

Doc. 300.3.2

Date: 18/2/2021

Higher Education Institution's Response

(Departmental)

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

Programme 1

In Greek:

Νηπιαγωγικά (4 έτη/240 ECTS, Πτυχίο)

In English:

Early Childhood Education (4 years/240 ECTS, Bachelor of Arts)

Programme 2

In Greek:

Επιστήμες της Αγωγής (18 μήνες/90 ECTS, ΜΕΤΑΠΤΥΧΙΑΚΟ):

- Ειδική και Ενιαία Εκπαίδευση
- Δημιουργικότητα και Παιχνίδι στην Πρώτη Αγωγή και Εκπαίδευση
- Τεχνολογίες Μάθησης & Επικοινωνίας και Εκπαίδευση STEAM
- Εκπαιδευτική Διοίκηση και Ηγεσία

In English:

Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, Master of Arts):

- Special and Inclusive Education
- Creativity and Play in Early Childhood Education
- Technologies of Learning & Communication and STEAM Education
- Educational Management and Leadership

Programme 3

In Greek:

Επιστήμες της Αγωγής (3 Έτη /180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)

In English:

Education Sciences (3 Years/180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)

- **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.*

The Department of Education Sciences of European University Cyprus wishes to express its sincere gratitude to the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for the evaluation of the Department and its three programmes of study: Early Childhood Education (BA), Education Sciences MA in 4 concentrations: Special and Inclusive Education, Creativity and Play in Early Childhood Education, Technologies of Learning & Communication and STEAM Education, Educational Management and Leadership and PhD in Education Sciences

It is with great pleasure that the Department and the School of Humanities, Social and Education Sciences noted the positive feedback of the EEC and we appreciate its insightful recommendations, which has provided us with the opportunity to further improve the quality and implementation of the work we do in our Department and the programmes we offer. In the following pages, we respond in detail to all recommendations for improvement suggested by the EEC and we provide all relevant information to explain the actions taken and planned to ensure the high quality of the Department's academic, research and administration work and operations.

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 has raised the following issues in relation to the Department's academic profile and orientations. The EUC's corresponding response can be found below numbered according to the number of each point/issue in Findings and/or Areas of Improvement

Comments by the EEC:

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

(based on quality indicator 1.3.3)

1. The most striking problem was that of attracting international students. To address this problem, we recommend the Department adopt a staged approach to increasing the English component of all programmes by first, ensuring that all programmes provide at least one comprehensive course in English. This initiative could then be followed by offering full semester of English courses for each programme. We strongly support the Department's initiative to provide English version of the Masters concentrations. We strongly recommend that the PhD Programme is run in English and provides the option of submission of a thesis in English.

Area 1: EUC Response:

We thank the EEC for these important recommendations, which we have taken into account, as indicated below:

1. The Department is very positive to the EEC's suggestion for attracting international students, and this is reflected in the existing initiative of offering the MA Education Sciences Programme's concentrations in English. The MA Programme was initially accredited in both Greek and English and was submitted for re-accreditation again in both its Greek and English versions. Having in mind that one of the four concentrations (Early Childhood Education) already runs in English and attracts a good number of students, the Department can build on this accumulated experience and expand the provision of the rest of the concentrations in English, and attract English-speaking/international students for the other concentrations as well. In addition, we agree with the EEC that internationalisation of the Department and relevant opportunities for our existing Greek-speaking students are essential.

According to the CY.Q.A.A., a programme offered in Greek **is not possible to include courses offered in English** (or other language). In light of this, the suggestion of the Committee to increase the English component of the programme following a staged introduction of compulsory courses in English is not possible to be implemented – at least not currently - due to national regulations. Given these restrictions, the Department would be willing to proceed to a staged process of introducing courses in English, as suggested by the EEC, only upon a formal approval or amendments in the national regulations by the CY.Q.A.A. Nevertheless, the internationalisation of Greek-speaking students attending the Greek-medium programmes and the enhancement of student and teacher mobility remains a priority for the Department and it will be promoted further with the following alternative actions:

- a. Providing opportunities for students to attend seminars and lectures in English: As other programmes of the Department are currently offered in English, selected sections/lectures of courses are promoted and disseminated widely through internal email to current students of the Department who are invited to attend those in the form of a seminar as part of their programmes' coursework and assessment (e.g. in Fall 2020, one of the students' graded assignments in Technology and Inclusive Education course requested students to attend a session of an international conference, and prepared a guided report on a template provided by the instructor).
- b. Further exploitation of Erasmus agreements: As reported in the re-accreditation application (Document 200.3, Appendix D.5.) the Department already holds more than 30 Erasmus agreements, for both teaching staff and students' mobility. In recent information by the Vice-Rector of Research & External Affairs (email dated 07 January 2021) it was stated that the University's Erasmus Charter proposal achieved the maximum (100%) score by the European Commission, which provides new opportunities for expanding the institutions', and the departments' Erasmus programme activities. Within this framework, the Department aims to further promote student mobility in Erasmus exchange among undergraduate and postgraduate students to non-Greek speaking countries in a more targeted manner. In addition, we will increase incoming teaching mobility from institutions outside Greece (from non-Greek speaking universities), in order to provide opportunities for students of all our programmes to have exposure to English language instruction and interaction during their studies. As a number of visits planned for 2020-2021 had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we aim to further expand and more intensively realize the exchanges once the restriction measures permit us to do so. The Erasmus teaching mobility also provides the opportunity to invite visitors to combine guest teaching/lecture and other seminars and presentation outside the classroom (see point (c) below).
- c. Offering English-medium seminars: The Department organizes a variety of seminars and events each year which are well attended by students (reference to and evidence of these has been made in our application). We will make a conscious effort to organize some of these in English (with guest international speakers or even combined with Erasmus teaching mobility opportunities). We will also encourage students to participate in research and dissemination events organized as part of funded international projects either at EUC

- premises or abroad (e.g. via live-streaming and online participation in multiplier events, conferences, seminars etc.). The aim is to encourage undergraduate students to actively participate in these events, by directly connecting these to their programme of studies, courses, and assignments.
- d. Internationalisation of postgraduate programmes: As noted by the EEC, the MA Programme submitted for re-accreditation was re-submitted in both its Greek and English versions. So, the Department is ready to support both versions of the programme, with the English programme being open to both international students as well as Greek and Cypriot students who would like to pursue their studies in English. The MA programme that is currently available in English, already has international students with successful results and interest since it was launched. The University and the Department will continue to support these efforts and attract international students through a number of strategies including close collaboration with the Marketing Department (e.g. organized presentations and webinars in English), as well as developing new and maintaining existing collaborations at a European level (e.g. Utrecht Network) and Globally (e.g. EU-China agreement on Research and Innovation, at https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/eu-china-high-level-dialogue-research-and-innovation-2021-jan-25_en); partnership with Minjiang University).
- e. It is also noted that students of the existing Greek programme already have the opportunity to submit an MA Thesis in English and are provided with the opportunity to disseminate their own work in the international research and literature arena through relevant publications and participation in international conferences. The Department will continue to support such efforts through also sustaining and increasing opportunities and incentives for student participation in internationally funded research projects, as well as attendance of events organized at the University and abroad in English. In addition, it is particularly highlighted that the teaching staff supporting the MA programme will strengthen their effort to expose students to academic literature in English so that they become familiar with fundamental English terminology and discourse in relation to Educational Sciences and the concentration of their choice. This is already a general practice, as a great part of the scientific literature available and used at a postgraduate level is in the English language, a practice which we will continue to implement and reinforce (see syllabi submitted in Course Descriptions, in Annex 2 of the 200.1 MA programme re-accreditation application document, as well as new syllabi in Appendices III & IV of this response). With the recent introduction of the Library Resource Building tool in the Learning Management Systems used at the University (see [***EUC Response in Area 2: Quality Assurance, point 1***](#), below), exposure to international literature is further facilitated and easy to link to specific course content and assignments.
- f. PhD programme in English: Acknowledging the recommendations of the EEC, the Department has planned to start offering the Programme in English in Fall 2021. In January 2021 the new PhD application process was announced, which resulted to the acceptance of one candidate and provisional acceptance

