

Higher Education Institution's Response

(Departmental)

Date: 04.08.2025

- **Higher Education Institution:** National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty:** School/Faculty
- **Department:** Department of Pedagogy and Primary Education

Programme(s) of study under evaluation
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle) Undergraduate Study Programme in Pedagogy and Primary Education

Programme 1

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Programme Name

Programme 2

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Programme Name

Programme 3

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Programme Name

- **Department's Status:** New

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 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

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 (including SWOT analysis)
- 1.2 Connecting with society
- 1.3 Development processes

The report in p. 9 states that regarding the department's academic profile and orientation, we are partially compliant; therefore, we respond to each specific comment below on how we have addressed these topics to meet all the criteria.

A. NKUA-CYPRUS BRANCH RESPONSE ON THE FINDINGS, STRENGTHS, AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

EEC's findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations	NKUA-Cyprus branch response
1.1 Mission and strategic planning	
<p>Mission and Strategic Planning: The department should formalise the mission of the Cyprus Branch in a <u>clear, written document and ensure that it is contextually adapted to the Cypriot educational, cultural, and professional environment.</u> Strategic planning should be strengthened by defining concrete objectives, implementation steps, review mechanisms, and indicators for monitoring progress over time.</p>	<p>Mission and Strategic Planning is in accordance with NKUA https://cy-en.uoa.gr/cyprus_branch/objective_of_the_branch which is committed to establishing Academic and Administrative Staff Associations immediately after staff recruitment, with elected representatives in the Governing Committee and Academic Council, holding voting rights on matters affecting their position. We intend to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend the Internal Regulations within two months of licensing to incorporate these provisions • Appoint a General Director as a senior administrative officer to implement management decisions on resources, human resources, and service organization, recognize and support staff associations for all categories, ensuring inclusive and effective governance. <p>Furthermore, the Department's Mission and Strategic Planning was explicitly presented from the Chair of the Department during the face-to-face visit with the EEC (July 28, 2025).</p>
<p>Stakeholder Involvement: Although local stakeholders expressed support for the initiative, <u>the institution should establish structured mechanisms to involve them in the ongoing development and review of the programme.</u> Their contribution should go beyond implementation support and include co-design of key aspects, especially regarding school</p>	<p>The Department has already agreed with significant institutions, such as ELENEION (dim-eleneion-lef.schools.ac.cy), the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus and the School of Theology www.theo.ac.cy that its initiative is supported. The MOUs are at the final stage. The directors and representatives of the above organisations as well as other stakeholders</p>

<p>internships and practical training components.</p>	<p>(e.g. past students) have committed to be actively involved in programme development, programme practice and student evaluation processes as members of a USP Committee. The parent IQAS quality procedures will be implemented for the branch. For instance, there are mechanisms in place for the annual evaluation of the department's quality procedures and for ensuring that the programme offered meets the quality standards of the EHEA. In addition, upon accreditation it is planned to establish a dedicated Alumni Office at the "Eleneion" Primary School (Central Administration Building), underscoring the significance attributed to graduates for the Branch's future growth. Finally, the Theological School has sent a letter to the Department of Pedagogy and Primary Education signed by the Director of the School validated by the signature of the Archbishop of Cyprus to host premises and administration services (see Annex 1).</p>
<p>Quality Assurance: <u>The institution should provide a detailed plan on how quality assurance will be implemented locally at the Cyprus Branch. This should go beyond reliance on student surveys and include mechanisms such as periodic self-assessment by academic staff, internal academic reviews, and structured feedback from stakeholders and internship partners.</u></p>	<p>Quality Assurance Policy in Cyprus Branch follows NKUA Quality Assurance practices and processes https://en.uoa.gr/about_us/mission_policies_and_publications/quality_assurance_policy</p> <p>Therefore, all students can receive comprehensive information on quality assurance mechanisms at the commencement of their studies, as part of the induction process, ensuring that they are fully aware of their rights, responsibilities, and available procedural avenues.</p> <p>We must refer to the quality procedures of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of NKUA, such as the annual evaluation of the programme and staff by the IQAS of the NKUA, which will be also implemented in the branch.</p> <p>There will also be a specific mechanism for quality procedures involving stakeholders. For instance, these procedures for stakeholders will include, as mentioned in the institutional report:</p> <p>Participation in the annual internal evaluation of study programmes – External stakeholders (e.g., employers, professional associations, public bodies) will receive specialised questionnaires designed to collect their assessment of the qualifications of graduates employed in their organisations. They will also be invited to provide feedback on the structure and content of the study programmes and to submit proposals for improvement. Membership in Advisory Boards – External stakeholders will participate in the Local Advisory Board of the Branch, as well as in Departmental Advisory Boards at programme level, ensuring close alignment of</p>

	<p>curricula with labour market needs and sectoral developments. Involvement in initial and periodic external evaluations – In line with the applicable legal framework, external stakeholders will take part in the initial and periodic accreditation processes of the Branch’s study programmes, contributing to their relevance and quality. Integration into the Internal Quality Assurance System – A new dedicated process (“Process 9”) will be added to the Internal Quality Assurance System, explicitly defining the participation of external stakeholders in all relevant quality assurance procedures, from feedback collection to the formulation of improvement actions. In addition, within the Institution’s policy is a dedicated Student Appeals Guide, available both in printed and digital form.</p>
<p>Academic Governance and Participation: While the involvement of academic staff through assemblies is positive, the institution should ensure that <u>staff from the Cyprus Branch are actively involved in decision-making processes and curriculum development from the outset</u>, and that their input is systematically considered in governance structures.</p>	<p>The Interim Governing Body and the Interim Academic Council of the Institution ensure the proper governance according to Cypriot Law (http://cy-en.uoa.gr)</p> <p>In the Interim Governing Board the Primate of the Church of Cyprus, Archbishop of Nova Justiniana and All Cyprus George III, already participates ensuring the close ties and understanding of today’s Cypriot reality. In addition, upon recruitment, within the obligations of the staff stationed in Cyprus is to be actively involved in curriculum development and all decision-making processes as it is the common practice of the parent department where all faculty participate in monthly meeting to discuss and make decisions relevant to the study programme, students’ progress and staff professional development and research topics.</p>
<p>1.2. Connecting with society</p>	
<p>None of the elements listed in points 1.2.1 to 1.2.4 are clearly addressed in the application. Where relevant reflections are provided, they refer to the department’s activities in the Greek context, not to the Cyprus Branch. <u>There is no evidence of specific mechanisms to assess societal needs in Cyprus, to communicate effectively with the public or with graduates, or to ensure that the department’s activities will have a positive impact on Cypriot society.</u> As a result, these aspects remain underdeveloped and disconnected from the local context. These matters were not discussed during the site visit. Nevertheless, <u>considering the experience and institutional capacity of the parent university, we are confident that all these processes will be</u></p>	<p>The Department has already well-established links with the Cypriot Society and relevant stakeholders. Eleneion School, the School of Theology, Representatives from other public and private institutions, the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus, University of Cyprus, European University Cyprus are amongst the few that support the initiative. In addition, a public opinion poll that took place is in clear favour of the initiative. Specifically and according to the 2024 ALCO survey, 87% of Cypriots welcome the establishment of the Branch, and 85% recognise NKUA’s prestige and historical legacy https://cy-en.uoa.gr/news and events/view announcement (as the Rector of NKUA has presented).</p>

