



Doc. 300.3.2

Higher Education Institution's Response (Departmental)

Date:

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Frederick University
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School:** Business and Law
- **Department:** Law
- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation**
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

Programme 1

In Greek:

Νομική (4 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο (LLB))

In English:

Law (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor (LLB))

Programme 2

In Greek:

Δημόσιο Δίκαιο (3 ακαδημαϊκά εξάμηνα, 90 ECTS, Μάστερ (LLM))

In English:

Public Law (3 academic semesters, 90 ECTS, Masters (LLM))

Programme 3

In Greek:

Νομική (3 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 180 ECTS, Διδακτορικό (PhD))



In English:

Law (3 academic years, 180 ECTS, Doctorate (PhD))

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- 1.a. Need to clarify the expected number of PhD students

Department's Response:

Based on the experience the University has with the rest of the Doctoral programs already running, the expected number of PhD Students is estimated to be around six (6) to ten (10) new students per year. The aim is to have one (1) new PhD students per faculty member per year, resulting in a total of three (3) to five (5) PhD students supervised by each faculty member in the long ran. It is noted that according to the "PhD Regulation" of the University" the maximum number of PhD students a faculty member can supervise at a time is limited to five (5).

- 1.b. In time, create a law-specific alumni network

Department's Response:

The creation of the alumni community is an effort of the past two years, as per the Rector's initiative for the creation of Alumni Associations in every Department. Due to Covid-19, the effort was held back but the Departments are continuing the development starting next academic year.

Records are hold for all of alumni in the department's programmes, and an alumni meeting is be planned as early as next academic semester.



2. Quality Assurance

Sub-areas

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

2.a. Maintain focus on potential gender discrimination in relation to student evaluations/feedback.

Department's Response:

We accept and adopt the EEC's comment. The University has not made such an evaluation yet, i.e. examining whether there is a gender bias in staff assessments by students. The Internal Quality Assurance Committee will conduct such a survey from historical information and any identified bias at department level will be duly noticed and inform the results used from the coming semester onwards.

2.b. Keep under review the policy of offering all taught programmes in both Nicosia and Limassol.

Department's Response:

While at the Nicosia campus, both orientations (Greek and Cypriot Law) are offered, at the Limassol Campus **only the Cypriot Law orientation** is offered. The Greek and Cypriot Law orientations that are offered in Nicosia, contain a number of common courses taught by the same academic staff. There is a critical mass of academic staff who are permanently located in each campus. For the same course that is taught by two different academics between Nicosia and Limassol campus, the most senior academic operates as course coordinator in order to make sure that (a) students in both campuses enjoy the same learning experience, (b) the course content and learning outcomes are achieved (c) the exams are the same for the students of both campuses. In the rare cases, where the need arises for one academic staff member to travel between campuses, the distance is only 40 minutes between campuses which is not prohibitive in both human resources allocation and student learning experience.



The programme of study is adequately supported by the academic staff for its operation Nicosia and Limassol Campuses as shown in the attached Annex 1.

The LLM programme: "LLM in Public Law" will be offered **only** in Nicosia Campus.



3. Administration

Areas of improvement and recommendations

3.a. none



4. Learning and Teaching

The small size of the cohorts has helped enhance interaction and communication between staff and students, and all the processes on the organisation of teaching appeared to us effective and in line with international standards. In particular, the criteria of assessment are clear, feedback is timely (two weeks), the assessment methods are suited to the subject, and the rules allow for appeal of exam results.

Though the current system is not deficient, we would encourage the Department to consider introducing alternative assessment methods to its standard 60% exam - 30% assignment – 10% participation model, in line with modern international practice, e.g. through longer assessed essays. This will be particularly valuable in adding a research component to the skills students obtain from their programmes, especially in the LLM.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

4.a. Consider diversifying assessment methods, especially in the LLM programmes (see note above).

Department's Response:

We accept and adopt the recommendations of the EEC. All courses descriptions have been updated as per the EEC recommendation.

Please refer to Annex 2 – Course Descriptions.



5. Teaching Staff

Areas of improvement and recommendations

5.a. As the Department's programme offering grows, it will be important to increase staff numbers, in order to maintain quality and not to undermine the Department's effort to develop its research culture.

Department's Response:

Teaching and administrative load do not affect, whatsoever, the research activity of the faculty. Although the maximum teaching hours are 12 per semester, the average teaching load does not exceed 9 hours per week. As per the Senate's decision, the tasks are approximately allocated as follows:

40% teaching, 40% research, 20% administrative duties.

In case our department's need grow further (for instance, if the classes exceed the threshold of 30 students per group), then the Department initiates the procedure for evaluating and recruiting new staff. Future growth is anticipated in the strategic planning of the Department and most welcomed.