of another two, into the English speaking programme. The application call is open not only for international students but also for Greek-speaking candidates who may wish to pursue their PhD studies in English. It is noted that one of our current PhD students has already indicated her intention to move to the English speaking programme, immediately after this was launched. It is also noted that postgraduate students already have the option to submit their PhD or MA thesis in English (upon approval of the Department Council). Some students have already proceeded to do so: for instance a PhD graduate submitted her PhD in English (Dr Stylianidou Nayia), and a number of current PhD students are planning to submit theirs in English (e.g., Ms. Ilona-Elefteryja Lasica and Ms. Christina Vasou). The Department shall strengthen its efforts to further support students' decision to take advantage of this option through highlighting this option and its possible benefits in terms of publication, career and further studies prospects during student orientation sessions and student colloquia.

More suggestions and measures towards internationalisation of the Department are included in the EUC response to the Programmatic Evaluation of the EEC, where the Committee has highlighted more specific recommendations.

2. Quality Assurance

Sub-areas

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

The EEC has raised the following issues in relation to the Department's Quality Assurance strategies. The EUC's corresponding response can be found below numbered according to the number of each point/issue in Areas of Improvement.

Comments by the EEC:

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

These recommendations of the EEC refer to sub-area 2.2

1. Ensure students have easy access to the digital resources of the library (and other learning environment). More detailed user information of the library services could inform and deliver evidence, relevant to further develop the library policies.

Comments by the EEC linked to Quality Indicator 2.2.12.2

The committee was informed that not all students were able to access the digital resources of the library. The reasons for this difficulty were unclear, however additional effort is required to remove the barriers to students' access.

2. Consider allocating to specific members of the library team a remit to support particular Departments, including of course, the Department of Education Sciences.

Comments by the EEC linked to Quality Indicator 2.2.12.2

The committee was informed that not all students were able to access the digital resources of the library. The reasons for this difficulty were unclear, however additional effort is required to remove the barriers to students' access

3. There is no policy regarding authorship of publications in relation to jointly publications with students. Guidelines or principles would benefit both the student and their supervisors and prevent disputes and unethical behaviour. These guidelines could be included in the framework regarding research ethics and scientific integrity.

Comments by the EEC linked to Quality Indicator 2.2.19

The Department has a procedure for resolving disputes concerning intellectual property through the Intellectual Property Adjudication Committee. However, it does not have written guidelines concerning authorship.

Area 2: EUC Response:

We thank the EEC for these important recommendations, which we have taken into account effectively, as indicated below:

1. The Department acknowledges students' concerns for ensuring easy access to the digital resources of the library, especially for those who work mostly remotely. It is noted that access to digital library resources is currently very easy through the OneLogin policy of the University. OneLogin is a function allowing all EUC members (students and faculty) to access digital services (i.e. learning platforms, webmail, teleconferencing tools, library digital resources, etc.) with a single login process using the same credentials provided for their EUC digital account. Through this option students can access OpenAthens databases available at the EUC Library, which can be easily found on the Library webpage: <https://library.euc.ac.cy/>. In addition, all guides for accessing digital resources and other Library related information can also be found on the Library webpage:
 - a. Library guides: https://library.euc.ac.cy/library-guides/?et_fb=1&PageSpeed=off
 - b. Library: <https://library.euc.ac.cy/>
 - c. Online Transition and Exams Manuals: <https://euc.ac.cy/en/online-learning-transition-students/>

Following the EEC's recommendations, the Library guides have been updated with versions showing step-by-step the process of not only accessing the digital library resources, but also of selecting and searching in the available databases of OpenAthens (Appendix IX). Updated library guides are now publicly available in both Greek and English on the above webpages (Library Guides). In order to enable better access to the digital resources of the library and the other learning environments, instructors of each course will be instructed to upload relevant guides (i.e. Access to Library, Guidelines for the use of Moodle, Guidelines for accessing material and examination online during the covid-19 pandemic) on their course page in the Learning Platforms.