<p><u>appropriately developed and implemented over time.</u></p>	<p>Nonetheless, the aim is to further involve local stakeholders in programme development and upon the first cycle of study completion to create an alumni of graduates that will ensure the continuous quality improvement of the programme. We intend to hold some happenings (such as seminars, conferences, etc.) that will involve and will have an impact to the Cypriot society. In addition, and according to parent institution upon accreditation: a) a Departmental Advisory Board will be established, to meet at least twice a year and b) an Annual Meeting of Local Stakeholders will take place with the specific mandate to advise on curriculum enhancement, strengthen links with the labour market, and ensure that graduates' skills match the evolving needs of the Cypriot context, culture, and society.</p>
<p>1.3. Development processes</p>	
<p>Data and Evidence-Based Planning: The Department <u>should broaden its quality monitoring tools beyond student surveys by incorporating multiple data sources</u> such as peer reviews, staff self-assessments, academic performance indicators, and stakeholder feedback. A more comprehensive and systematic approach to data collection and analysis is necessary to support effective academic development and strategic decision-making.</p>	<p>Department's Quality Assurance Policy in Cyprus Branch follows NKUA Quality Assurance practices and processes https://en.uoa.gr/about us/mission_policies_and_publications/quality_assurance_policy The institution ensures quality by employing annual progress reviews with performance indicators agreed in consultation with stakeholders (see Annexes 2.1, 2.2 & 2.3).</p>
<p>Recruitment Planning: While an annual recruitment plan has been submitted following the visit, <u>the Department should ensure that it remains realistic, time-bound, and aligned with the educational needs of the Cyprus Branch.</u> It is recommended that <u>the recruitment strategy also consider the inclusion of faculty with knowledge of the Cypriot educational system and experience relevant to the local context.</u></p>	<p>The Interim Governing Body and the Interim Academic Council of the Institution ensure the proper governance according to Cypriot Law (http://cy-en.uoa.gr). The Institution already agreed that the first initiative will be the immediate recruitment of the Branch Director to develop and implement the Branch's strategic and operational plans in alignment with NKUA's overall institutional vision supported by an Administrative Team. In addition, the recruitment plan for the NKUA Cyprus Branch has been carefully designed to ensure that by the end of 2025, 30% of the new academic staff positions required for the first year's teaching needs will be filled, with the full complement of faculty in place by the end of the 2025–2026 academic year. The Department follows the same strategy and policy in staff recruitment with the intention to recruit highly qualified staff from Cyprus.</p>

B. NKUA-CYPRUS BRANCH RESPONSE ON THE DEFICIENCIES NOTED UNDER THE QUALITY INDICATORS (CRITERIA)

1. DEPARTMENTS' ACADEMIC PROFILE AND ORIENTATION

1.1. MISSION AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

1.1.1.	The Department has formally adopted a mission statement, which is available to the public and easily accessible.
Comment	The institution should formalise the mission of the Cyprus Branch in a clear, written document and ensure that it is contextually adapted to the Cypriot educational, cultural, and professional environment.
Answer	<p>The mission of the Department of Pedagogy and Primary Education (Cyprus Branch) is identical to the mission of the Parent Department: (i) Development of the Science of Pedagogy as a distinct Social Science through Teaching and Research and (ii) Providing Training to Primary School Teachers in accordance with the latest achievements of Education Science. This mission statement was explicitly discussed during the face-to-face visit with the EEC. It is a formal mission statement appearing in the Students' Guide of the Parent Department. It is not specific to any national or cultural context allowing room for the education of Greek speaking students coming from a multiplicity of national and/or cultural backgrounds. The Cypriot educational, cultural, and professional environment converges to a large extent with that of Greece as both countries share a common linguistic, historical, cultural and educational background on one hand, whilst on the other both countries share their common participation in the larger European Union context. However, the need for the adaptation of certain courses of the Teaching Program (especially from the Humanities) to the Cypriot educational, cultural, and professional environment has been profoundly stated by the presenters.</p> <p>In the 41 years of operation of the parent department, hundreds of Cypriot graduates (undergraduates, postgraduates, PhDs) staff the schools and educational structures of the Ministry of Education of Cyprus as teachers and education executives without any additional appointment process than that applicable to graduates of Cypriot universities. Also, graduates of the parent department are employed as members of the teaching staff of Universities of Cyprus, public and private, and have risen to positions of responsibility, such as Ministers of Education (as mentioned in the presentation of the Department's Head and during the interview with the stakeholders, July 28, 2025).</p>
1.1.2.	The Department has developed its strategic planning aiming at fulfilling its mission.
Comment	Strategic planning should be strengthened by defining concrete objectives, implementation steps, review mechanisms, and indicators for monitoring progress over time.
Answer	During the face-to-face visit with the EEC, a detailed strategic plan and a development action plan was presented by the Head of the Parent Department with the appropriate goals over a four-year period. Certain milestones have been clearly indicated e.g. the development and function of a Postgraduate Program in Education by the end of the fourth year of the functioning of the Department. It must be noted, however, that the complete description of the review mechanisms of this strategic planning and indicators for monitoring progress in this and other matters are subject to approval from the NKUA-Cyprus Branch since they are closely related with the Institution's internal policy and structures and are not exclusively Department specific.
1.1.3.	The Department's strategic planning includes short, medium-term and long-term goals and objectives, which are periodically revised and adapted.