6. Research

Areas of improvement and recommendations

6.a. Need for greater focus on international publications

Department's Response:

Following the University's R&I strategy and the Department's policy, the Department is communicating to faculty members the need for higher number of Scopus cited publications.

The Department has measured and assessed all KPIs listed above for each faculty member and has set overall targets in each KPI for a horizon of 3 years. These KPIs and each faculty member's contribution is evaluated every year against these targets. Specifically relating to publications, faculty members are expected to contribute to the research output of the Department with a focus on Scopus ranked publications. The expected output of each member is at least one Scopus ranked publication per year. In order to provide merit for high quality research output, the Department measures high rank publications for each faculty member based on SJR with high impact publications considered when a rating $SJR \geq 1$.

In addition, the Department has submitted for accreditation two new bilingual programmes of study (LLM in Public Law and PhD in Law). Upon accreditation these programme will assist the Department in attracting international students / researchers, as well as strengthen the research output of the Department by participating in more international publications / research funded projects.

6.b. More focus on integrating research into the teaching programmes, especially at the LLM level.

Department's Response:

The Department encourages and implements synergies between research and teaching. At the LLM level students enrol in a compulsory research methodology course where they are given the opportunity to deepen their knowledge, skills and experiences through educational research that they will schedule and develop, in a specialized topic in the field of their scientific focus, if they know the stages of design and implementation of quantitative or qualitative research methods. The first part of the course aims to build a comprehensive understanding of the educational research methods in order to enable students to apply them to the design



and development of their master thesis. The main focus is on understanding and being able to implement all stages of the design and development of a study. The course covers the basic methodological approaches for designing quantitative and qualitative research, but also any combination of them. Through a critical perspective the course brings students into contact with the advantages and disadvantages of each approach. The course also focuses on knowing how to select and justify the appropriate sample and how to choose or develop appropriate research tools for data collection, analysis of quantitative and qualitative data and presentation of the results.

The second part of the course aims to enable students to develop and support the research proposal: to conduct the literature review, to pose the purpose of study and the research questions and to document the significance and the rationality of their work.

Furthermore, LLM students must complete a compulsory Master Thesis, where they are expected to expand on a research project and upon completion, they will present it in front of their academics and peers, and receive feedback.

Additionally, the LLM courses are enhanced with case studies, group assignments on relevant research topics.

Upon accreditation, students of this new Masters and PhD programmes, will have the opportunity to participate in relevant research project of the academic staff.



7. Resources

Areas of improvement and recommendations

7.a. The Department should keep under review its policy of offering all taught programmes in both Nicosia and Limassol, with particular focus on its human resource implications.

Department's Response:

Please refer to previous answer 2.b.

B. Conclusions and final remarks

Areas of improvement and recommendations

7.a. The EEC believes that the Department is clearly compliant with the applicable standards of assessment and gladly recommends its accreditation. The documentation in the application pack was thorough and informative, and our interaction with the teaching and administrative staff of the Department and the University during our remote visit was pleasant and constructive. We have been particularly impressed with the openness of the Department to our questions and suggestions, and would like to commend the Chair, Vice-Chair and other officers and staff of the Department for their hard work and constructive attitude.

The Law Department is a relatively recent addition to Frederick University, but it has managed to recruit a strong and research-active body of scholars. The range of its programmes is increasing and diversifying, especially with the development of further LLM courses and the creation of a PhD programme. The Department has a clear strategic plan, a vision for its role in relation to Cypriot society and Cypriot law, and has so far been effective in delivering on those fronts. Internal quality assurance mechanisms are robust, and the learning & teaching experience is well-structured and adequately supported. The very few improvements we have suggested in the Department's policies and processes (development of a Department-centred alumni network; information-gathering on potential gender bias in student evaluations/feedback; diversification in course assessment) are not systemic, and mostly consist of suggestions that, in our view, would help the institution further its aims and stated policies. Given the quality of its staff, we believe that the Department is fully justified in wanting to develop further its research culture, so we would encourage it to maintain focus on encouraging staff to publish internationally. Both this objective and the expansion of the Department's degree programmes, as well as the continuing offer of all its taught programmes in both Nicosia and Limassol require additional investment in academic personnel.

Department's Response:

The Department of Law wishes to express its gratitude to the members of the External Evaluation Committee for their thorough and insightful evaluation of the Department and its



programmes as well as their fruitful comments and constructive discussion. The accreditation process provided the opportunity to the Department and the Program Coordinators to obtain the objective views of external and independent peers, as well as examine aspects of the program from a different perspective. The Department has already considered the issues raised, as well as the recommendations of the EEC and has already acted upon, in terms of implementing the Committee's recommendations as shown in sections 1 to 6.

The Department also wishes to thank the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, as well as the members of staff of the Agency that facilitated the organisation and implementation of the External Evaluation Committee's visit.



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C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
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Prof. George Demosthenous Rector