In addition, to further facilitate students' access to information regarding easy access to digital resources, the Department will organize in collaboration with the Library, a relevant webinar offered to all students (live and in recorded mode) at the beginning of each semester. A short virtual tour and tutorial for accessing digital library resources has also been developed and can be found here: <https://euc.ac.cy/en/academics/library/> (and here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PcAwm79-Yj8&feature=youtu.be>). The link will also be disseminated to students via the learning platforms of their courses as well as become available on the Library webpage.

Finally, access to digital resources for course material and readings is also facilitated by the content builder feature (Resources Building Tool) embedded in the Moodle and Blackboard platforms. The use of this feature allows instructors to connect the students' coursework with particular readings drawn directly from the Library's

resources and databases and accessed within each course section in Moodle and Blackboard. In this way, at least in relation to course readings or literature needed for their course requirements, students will be able to access the resources within their course platform.

2. The number of students of the European University Cyprus and the Department of Education Sciences in particular, as well as the number of the library staff do not allow for assigning specific Departments to different members of library staff. However, the Department is in close collaboration with the Library staff in order to ensure student support based on disciplines, and when the Library staff recruitment will allow this, specific departments/disciplines will be allocated among library staff. It is noted that several members of the Library are long-term university employees and have thus established close collaboration with the university departments, have an understanding of resource needs in different departments and are able to consult faculty and students accordingly. In addition, students are often employed at the Library, and hence are able to support fellow students from their own departments. The Library has a team of librarians that provide assistance to its users. The Department will additionally undertake an effort to host library orientation/familiarization seminars in collaboration with the Library as part of its orientation programme for new students, as mentioned above.
3. As the EEC has indicated (see Findings and Strengths points above) the University and the Department hold a strong ethic of student centeredness. Hence, Intellectual Property and Authorship issues have been always resolved on the basis of this ethic and common understanding as well as mutual respect among faculty and between faculty and students. Nevertheless, acknowledging the EEC's concerns on having a more concrete policy and guidelines available to both students and faculty, the Department, in collaboration with the Vice-Rector of Research and External Affairs and the Intellectual Property Adjudication Committee has formulated such policy guidelines for the entire University. The Guidelines have been submitted for final approval by the Senate on March 2nd, 2021, and the submitted document can be found in Appendix X.

3. Administration

The EEC has raised the following issues in relation to the Department's Administration. The EUC's corresponding response can be found below numbered in according to the number of each point/issue of Areas of Improvement.

Comments by the EEC:

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

1. Although students are invited to participate, they are not always responsive to this invitation.

Area 3: EUC Response:

1. The Department shares the EEC's concerns, and has also noticed that students who are invited to participate in academic and administration decision-making bodies are not always responsive to this invitation. To amend this, the Department developed and intends to apply the following strategy:
 - a. Closer collaboration with the School administration staff to hold personal communication with students/representatives in decision-making bodies (including the Department and School Council).
 - b. Pursuing communication via the phone following written invitations to ensure student presence in relevant meetings.
 - c. Closer collaboration with the Student Association, the leaders of which have already been asked to contact and encourage their representatives to participate in meetings of Department bodies they are members of.

4. Learning and Teaching

Sub-areas

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

The EEC has raised the following issues in relation to the Department's Learning and Teaching practices. The EUC's corresponding response can be found below numbered in accordance with the number of each point/issue in the Areas of Improvement.

Comments by the EEC:

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

1. In relation to postgraduate study, the committee recommends that the Department develop a procedure to recognize competencies that students have acquired elsewhere, e.g. in non-formal education settings in the labour market.

Area 4: EUC Response:

We thank the EEC for this important recommendations, which we address as indicated below:

1. In Cyprus, to this date, there are no legislated practices for the recognition in formal education of knowledge and skills acquired via non-formal and informal learning processes. Recognition is attributed only to titles awarded by formal education institutions. Although tertiary level institutions are autonomous and thus have in theory the discretion to decide what they recognise and how they recognise learning, in practice it is rare for non-formal and informal learning to be recognized in the Cypriot context, given the absence of said legislated practices or framework at a national level. However, we are hopeful that, based on national initiatives, EUC will indeed be able in the near future to adopt the EEC's important recommendation for the development of procedures to recognize (through the granting of credits or exemptions from courses) of competencies that students have acquired in non-formal and vocational settings. This seems feasible due to the fact that the establishment of procedures for the validation of non-formal and informal learning has, in recent years, become a priority for the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth. A proposal for a Framework for the Validation of Non-formal/Informal Learning in adult education, youth and volunteering was developed in 2018, based on a mapping study commissioned during 2017 (EEO Group, 2017). The proposed national framework for validation was designed by experts and put to public consultation. The framework was finalized during