Comment	The institution should provide a detailed plan on how quality assurance will be implemented locally at the Cyprus Branch. This should go beyond reliance on student surveys and include mechanisms such as periodic self-assessment by academic staff, internal academic reviews, and structured feedback from stakeholders and internship partners.
Answer	The Department follows QUA of NKUA. The Quality Assurance Unit is autonomous, and its activities are overseen by the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs and Student Support. It operates according to ESG (2015). Same applies to NKUA Cyprus Branch https://modip-en.uoa.gr/
1.1.7.	The mechanism for collecting and analysing data and indicators needed to effectively design the Department's academic development is adequate and effective.
Comment	The institution should ensure that staff from the Cyprus Branch are actively involved in decision-making processes and curriculum development from the outset.
Answer	This is a fair and completely justifiable claim. It falls completely within a policy of participatory decision making. However, the Institution (and the Department) cannot proceed to hiring staff before the Institution (and the Department) are fully accredited and the date for student enrolment has been specified. As it has been clearly stated during the face-to-face visit of the EEC, calls of interest for hiring academic and administration staff are being prepared and will be public once the accreditation process is successfully completed and student enrolment starts. Therefore, it wouldn't be possible for staff from the Cyprus Branch to be actively involved in decision-making processes and curriculum development from the outset, as the set-up of the Department is currently heavily relied on the expertise of the parent institution Department and the success of the Qualified Programme of Study offered there. Undoubtedly, the staff from the Cyprus Branch will actively be involved in decision-making processes and curriculum development in accordance with the NKUA policies.

1.2. CONNECTING WITH SOCIETY

Comment	None of the elements listed in points 1.2.1 to 1.2.4 are clearly addressed in the application. Where relevant reflections are provided, they refer to the department's activities in the Greek context, not to the Cyprus Branch. There is no evidence of specific mechanisms to assess societal needs in Cyprus , to communicate effectively with the public or with graduates, or to ensure that the department's activities will have a positive impact on Cypriot society . As a result, these aspects remain underdeveloped and disconnected from the local context . These matters were not discussed during the site visit. Nevertheless, considering the experience and institutional capacity of the parent university, we are confident that all these processes will be appropriately developed and implemented over time.
Answer	We are very grateful that the EEC is confident that processes regarding connection with the Cypriot society will be appropriately developed and implemented over time. In Annex 3, you can find a list evidencing the connection with Cypriot society and educational institutions and the DPPE teaching staff's knowledge of the primary education system in Cyprus. Moreover, hundreds of Cypriot graduates (undergraduates, postgraduates, PhDs) staff the schools and educational structures of the Ministry of Education of Cyprus as teachers and education executives without any additional appointment process than that applicable to graduates of Cypriot universities. Also, graduates of the parent department are employed

	<p>as members of the teaching staff of Universities of Cyprus, public and private, and have risen to positions of responsibility, such as Ministers of Education (as mentioned in the presentation of the Department's Head and during the interview with the stakeholders, July 28, 2025).</p> <p>Finally, there are currently 58 students from Cyprus attending the USP in Pedagogy and Primary Education, which showcases the connection.</p>
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1.3. DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

1.3.1.	Effective procedures and measures are in place to attract and select teaching staff to ensure that they possess the formal and substantive skills to teach, carry out research and effectively carry out their work.
Comment	The application form and development plan do not provide detailed information on the procedures for attracting and selecting teaching staff in Cyprus.
Answer	<p>The Department cannot proceed to hiring staff before it is fully accredited and the date for student enrolment has been specified. As it has been clearly stated during the face-to-face visit of the EEC, calls of interest for hiring academic and administration staff are being prepared and will be public once the accreditation process is successfully completed.</p> <p>In this aspect, the policy of the Department is fully compliant with the policy of the Institution, i.e. the NKUA-Cyprus Branch.</p> <p>It has to be noted and taken into account that the ultimate decision about the number of staff to be hired, rank, annual income etc. lays with the authorities of the Institution and not of the Department. The Department proposes and the Institution decides. Therefore, the procedures for attracting and selecting teaching staff are not specific to the Department but are decided by the Institution and implemented by all of its Departments.</p>
1.3.2.	Planning teaching staff recruitment and their professional development is in line with the Department's academic development plan.
Comment	The application form and development plan do not provide detailed information on the procedures for attracting and selecting teaching staff in Cyprus.
Answer	<p>The Department cannot proceed to hiring staff before it is fully accredited and the date for student enrollment has been specified. As it has been clearly stated during the face-to-face visit of the EEC, calls of interest for hiring academic and administration staff are being prepared and will be public once the accreditation process is successfully completed.</p> <p>In this aspect, the policy of the Department is fully compliant with the policy of the Institution, ie. the NKUA-Cyprus Branch.</p> <p>It has to be noted and taken into account that the ultimate decision about the number of staff to be hired, rank, annual income etc lays with the authorities of the Institution and not of the Department. The Department proposes and the Institution decides. Therefore, the procedures for attracting and selecting teaching staff are not specific to the Department but are decided by the Institution and implemented by all of its Departments.</p>

2. Quality Assurance

Sub-areas

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

The report in p. 14 states that regarding the Quality Assurance the Department is compliant. Some suggestions regarding the Quality Assurance are presented below, along with our argumentation on how these will be addressed.

