to continue working hard to maintain a strong research record, and the enthusiasm, energy and commitment that the Committee witnessed during the visit.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

When evaluating research activities, the committee suggests to the University to better take into account the importance of the specificities of legal research by for instance also valuing Greek language publications on the Cyprus system rather than using output measures that are based on different disciplinary contexts (H-indices, Peer reviewed International articles etc).

The rather one-sided system of evaluating performance and promoting staff members imposes a workload that appears to be unacceptable and may even threaten the viability of a very productive and highly reputed Department in the future. This problem is exacerbated by an organisational structure which does not allow the Department to have an effective role in important decision-making with respect to allocation of faculty positions, premises, budget, and scholarships.

The above-mentioned challenge was already noted in the earlier accreditation process but in fact has become more serious because of the success and growth of the Department.

Two smaller suggestions:

For students funding for research is so far lacking. Given the fact that students produce high quality work the committee suggests looking into the possibility of also offering some funding in case they want to visit a conference or other event where they can present their work. This can be very beneficial for students and it can be a good preparation when pursuing a Ph.D.

With respect to the Ph.D programme committee advises to explore options of more scholarships and part time scholarships. This may also help attracting full time Ph.D students as well as catering better to the needs of more experienced Ph.D students that also work as lawyers.

The Department fully endorses the Committee's suggestion to the University to better take into account the importance of the specificities of legal research by for instance also valuing Greek language publications on the Cyprus system rather than using output measures that are based on different disciplinary contexts. The Department has already brought the matter to the attention of the School, which also serves as the electoral body for hiring new staff and promotions, and will continue to do so.

As to increasing funding opportunities of doctoral students for conferences and full and partial doctoral scholarships, the Department fully agrees with the Committee and has already acted upon those recommendations, as explained elsewhere in the present document.

The Department did not have any own income until the beginning of 2020 and was unable to fund any PhD student activities by its own means. This situation has now changed. In view of the successful LLM and PhD programs, the Department is gradually acquiring its own income, which is expected to increase considerably in the short term and thus enable such funding. As soon as the Department's own income figures become available to the Department from the University's financial services (there has been a delay due to the coronavirus pandemic), the Department will decide on a minimum flat rate to be available to PhD students for conference activities as of 2021. The idea will be to have two calls for applications for interested students and provide funding according to available funds. Such funds are expected to considerably increase in the coming years.

As to scholarships for doctoral students, their number is determined by the University and depends on various factors including the number of PhD students. Since the number of the Department's PhD students has grown, the number of available scholarships has also grown to two full scholarships, which can however be substituted for three partial scholarships each, and two partial scholarships. Since the overwhelming majority of the Department's doctoral students are in employment, the Department will consider offering eight partial scholarships or one full and five partial scholarships. The decision will be made at the upcoming departmental board which will examine all scholarship applications.

7. Resources

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Although the Department is successful at the moment, the SWOT analysis of the head of Department indicated the possibility of financial and institutional vulnerability which could be accentuated by the threat of relocation. The Department would like to receive more favourable treatment in the allocation of new positions and the distribution of internal funding. The panel witnessed the exceptionally high administrative workload at present and for this reason it recommends the employment of a second secretary.

The Department first notes that the threat of relocation seems to have diminished according to reassurances by the University authorities. The Department's recent growth in staff members from 7 to 11, and particularly the growth in the numbers of LLM and PhD students and the corresponding increase in revenue make any financial and institutional vulnerability a distant scenario, which the Department however takes into account in its present management and in planning the future. The Department fully agrees with the Committee's recommendation about the employment of a second secretary, as already noted.

Findings

The department follows sound and efficient collective management of the available financial resources (p. 227) and is externally audited. They have expanded over the years and there appears to be room for more expansion. In such a case the budget would have to be adjusted in order to allow them to develop academically and researchwise. At present the panel believes that more administrative support ought to be provided.

The Department is thankful to the EEC for finding that the Department follows sound and efficient collective management of the available financial resources. The Department pledges to continue working hard in the same direction.

Strengths

There is generous policy of basic research funding for new staff members. The Department has been able to hire new staff members recently. The expansion of the LL.M program as well as the Ph.D program has led to better resources.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The need for more administrative support has been noted throughout this report. Flexible adjustments of the budget would be needed to address increasing numbers of students and activities in the near future. For instance if the Doctoral intake continues at the present level or increases, additional members of staff would be required.

Following the successful call for applications for the LLM and PhD program for the next academic year, the Department received 82 applications (66 for the LLM program and 16 for the PhD program) resulting in a significant increase in the intake of students and a corresponding increase in revenue for the Department in the short term. As soon as the Department receives the relevant figures it will adjust (and will be constantly reviewing) its budget with a view to

maintaining the sound and efficient management of its resources to enable the further development of its research and other activities as well as the financial support of its doctoral students, particularly for conference activities.

B. Conclusions and final remarks

The Department of Law of the University of Cyprus wishes to extend its deep appreciation to the External Evaluation Committee for their evaluation of the Department.

The Department, its academics and its students are grateful for the excellent and constructive cooperation with the EEC and the CYQAA and for giving us the opportunity to present the Department, its structure, organization and function, our working environment, our teaching and research, our contribution to society, the LLB, LLM and PhD programmes of study as well as our vision and prospects for future development.

The Department is sincerely thankful to the EEC for the excellent cooperation and the Evaluation Report, the recognition and appreciation of our efforts, and the very positive comments on the work of the Department and the very useful and constructive suggestions.

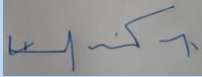

As explained in the present response, the Department has accepted and endorsed all recommendations of the EEC and has already taken the necessary initiatives and steps towards their implementation.

We look forward to continuing the excellent and fruitful cooperation with the CYQAA and the EEC and remain at their disposal for any clarifications.

In addition to the comments made above addressing all findings and recommendations of the Committee, the Department wishes to highlight and fully agree with the Committee's observation that its elevation to a School of Law will enable solidification, growth and competitiveness. This remains the vision and main strategic goal of the Department in the mid-term. However, such decision will have to be taken by the competent University bodies and will not be an easy one. The Department believes that its constant commitment to excellence in research, teaching and contribution to society and its constant growth in terms of teaching staff and students (particularly LLM and PhD students) will create the conditions necessary for a positive decision to that effect in the mid-term.

The Department is grateful to the EEC for its External Evaluation Report that has highlighted the aspects and conditions that are conducive to that end.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Aristoteles Constantinides	Associate Professor, Chairman	
Tatiana-Eleni Synodinou	Associate Professor, Vice-Chair	
FullName	Position	
FullName	Position	
FullName	Position	
FullName	Position	

Date: 5 May 2020