the second half of 2018. The creation of mechanisms for the validation of non-formal and informal learning is currently under development and once finalized may provide a road map for the development of such procedures in EUC, especially through the Programme Evaluation Review procedure (PER, as this was presented in the re-accreditation application form 200.1 and Annex 14, of that application) through which relevant feedback and suggestions would be collected by involved stakeholders such as students, alumni and the Advisory Board as well as the external experts panel.

In addition, we would like to mention that the basic principles of adult learning have been incorporated into the design of our programs and courses. Students are offered a highly social and collaborative learning environment, with opportunities to share experiences and combine instruction with discussion, reflection, implementation, and (self)evaluation. Rather than adopting transmission of knowledge instructional models, our courses facilitate inquiry, problem-based learning, and the development of communities of learning. Students are rendered responsible for their own learning, supported by an environment rich in challenges and interactions. Particular emphasis in our courses is placed on drawing upon and extending students' workplace experiences (e.g. utilizing the experiences of many of our graduate students who are in-service teachers). The Department commits to sustaining the emphases outlined above through revisiting these during its regular PER process, through performing regular update and revision of course outlines, as well as through the provision and attendance of Faculty Professional Development Seminars on teaching and learning in Higher Education.

Finally, as it is indicated in the student application form for entry into our programs (e.g. see application for Postgraduate Programmes at: <https://euc.ac.cy/el/admissions/how-to-apply/graduate/>), in their application package applicants are requested to submit any other evidence they consider important to support their application, including prior experience and competencies, which is in turn taken into consideration during the selection process. For our PhD programme in particular, prior experience and competencies are already included as one of the formal evaluation criteria for the examination of each application and during the interview process.



5. Teaching Staff

The EEC did not raise any issues in relation to the Department's Teaching Staff.

Comments by the EEC:

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

N/A

Area 5: EUC Response:

We thank the EEC for their very positive comments on the Teaching Staff of the Department. The Faculty will continue to work hard and stay committed in maintaining and further developing learning and teaching approaches with experience and knowledge from current and future research, as well as through our own professional and academic development.



6. Research

The EEC did not raise any issues in relation to the Department's Research activity and profile.

Comments by the EEC:

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

N/A

Area 6: EUC Response:

We thank the EEC for their very positive comments on the research profile and activity of the Department. The Faculty will continue to work hard and stay committed in maintaining a strong research record also feeding into our teaching in the academic programmes offered by the Department. This is already supported and will be reinforced through the activities and structures of the newly established Centre of Excellence in Research & Innovation in the Social Sciences, the Arts and the Humanities (see Centre's activities at <https://sosciath.euc.ac.cy/>)



7. Resources

The EEC did not raise any issues in relation to the Department's Resources.

Comments by the EEC:

Areas of improvement and recommendations:

N/A

Area 7: EUC Response:

We thank the EEC for their very positive comments on the Resources of the Department. We are sorry that the EEC did not have the opportunity to visit the on-campus facilities of the Department and the research and teaching labs and classrooms.

B. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC has overall identified the following issues in relation to the operation of the Department of Education Sciences, which if confronted, could add significant value to the Department status and its programmes of study. The EUC's corresponding response can be found below numbered according to the number of each point/issue/comment below:

Comments by the EEC:

1. The Department will need to take measures to ensure that staffing can properly support the anticipated expansion of programmes e.g. the Masters offerings, without diluting current strengths.
2. The Department may wish to consider reducing the number of Masters concentrations to three. We suggest that if it decides to pursue this course of action, it should consider in relation to each programme - current and projected enrolments (nationally and internationally); the capacity for an offering in English; that the programme is taught by staff with a relevant research profile.
3. The committee's strongest recommendations relate to the internationalisation of the Department's work. This could be achieved by the greater use of courses in English at both the undergraduate and post graduate level.
4. We strongly endorse the option of an PhD in English and we also recommend that the PhD Programme introduce the option of a compilation thesis/ thesis by publication. These measures would enhance the academic profile of the Department internationally, and may support both greater international enrolments and the visibility of the work of Cypriot and Greek students.