A. NKUA-CYPRUS BRANCH RESPONSE ON THE FINDINGS, STRENGTHS, AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

EEC's findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations	NKUA-Cyprus branch answer
<p>Flexible Study Options: While the programme currently does not plan to offer part-time studies, it is recommended to evaluate the potential demand for more <u>flexible study options in the future, particularly to accommodate diverse student needs.</u></p>	<p>The Interim Governing Body and the Interim Academic Council of the Institution according to Cypriot Law discuss flexible study options (http://cy-en.uoa.gr).</p> <p>As for international students the Cypriot Law requires full time studies as a prerequisite to receive a visa.</p> <p>In NKUA a special unit supports international students issu.uoa.gr</p> <p>The same applies to NKUA Cyprus Branch.</p>
<p>Graduate Employment Data: The institution should make <u>publicly available</u> the data collected and analysed by the Quality Assurance Unit regarding <u>graduate employment outcomes</u>, for both the Greek and Cyprus branches. This would improve transparency and provide valuable information to current and prospective students.</p>	<p>NKUA Alumni can provide relevant data. On the Cyprus branch an Alumni Office will be established to provide relevant data and assist students' connection with the labour market.</p>
<p>Broadening the Scope of Quality Assurance: The institution could expand its internal quality assurance framework to <u>include the systematic evaluation of key areas beyond teaching, such as research activities, student support services, and institutional governance.</u> Clear procedures, indicators, and review mechanisms should be established and made publicly available to ensure transparency and continuous improvement.</p>	<p>Quality Assurance Policy in Cyprus Branch follows NKUA Quality Assurance practices and processes https://en.uoa.gr/about-us/mission-policies-and-publications/quality-assurance-policy</p> <p>Regarding students' support and compliance with academic ethics the following are employed by QUA and implemented in Cyprus Branch as well: Formal Documentation and relevant institutional regulations. The Institution intends to expand its Quality assurance procedures to harmonize them with the standards of CYQAA and the good practices in the EHEA.</p> <p>Early Communication:</p>

	<p>during induction/orientation programme.</p> <p>Student Appeals and Academic Ethics Guide: in both printed and digital format.</p> <p>Accessibility and Support: with personalised clarification and guidance upon request.</p> <p>Monitoring and Evaluation: to further enhance the clarity, fairness, and efficiency of the process.</p>
<p>Anti-Discrimination Policies and Structures: The existence of a gender equality policy and a dedicated Gender Equality Committee is a positive step. However, the institution should develop and implement a broader set of anti-discrimination policies that <u>go beyond gender, addressing other potential grounds for discrimination</u>. It is also recommended that the implementation of these policies be actively monitored across both the Greek and Cyprus branches.</p>	<p>NKUA Ethics Committee, Gender Equality Committee, Disabilities Committee etc. apply to NKUA Cyprus Branch and are established by corresponding faculty members.</p>

B. NKUA-CYPRUS BRANCH RESPONSE ON THE DEFICIENCIES NOTED UNDER THE QUALITY INDICATORS (CRITERIA)

2. QUALITY ASSURANCE

2.2 QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR THE PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

2.2.5.	The policy dealing with plagiarism committed by students as well as mechanisms for identifying and preventing it are effective.
Comment	No specific plagiarism detection software has been mentioned as being available to the teaching staff, nor is it clear what procedures are currently in place at the Athens Branch.
Answer	NKUA uses turnitin (www.turnitin.com) as a tool for detecting plagiarism. The same applies to the new Branch https://www.lib.uoa.gr/ypiresies/apotropi-logoklopis-turnitin.html
2.2.7.	The Department publishes information related to the programmes of study, credit units, learning outcomes, methodology, student admission criteria, completion of studies, facilities, number of teaching staff and the expertise of teaching staff.
Comment	The application does not specify which courses will be delivered by the newly recruited faculty members based in Cyprus.

<p>Answer</p>	<p>The Department cannot proceed to hiring staff before it is fully accredited and the date for student enrolment has been specified. As it has been clearly stated during the face-to-face visit of the EEC, calls of interest for hiring academic and administration staff are being prepared and will be public once the accreditation process is successfully completed.</p> <p>In this aspect, the policy of the Department is fully compliant with the policy of the Institution, i.e. the NKUA-Cyprus Branch.</p> <p>It has to be noted that the ultimate decision about the number of staff to be hired, rank, annual income etc. concern the Institution and not the Department. The Department proposes and the Institution decides. Therefore, the procedures for attracting and selecting teaching staff are not specific to the Department but are decided by the Institution and are implemented by all the Departments.</p> <p>During the face-to-face visit of the EEC, it has been made clear that the proportion between the staff based in Cyprus and any other type of staff (staff from the Department in Athens, Visiting Professors, distinguished Visiting Scholars etc.) has been proposed to be 70:30.</p> <p>Given that each member of staff will teach at least 4 courses per year and that the number of courses offered in the first year of the Program is 11, it can be easily deduced that according to the present state of affairs 2 members of staff located in Cyprus will be hired for the first year with a background in Education Sciences and Humanities.</p>
<p>2.2.8.</p>	<p>Names and position of the teaching staff of each programme are published and easily accessible.</p>
<p>Comment</p>	<p>The EEC screened the CV of potential teachers being involved in the programme of the Cyprus branch (http://www.primedu.uoa.gr/an8ropino-dynamiko/melh-d-e-p/alfabhtikos-katalogos-melon-dep.html). These CVs are not up to date (e.g., publications of 2015 in press; no publications beyond 2021, or even without a publication track record).</p>
<p>Answer</p>	<p>A ppt document with CVs of the teaching staff was sent to EEC and is attached in the report (see Annexes 4.1 & 4.2). This ppt and information on teaching staff is also available at the website of the branch (https://cy.primedu.uoa.gr/staff/).</p>
<p>2.2.12</p>	<p>The Department analyses and publishes graduate employment information.</p>
<p>Comment</p>	<p>During the visit, the Department informed us that the Quality Assurance Unit at the Greek Branch collects and analyses graduate employment data. However, it remains unclear whether this information is made publicly available.</p>

Answer	The NKUA Alumni is being developed for providing such info. The same applies to the Cyprus Branch. Nonetheless, there are currently 58 students from Cyprus attending the USP in Pedagogy and Primary Education.
2.2.15	The Department’s mechanisms, processes and infrastructure consider the needs of a diverse student population such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities.
Comment	It is unclear what specific support measures are in place for international students. During the visit, the institution also clarified that the programme will not offer a part-time study option.
Answer	The possibility to study part-time or full-time at NKUA Cyprus Branch follows the options provided for undergraduate study programmes by the Cypriot Law for Higher Education. However, international students usually have to study full-time in Cyprus for visa purposes.

3. Administration

The report in p. 16 states that regarding Administration the Department is Compliant and that the Evaluation Committee states “we felt confident that the administrative staff are there to support the establishment of this new branch campus. We were also reassured that the engagement of the academics in the ongoing governance of the Department is in place.”

Response: We are pleased that EEC feels confident that administration will support the establishment of the new branch.

4. Learning and Teaching

Sub-areas

4.1 Planning the programmes of study

4.2 Organisation of teaching

The report in p. 21 states that regarding Learning and Teaching the Department is Partially Compliant. Therefore, we respond to each specific comment below on how we have addressed these topics to meet all the criteria.

A. NKUA-CYPRUS BRANCH RESPONSE ON THE FINDINGS, STRENGTHS, AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

EEC's findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations	NKUA-Cyprus branch answer
4.1 Planning the programmes of study	
The EEC suggests developing a <u>paragraph about the compliance of the – to be operationalised - Cyprus programme with the Cyprus legislation.</u>	The operation of the new department is subject to Cypriot legislation as clearly explained by NKUA https://cy-en.uoa.gr/cyprus_branch/legal_personality
The EEC would encourage the identification of the specific courses and a description of the strategy that the department will follow to change/adapt the course content of specific courses to fit the <u>Cyprus context.</u>	As mentioned, the two educational systems of Greece and Cyprus converge to a large extent. It is apparent that course adaptation, where needed, will take place already from the first year of operation as clearly stated during the interview process (e.g. History of Cyprus, Modern Cypriot Literature etc.).
As will be elaborated further below in the section about research, the EEC invites the Cyprus branch to <u>discuss the competence list put forward to ground the current programme.</u> The EEC misses a competence related to research that could result in teachers adopting inquiry-based teaching approaches and data-driven decision making.	<p>The first program outcome (Outcome 1: Critical Thinking: <i>Critically approach, analyze and synthesize research data related to teaching and learning</i>) described in the matrix which was sent and also presented to EEC concerns critical approach of research data (Annex 5). Following the apt comment from the EEC, Outcome 1 could be enriched and rephrased as follows: <i>Outcome 1: Critically approach to research data:</i></p> <p><i>Critically approach, analyze and synthesize research data related to teaching and learning (e.g. inquiry-based teaching, data-driven decision- making).</i></p> <p>It should be stressed that the theory of inquiry-based teaching approaches is taught in the framework of compulsory and elective compulsory courses. Apart from that, inquiry-based teaching approaches and data-driven decision making is already applied in NKUA parent department mostly in elective courses and ‘lab-approach’ courses (as student numbers in compulsory and elective compulsory courses exceed 360 per year). Given the relatively small (40) number of students in Cyprus Branch the adoption of these methods in compulsory courses as well, is apparently feasible.</p>
4.2 Organisation of teaching	
Firstly, the EEC wonders <u>why</u> the NKUA staff, and the future new staff would not grab the opportunity to <u>move beyond a ‘copy paste’ approach of the existing NKUA learning and teaching approach.</u> The new setting and context, the smaller number of students, the opportunity to work with new stakeholders, the different cultural and society context ... can be considered as a	We are grateful for this comment, because it gives us the opportunity to elaborate on the organisation of teaching already applied in the parent Department. The theory of inquiry-based teaching approaches is taught in the framework of compulsory and elective compulsory courses. Despite the fact the number of students attending compulsory and compulsory elective courses in the department in Greece usually exceeds 360 per year, there is a wide range of elective courses offered where the number

<p>laboratory setting to redesign current courses and adopt some innovative directions to educate future teachers. This “lab-approach” to the development of the teaching and learning experiences in the Cyprus branch could even be beneficial for the Greece branch as it can become a research base that inspires the design and development of other programmes. In the context of teacher education this could result in the adoption of e.g., co-creation approaches, the lesson study plan (see Japan), the adoption of inquiry-based teaching by student teachers, the adoption of project-based education, etc.</p>	<p>of students attending may range from 20 to 60, as well as compulsory and elective compulsory courses that are taught in a ‘lab-approach’ where students are divided in groups of 20 - 30 persons. These courses give the teaching staff the opportunity to adopt modern student-centred approaches, such as the design thinking methodology, the action research approach, the problem-based learning, the project-based education, case studies based on real-life situations, etc. These and other approaches, such as the lesson study plan, foster a collaborative culture among teachers who co-design and reflect on their teaching practices and their students’ learning.</p> <p>Given the relatively small number of students in the Cyprus branch, it is feasible to develop such teaching strategies in compulsory courses as well and co-create synergies with teachers, students, headteachers, school counsellors, etc.</p>
<p>Secondly, the EEC would appreciate a <u>commitment to a focus on assessment and evaluation at course level</u> – how the teacher competences are being assessed at a holistic level so that we see how students evolve and are gradually able to function as competence autonomous teachers. During the site visit some teachers mentioned the potential of <u>portfolio assessment</u>. The EEC considers this as a promising approach since it helps to collect evidence that could be pulled together from the course level to come to conclusions at the competence level.</p>	<p>As mentioned during the presentations (July 28, 2025), the USP has been accredited as fully compliant by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education, which, like the other official national bodies of other European states, is subject to the criteria set by the European body for its member states.</p> <p>The Study Guide describes in detail each course, its learning outcomes, teaching methods and assessment methods. Some courses that are integral part of the practical training at schools in the parent department already apply a holistic evaluation approach, e.g. portfolio assessment with a collection of evidence, such as teaching plans, reflection sheets, exercises with case studies and teaching scenarios, self-assessment questionnaires.</p> <p>Given the relatively small number of students in the Cyprus branch, it is also feasible to pilot a competence portfolio that will be evaluated prior to study completion by a relevant internal committee.</p>

B. NKUA-CYPRUS BRANCH RESPONSE ON THE DEFICIENCIES NOTED UNDER THE QUALITY INDICATORS (CRITERIA)

4. LEARNING AND TEACHING

4.1 PLANNING THE PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

<p>4.1.1.</p>	<p>The Department provides an effective system for designing, approving, monitoring and periodically reviewing the programmes of study.</p>
<p>Comment</p>	<p>The EEC wonders why the NKUA staff, and the future new staff would not grab the opportunity to move beyond a ‘copy paste’ approach of the existing NKUA learning and teaching approach. The new setting and context, the smaller number of students, the opportunity to work with new stakeholders, the different cultural and society context. The EEC suggests developing a paragraph about the compliance of the – to be operationalised - Cyprus programme with the Cyprus legislation.</p>