EUC Response to Conclusions and Final Remarks:

We thank the EEC for their important overall recommendations, which we have taken into account effectively, as indicated in the previous sections of the response, as well as below:

1. We agree with the suggestion of the EEC that the Department should take measures to ensure that staffing can properly support the anticipated expansion of programmes, as well as the concerns of the EEC on the teaching burden on staff and the need to make space in order to support the programmes' innovations. In order to respond to these challenges, the Department has proceeded to the following actions for increasing the members of the teaching and research staff:

- a. *Hiring of a new full-time member of faculty:* A new academic post has already been announced for the position of a Lecturer or Assistant Professor in Research Methods in Education, with a strong pedagogical background. The new position is anticipated to respond to the needs of all programmes which share Educational Research modules, as well as support the PhD Programme, the PhD thesis supervision and the research profile of the Department in general. At the same time, as described in the position qualifications, the new member of the academic staff is expected to be able to support our programmes with respect to modules on innovative pedagogical approaches (see Appendix V: full-time faculty job position announcement).
 - b. *Hiring of scientific collaborators:* New hiring positions for the appointment of scientific collaborators are announced every Spring based on the teaching needs of all programmes for the forthcoming academic year and the Teaching Hours Reduction (THR) obtained for the forthcoming academic year by the full-time Faculty. As the THR is allocated and announced on a semester basis, additional hirings may take place every October for the coming Spring semester (see Appendix VI: scientific collaborators job position announcement for Spring 2021)
2. The Department recognizes the concerns of the EEC regarding the Faculty workload, based on which the Committee suggests the reduction of the MA concentrations to three. Following careful consideration of the issues raised by the EEC and suggestion, we are concerned that reducing the MA concentrations to three might impoverish the MA in Education Sciences. Instead, we believe that the EEC's concern may be effectively addressed with the addition of a full-time member of the Faculty, as well as the enrichment of the group of our scientific collaborators, both measures of which are expected to enhance the Department's functionality and operational capacity. The new full-time member of Faculty is expected to be able to support all four MA concentrations as well as other programmes of the Department. The job opening has already been announced for the position of a Lecturer or Assistant Professor in Research Methods in Education, with a strong pedagogical background (see Appendix V). The new position is anticipated to respond to the needs of all programmes which share Educational Research modules, as well as support the PhD programme, the PhD thesis supervision and the research profile of the Department in general. At the same time, as described in the position specifications, the new member of the academic staff will be able to support the programmes with respect to modules on innovative pedagogical approaches (see Appendix V full-time faculty job position announcement, and jobposting at: https://galileo.wd3.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/european_university_cyprus_career_site/job/Engomi/FT-Academic-Position--Research-Methods-in-Education--Lecturer-or-Assistant-Professor- R-03300-3).
3. The Department acknowledges the EEC's concerns for further internationalisation of all of our programmes. Though, some of the EEC's suggestions are not possible to be fully implemented at the time, due to national regulations as noted above, following the EEC's recommendations on taking measures to increase contact with (English speaking) international research, the Department has decided to strengthen its efforts,

by enhancing existing practices and taking new measures. These are outlined in more detail in [EUC Response in Area 1: Department's academic profile and orientation](#).

4. We welcome the EEC's endorsement of the option for offering the PhD programme in English as well. Towards this end the Department has taken and is in the process of developing the following measures:

- a. The PhD programme will be offered in English starting Fall 2021. In January 2021 the new PhD application process was announced, and resulted to the acceptance into the English-speaking programme of one candidate and the provisional acceptance of another two. The application call is open not only for international students but also for Greek-speaking candidates who may wish to pursue their PhD studies in English. It is noted that one of our current PhD students has already indicated her intention to move to the English-speaking programme, immediately after this is launched in the Fall Semester 2021.
- b. PhD Dissertation in English: PhD students of the current programme already have the option upon approval of the Department Council to submit their PhD dissertation in English, even if they attend their course of study in Greek. In fact, some students have already authored/are currently authoring their PhD Thesis in English. For instance, a PhD graduate has already submitted her PhD in English (Dr Stylianidou Nayia), and a number of current PhD students are planning to do so as well (e.g Ms. Ilona-Elefteryja Lasica, Ms. Christina Vasou, and Ms Christina Varnava). The Department shall strengthen its efforts to further support students' decision to take advantage of this option through highlighting this option and its possible benefits in terms of publication, career and further studies prospects during student orientation sessions and student colloquia.
- c. Further measures for the internationalisation of the PhD Programme and students' experience in the programme are described in the EUC response to the Programmatic Evaluation Report, also copied here:

The PhD programme is being continuously updated and informed by current international research trends and literature in English. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the EEC's concerns for further internationalisation of all of our programmes, including the PhD programme of study. Hence, following the EEC's recommendations on taking measures to increase contact with (English-speaking) international research, we are aiming at strengthening these efforts, by enhancing existing practices and taking new measures through the following:

- The major corpus of the readings in the PhD courses (see syllabi submitted in Course Descriptions, Annex 2 of the 200.1 PhD Programme re-accreditation application) as well as the literature reviewed by students for the composition of their PhD proposals and dissertation are in English.
- In addition, following the EEC's recommendations, the Department is planning to offer the programme in English in the Fall 2021. In January 2021 the new PhD application processes was announced, which resulted to the acceptance into the English-speaking programme of one candidate and the provisional acceptance of another two. The application call is open not only for international

students but also for Greek-speaking candidates who may wish to pursue their PhD studies in English.

- In the framework of the above initiative, we will organize in English common research and academic colloquia and other activities for all of our PhD students (in both Greek-medium and English-medium programmes) to offer them opportunities to engage with international research outside their standard courses or programme requirements as well as to interact and share experiences. This development will also contribute to the diversification of the student body which promotes a more international outlook among students.
- As part of the standard activities of the PhD programme, we organize colloquia four (4) times per year. In some of these, we invite experts and researchers in Education Sciences from non-Greek speaking universities (e.g., Cory T. Forbes, Associate Professor of Science Education, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Georgakopoulou-Nunes, Alexandra, Professor of Discourse Analysis & Sociolinguistics, Kings College London). Starting from the following year, and following the Committee's recommendations, we will make sure we include at least one (1) international speaker per academic year.
- We also encourage students to participate in and/or present at international conferences in areas of their research interests. We expect that this will increase further in the following years after the end of the current pandemic. We have recently launched an initiative to offer a fellowship covering expenses for PhD students who present in international conferences in their area of interest (see Appendix VII) and expect the positive effects of this measure to appear in the following semesters.
- The Department has been collaborating with members of staff in universities outside Cyprus to provide support to our doctoral students as members of doctoral committees and will make efforts to further strengthen this practice as the Department feels it provides our students with opportunities for network building beyond Cyprus. For example, in current PhD supervisory committees we have members from international universities as shown in the table below:

Members of current PhD Supervisory Committees from universities outside EUC	
Greece	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
	University of Crete
	University of Western Macedonia
	National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
	University of Patras
USA	Teacher's College Columbia University
UK	St Mary's University
Estonia	Tartu University

Ireland

Mary Immaculate College

This kind of networking and international collaborations comprise an essential ground for preparing doctoral students to enter in academia as academics and professionals with a more international perspective.