Answer	<p>It has been stated explicitly during the face-to-face visit of the EEC that it is not our intention to transfer the USP of the Parent Department to Cyprus in a mechanistic way as a static entity.</p> <p>We firmly believe that the USP development is a dynamic process and that the new setting and context, the smaller number of students, the opportunity to work with new stakeholders, the different cultural and society context give the opportunity for an operational adaptation of the USP to the new conditions in compliance with the Cyprus legislation.</p> <p>In any case, modern teaching methodologies have already been applied in the Department of Pedagogy and Primary Education in Athens, thus ensuring student-centred teaching and learning approaches.</p>
4.1.3.	Intended learning outcomes, the content of the programmes of study, the assignments and the final exams correspond to the appropriate level as indicated by the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).
Comment	<p>The EEC invites the Cyprus branch to discuss the competence list put forward to ground the current programme. The EEC misses a competence related to research that could result in teachers adopting inquiry- based teaching approaches and data-driven decision making.</p>
Answer	<p>Even though in the matrix the first competence connected with Outcome 1 is related to collecting, analyzing and interpreting research data to guide decisions, the Curriculum Committee responsible for the study programme can take into consideration all relevant suggestions and make relevant amendments.</p> <p>At this point, following the apt comment from the ECC, Outcome 1 could be enriched and rephrased as follows: <i>Outcome 1: Critically approach to research data:</i></p> <p><i>Critically approach, analyze and synthesize research data related to teaching and learning (e.g. inquiry-based teaching, data-driven decision- making).</i></p>
4.1.5.	The Department ensures that its programmes of study integrate effectively theory and practice.
Comment	<p>The EEC would encourage the identification of the specific courses and a description of the strategy that the department will follow to change/adapt the course content of specific courses to fit the Cyprus context.</p>
Answer	<p>It has been clearly stated during the face-to-face visit of the EEC that specific adaptations/changes in certain courses of the USP is necessary to be effective. Namely courses such as “Modern History”, “Greek Literature”, “Folklore and Culture” have to be redesigned to include elements of the History of Cyprus, Cypriot Literature and Cypriot Cultural Heritage. Needless to mention that the Practical Training of Teachers which is the backbone of the USP has already been reconsidered in accordance with the suggestions of the local stakeholders and the research and the experience in general already gained through connections and convergences with Cypriot educational system (see Annex 3).</p>

4.2 ORGANISATION OF TEACHING

4.2.8	The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.
Comment	The EEC would appreciate a commitment to a focus on assessment and evaluation at course level – how the teacher competences are being assessed at a holistic level so that we see how students evolve and are gradually able to function as competence autonomous teachers. During the site visit some teachers mentioned the potential of portfolio assessment. The EEC considers this as a promising approach since it helps to collect evidence that could be pulled together from the course.
Answer	The USP describes in detail each course, its learning outcomes, teaching methods and assessment methods. Some courses that are integral part of the practical training at schools in the parent department already apply a holistic evaluation approach, e.g. portfolio assessment with a collection of evidence, such as teaching plans, reflection sheets, exercises with case studies and teaching scenarios, self-assessment questionnaires. Given the relatively small number of students in the Cyprus branch, it is also feasible to adopt a competence portfolio that will be evaluated prior to study completion by a relevant internal committee.

5. Teaching Staff

The report in p. 23 states that regarding the Teaching Staff the Department is Partially Compliant. Therefore, we respond to each specific comment below on how we have addressed these topics to meet all the criteria.

A. NKUA-CYPRUS BRANCH RESPONSE ON THE FINDINGS, STRENGTHS, AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

EEC's findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations	NKUA-Cyprus branch answer
Local Academic Presence and Contextual Relevance: The institution should <u>ensure the recruitment of permanent, full-time academic staff based in Cyprus</u> to provide continuous face-to-face support to students and to ensure alignment with the Cypriot educational context. Faculty with specific knowledge of, or experience in, the Cypriot primary education system should be included in the core teaching team, as this is essential for a teacher education programme operating locally.	The Interim Governing Body and the Interim Academic Council of the Institution ensure the proper governance according to Cypriot Law (http://cy-en.uoa.gr). NKUA's Support Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (KYDIMA) ensures that the new teaching staff will receive relevant training and have the opportunity to attend professional development sessions and receive advisory support aimed at enhancing their teaching practices.

<p>Time Commitment and Presence of Greek Branch Staff: The application <u>should clarify the actual time commitment, teaching load, and physical presence in Cyprus of staff from the Greek Branch.</u> This is necessary to assess the sustainability and effectiveness of the academic support structure at the Cyprus Branch.</p>	<p>The Interim Governing Body and the Interim Academic Council of the Institution ensure the proper governance according to Cypriot Law (http://cy-en.uoa.gr).</p> <p>The recruitment plan for the NKUA Cyprus Branch has been carefully designed to ensure that by the end of 2025, 30% of the new academic staff positions required for the first year’s teaching needs will be filled, with the full complement of faculty in place by the end of the 2025–2026 academic year.</p> <p>During the initial phase, the Branch will also be supported by experienced professors from the parent NKUA, who will contribute to covering teaching needs and provide academic guidance to newly appointed staff, ensuring a smooth transition and the transfer of NKUA’s academic standards and culture.</p>
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B. NKUA-CYPRUS BRANCH RESPONSE ON THE DEFICIENCIES NOTED UNDER THE QUALITY INDICATORS (CRITERIA)

5. TEACHING STAFF

<p>5.1.</p>	<p>The number of teaching staff - full-time and exclusive work - and the subject area of the staff sufficiently support the programmes of study.</p>
<p>Comment</p>	<p>The application lacks information on the role, profile, and contribution of visiting or special teaching staff, and does not clarify the time commitment of Greek faculty to the Cyprus Branch. Also, write the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of teaching staff working full-time and having exclusive work - Number of special teaching staff working full-time and having exclusive work - Number of visiting Professors - Number of special scientists on lease services
<p>Answer</p>	<p>The Department cannot proceed to hiring staff before it is fully accredited and the date for student enrolment has been specified. As it has been clearly stated during the face-to-face visit of the EEC, calls of interest for hiring academic and administration staff are being prepared and will be public once the accreditation process is successfully completed.</p> <p>In this aspect, the policy of the Department is fully compliant with the policy of the Institution, i.e. the NKUA-Cyprus Branch.</p> <p>It has to be noted that the ultimate decision about the number of staff to be hired, rank, annual income etc. concerns the Institution and not the Department. The Department proposes and the Institution decides. Therefore, the procedures for attracting and selecting teaching staff are not specific to the Department but are decided by the Institution and are implemented by all the Departments.</p>

	<p>During the face-to-face visit of the EEC, it has been made clear that the proportion between the staff based in Cyprus and any other type of staff (staff from the Department in Athens, Visiting Professors, distinguished Visiting Scholars etc.) has been proposed to be 70:30.</p> <p>Given that each member of staff will teach at least 4 courses per year and that the number of courses offered in the first year of the Program is 11, it can be easily deduced that according to the present state of affairs 2 members of staff located in Cyprus will be hired for the first year with a background in Education Sciences and Humanities.</p> <p>It is expected that a similar procedure is followed in every year of the USP and that the number of staff reaches its full deployment by the end of the 3rd year of operation of the Department.</p> <p>Our major concern is to combine academic excellence with the economic viability of the Department.</p> <p>We are planning to recruit in total:</p> <p>8 members of staff with full time employment based exclusively in Cyprus having an expertise in the Cyprus educational system.</p> <p>4 members of staff of all other categories (staff from the Department in Athens, Visiting Professors, distinguished Visiting Scholars etc.)</p> <p>2 Administration staff based in Cyprus</p> <p>1 IT Manager (Full time)</p> <p>1 Laboratory Technician</p>
5.2.	The teaching staff of the Department has the relevant formal and substantive qualifications for teaching the individual subjects as described in the relevant legislation.
Comment	The institution should ensure the recruitment of permanent, full-time academic staff based in Cyprus to provide continuous face-to-face support to students and to ensure alignment with the Cypriot educational context.
Answer	We are planning to recruit in total: 8 members of staff with full time employment based exclusively in Cyprus having an expertise in the Cyprus educational system.
5.6.	The ratio of the number of subjects of the programme of study taught by teaching staff working fulltime and exclusively to the number of subjects taught by part-time teaching staff ensures the quality of the programme of study.
Comment	The application should clarify the actual time commitment, teaching load, and physical presence in Cyprus of staff from the Greek Branch. This is necessary to assess the sustainability and effectiveness of the academic support structure at the Cyprus Branch.
Answer	We are planning to have 4 members of staff of all other categories (staff from the Department in Athens, Visiting Professors, distinguished Visiting Scholars etc.). According to the category of the staff different obligations/commitments/responsibilities are applicable.
5.8.	Feedback processes for teaching staff in regard to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.
Comment	Faculty with specific knowledge of, or experience in, the Cypriot primary education system should be included in the core teaching team, as this is essential for a teacher education programme operating locally.
Answer	The Interim Governing Body and the Interim Academic Council of the Institution ensure the proper governance according to Cypriot Law (http://cy-en.uoa.gr). Teaching and Learning Support Center (KYDIMA) ensures that the new teaching staff will receive relevant training and have the opportunity to attend professional development sessions and receive advisory support aimed at enhancing their teaching practices. The Interim Governing Body and the Interim Academic Council of the Institution ensure

	<p>the proper governance according to Cypriot Law (http://cy-en.uoa.gr).</p> <p>The recruitment plan for the NKUA Cyprus Branch has been carefully designed to ensure that by the end of 2025, 30% of the new academic staff positions required for the first year’s teaching needs will be filled, with the full complement of faculty in place by the end of the 2025–2026 academic year.</p> <p>During the initial phase, the Branch will also be supported by experienced professors from the parent NKUA, who will contribute to covering teaching needs and provide academic guidance to newly appointed staff, ensuring a smooth transition and the transfer of NKUA’s academic standards and culture.</p>
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6. Research

The report in p. 26 states that regarding Research the Department is Partially Compliant. Therefore, we respond to each specific comment below on how we have addressed these topics to meet all the criteria.

A. NKUA-CYPRUS BRANCH RESPONSE ON THE FINDINGS, STRENGTHS, AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

EEC’s findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations	NKUA-Cyprus branch answer
<p>The EEC recommends <u>developing a basic research programme for the local Cyprus branch that mirrors the local society and cultural setting</u>. This basic research programme could be helpful, to pull together the - sparse (N 8) – research resources. This programme is expected to be helpful to develop profiles for the future staff to be hired that take off – next to teaching and learning responsibilities – research responsibilities. The additional information obtained after the site visit about the lower number of staff to be hired reinforces the need to emphasize a programmatic approach to research that will inspire the profiles of new staff to be hired.</p>	<p>Relevant research can be carried out according to EU research funded programmes and national resources. NKUA Cyprus Branch has already agreed to adopt a comprehensive Research Policy & Strategy. To this end, a Research Committee will be established at the Branch and accordingly at the departmental level to develop and oversee the Research Strategy and ensure full integration of research into teaching, support applications for research funding and promote a strong research culture.</p>
<p>The EEC considers <u>active involvement of student teachers in research as a key asset of the future curriculum</u>. This would align the local teaching and learning approach with international trends to see teachers adopting inquiry-based teaching practices and a data-driven approach. In this context the EEC also suggests <u>looking at the list of competences and to include at programme level a research related competence</u> to the list currently being developed and upgraded.</p>	<p>The dimension of the role of the (future) teacher as a researcher is a key element of their professional identity and for teaching, learning and curriculum design. DPPE in Athens as well as in Cyprus places great emphasis on this dimension and includes a related competence and program outcome at programme level. The relatively small number of students in Cyprus allows the adoption of innovative teaching methods and resources. NKUA Department of Pedagogy and Primary Education ranks highly (301-350) according to academic rankings due to research activities of staff members and synergies with students. Similar research efforts synergies are applied to Cyprus Branch to align local teaching and learning with international trends.</p>