- Lastly, several of our PhD students have already published in some international journals and the Department will continue to support and promote such efforts (see point right below). Some recent examples of these are:
 - Tsouccas, L. F., & Meletiou-Mavrotheris, M. (2019). Enhancing In-Service Primary Teachers' Technological, Pedagogical and Content Knowledge on Mobile Mathematics Learning. *International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning (IJMBL)*, 11(3), 1-18.
 - Lasica, I.-E., Meletiou-Mavrotheris, M., & Katzis, K. (2020). Augmented Reality in Lower Secondary Education: A Teacher Professional Development Programme in Cyprus and Greece. *Education Sciences*, 10(4), 121.
 - Savva, M. & Symeou, L. (2019). Parental involvement in Primary School Education in Cyprus: What do the main stakeholders say [Participación de los padres en la Educación Primaria en Chipre: ¿Qué dicen las principales partes interesadas?]. *Aula Abierta*, 48(1), 105-112. DOI: 10.17811/rifie.48.1.2019.105-112.
 - Following the EEC's recommendations, and in order to further support our PhD students' efforts to enter the publishing world, we will offer during the next academic year a workshop specifically targeting our PhD students on 'How to Get Published'.
- d. Moreover, taking into account the Committee's recommendations, the Department has considered providing the opportunity to PhD students to submit a compilation/thesis by publication (submitted/published journal articles connected through an exigesis). After careful deliberation in the Department's pertinent committees, the Department feels that at this stage, a gradual and staged process of introducing such a change, building upon the expected positive impact of the measures outlined in this Report to promote the programme's internationalisation will benefit our students more. The reasoning for this is provided below:
- Our data show that many of our PhD students need support mostly during the proposal stage of their PhD work (time ranging between 2-4 semesters), and the most time-consuming stage of their PhD studies is the collection and analysis of data. Most of the PhD students go through the stage of writing-up the proposal quite quickly (1-2 semesters). Although we acknowledge that the option for compilation of journal articles will help our PhD students enter the publishing world faster, we believe that, without building the support structure outlined above, this might increase their overall time in the programme.

- Given the fact that thus far the PhD Programme has been provided only in Greek, we feel that it might be difficult for students to follow the route of compilation of publications in the absence of first establishing a support structure, as outlined above. We fear that at this stage of the PhD Programme it might be more difficult for students writing in English to submit papers in peer-reviewed journals and get easily accepted so as to complete their studies in a timely manner. Rather, we believe that through a staged approach building upon the first steps for the internationalisation of the Programme described above, the Department and the Programme will be in a better position to introduce the compilation/thesis by publication option. In fact, we plan to revisit the issue during the next regular PER process that the programme will undergo when we will specifically reconsider this option and conduct a detailed investigation and consultation which will include our PhD students' and Advisory Board's opinions on the matter, a new SWOT analysis about the issue as well as an assessment of the impact the internationalisation measures described above will have made at that point.
- We have enhanced opportunities for our PhD students to disseminate part of their research work through presenting at indexed conferences and/or publishing in academic journals (the University has launched a fellowship scheme for providing support to e.g. cover conference expenses, providing PhD students with opportunities to collaborate with Faculty who have experience with the publication process). The current COVID-19 pandemic has increased the options for students to participate and present in international conferences at a lower cost since they can do so without having to travel.
- Since the compilation option represents a new academic culture in the area of Education Sciences in Public and Private Universities in Cyprus, we feel that it might affect our competitiveness with the rest of the Universities in Cyprus, if executed without the close and extensive consultation process provided by the PER process.

More detailed response of the EEC's specific recommendations in relation to programme internationalisation and other issues can be found in the EUC response to the Programmatic Evaluation Report.

In closing, the Department of Education Sciences of the European University Cyprus would like to thank the EEC for the constructive feedback on the Department's operations and its programmes and would also like to reassure the Committee that the Faculty and the administration will continue to work hard and stay committed in maintaining and further expanding the high quality of our academic programmes, research activities and administration work and operations. The Department found the EEC's candid discussions, a constructive learning process. The review was a positive experience which has provided us with important input on how to move effectively forward. In addition, we have thoroughly reviewed the findings, strengths and areas of improvement clearly indicated by the EEC following its review and attempted to respond to each item specifically and succinctly, indicating our actions. By embracing



the EEC's comments and suggestions, we are convinced that our Department will be able to more effectively ensure the learning outcomes of its students. In this regard, we are grateful to the EEC for their candid discussions regarding our programme, and the insightful comments and suggestions throughout their report.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Professor Marios Vryonides	Dean School of Humanities, Social and Education Sciences	
Katerina Mavrou	Chairperson, Department of Education Sciences	
FullName	Position	
FullName	Position	
FullName	Position	
FullName	Position	

Date: 18/2/2021