B. NKUA-CYPRUS BRANCH RESPONSE ON THE DEFICIENCIES NOTED UNDER THE QUALITY INDICATORS (CRITERIA)

6. RESEARCH

6.3.	The Department provides adequate facilities and equipment to cover the staff and students' research activities.
Comment	The EEC recommends developing a basic research programme for the local Cyprus branch that mirrors the local society and cultural setting. This basic research programme could be helpful, to pull together the - sparse (N 8) – research resources. This programme is expected to be helpful to develop profiles for the future staff to be hired that take off –next to teaching and learning responsibilities – research responsibilities.
Answer	The development of the research plan for the Department in Cyprus is going to be tailored on the profiles, research experience and research interests of the permanent staff in the new Department, that apparently will create new dynamics.
6.5.	The results of the teaching staff research activity are published to a satisfactory extent in international journals which work with critics, international conferences, conference proceedings, publications, etc. The Department also uses an open access policy for publications, which is consistent with the corresponding national and European policy.
Comment	Not exactly clear what teachers would be 'flown in' from the NKUA campus, the available information about this staff (see CVs) demonstrated their active involvement in research (project applications, research activities, research communication, research publications). It is to be stressed that the available information mirrored an individual involvement in research of NKUA staff. Information about a programmatic approach was not available.
Answer	As stated at the presentation (July 28, 2025), the colleagues from the Department in Athens are going to act as mentors in teaching and research for the Department in Cyprus. The experience in gaining international research funding is a valuable asset and should be utilized in the Department in Cyprus.
6.8.	The external, non-governmental, funding of research activities of teaching staff is similar to other Departments in Cyprus and abroad.
Comment	The EEC developed an understanding that at the start, teaching responsibilities of staff in the Cyprus branch could be mainly related to teaching. Nevertheless, given the academic orientation of the programme and the plans to hire new staff (N 8), during the next 4 years), a picture about the future research activities in the Cyprus branch is deemed necessary. The local deployment of a research programme that fits the Cyprus branch and could be the basis to hire new staff, was not available.

Answer	NKUA provides the opportunity due to the high available resources for more research. Plus, NKUA has more resources regarding teaching and research compared to other Universities in Greece.
6.9.	The policy, indirect or direct of internal funding of the research activities of the teaching staff is satisfactory, based on European and international practices.
Comment	The EEC considers active involvement of student teachers in research as a key asset of the future curriculum . This would align the local teaching and learning approach with international trends to see teachers adopting inquiry-based teaching practices and a data-driven approach. In this context the EEC also suggests looking at the list of competences and to include at programme level a research related competence to the list currently being developed and upgraded.
Answer	The dimension of the role of the (future) teacher as a researcher is a key element of their professional identity and for teaching, learning and curriculum design. DPPE in Athens as well as in Cyprus places great emphasis on this dimension and includes a related competence at programme level. The relatively small number of students in Cyprus allows them to adopt innovative teaching methods and resources. NKUA Department of Pedagogy and Primary Education ranks highly (301-350) according to academic rankings due to research activities of staff members and synergies with students. Similar research efforts synergies are applied to Cyprus Branch to align local teaching and learning with international trends.

7. Resources

The report in p. 28 states that regarding Resources the Department is Compliant. The *Areas of improvement and recommendations* by the Committee are the following: “These resources are adequate to the establishment of the Department – whose small staff (academic and administration) and first intake (40 students) will be accommodated in the current proposed site. However, we note that at full intake across 4 years, that 160 students – together with 60 theology students – this will take the building to full capacity and likely require additional space. We know the Vice Rectors are aware of these longer-term issues.”

Answer: We sincerely appreciate the EEC’s recognition of the adequacy of the current resources. Furthermore, scholarships are included for the students that exhibit excellency after the first year of their study.

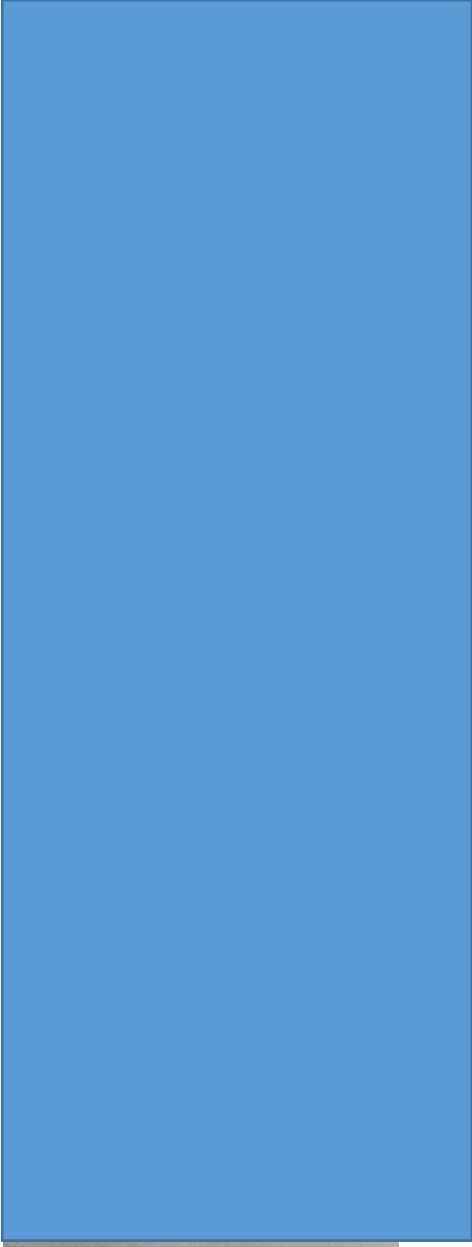
C. Conclusions and final remarks

The Department wishes to express its deep gratitude for the constructive feedback of the External Evaluation Committee, that is a valuable guide for the improvement and strengthening of the structure, management and strategic planning of the USP. In response to that, the Department takes specific and targeted actions to ensure full compliance with the quality standards of the CYQAA, taking into consideration the educational, social and cultural specificities of Cyprus.

We would like to thank the esteemed members of DIPAE and EEC for the constructive comments and suggestions in the context of the evaluation of the Program and we remain at your disposal for any clarifications.

With our sincere thanks.

D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Konstantinos Skordoulis	Professor, Head of the NKUA DPPE	
Thomas Bampalis	Professor	
Frantzeska Mpothou	Secretary	
Konstantina Tsoli	Associate Professor	
Anna Tsiboukli	Assistant Professor	

Date: August 4, 2025