Doc. 300.3.1

Date: 01/03/2025

External Evaluation Report
(Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  Philips University

- **Town: Nicosia**

- **School/Faculty: School of Education and Sciences**

- **Department: Educational Studies**

- **Department's Status: New**

Department's programmes (to be filled by the CYQAA officer and verified by the EEC):

DEPARTMENT	PROGRAMMES OF STUDY
Education Studies	BA Primary Education
	MA Special and Inclusive Education
	MSc Pedagogical and Training Adequacy
	Doctorate (PhD) in Education

A. Introduction
This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The EEC reviewed two applications to approve a BA in Primary Education (240 ECTS) and a PhD in Education (240 ECTS). In addition to this, the EEC team were tasked with the considering the overall approval of the Department of Education Studies. Therefore, there were three discreet components to be explored during the site visit. The EEC received the paperwork in plenty of time and additional material was provided in the lead up to the site visit as it became available. The EEC had times to analyse the documentation prior to the site visit. The site visit took place on February 27th 2025 . The team spent the full day at the university. The day was spent hearing presentations from the President, the Rector (our gratitude to him for joining online while in hospital). The committee had requested that the presentations would be kept short and all of the presenters were mindful of this in their presentations. Consequently, while time was short there was adequate time for questions and also time for elaborations on different elements of the applications. The overall atmosphere at all of the meetings was cordial and relaxed, most of the staff members present contributed frequently to the discussions. All of the scheduled meetings were held and worked as per the timetable with the exceptions of the stakeholders meeting which was cancelled. All of the leaders of each of the programmes/ programme components were present and the Dean of the School took the lead in outlining the overall structure of the School and the Department. These group of leaders spent most of the day with the EEC with the result that the appropriate people were always in the room when questions arose. As the programmes and the Department itself have not yet been approved to be taught, we had to rely on documentation and evidence from previous practice and current practice elsewhere in the university to triangulate our findings.   The EEC (see section B below for the list of evaluators) appreciated the opportunity to meet the different leaders and staff in the department and we had the opportunity to meet with several students. Some of the students (all masters) were on distance learning programmes in the Department and they provided a very positive picture of student life at Philips University in Cyprus. We do recognise that on campus undergraduate students present with different needs and demands but there is clear evidence that there are tried and tested support structure in place to support the students in their learning.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Professor Gerry Mac Ruairc	Chair	University of Galway
Professor Barbara Schulte	Member	University of Vienna
Professor Sarah Anderson	Member	University of Glasgow
Ms Agelina Aggelidou	Student	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

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C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report refers to the Department as a whole (programmes offered, teaching staff, administrative staff, infrastructure, resources, etc.).*

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas and sub-areas.*

- *Under each assessment area there are quality indicators (criteria) to be scored by the EEC on a scale from one (1) to five (5), based on the degree of compliance for the above mentioned quality indicators (criteria). The scale used is explained below:*

  > *1 or 2:   Non-compliant*
  >
  > *3:   Partially compliant*
  >
  > *4 or 5:   Compliant*

- *The EEC must justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.*

- *It is pointed out that, in the case of indicators (criteria) that cannot be applied due to the status of the Department, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted and a detailed explanation should be provided on the Department's corresponding policy regarding the specific quality indicator.*

- *In addition, for each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant),* **which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report.**

- *The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.*

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1. Department's academic profile and orientation
(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-areas
1.1 Mission and strategic planning (including SWOT analysis)
1.2 Connecting with society
1.3 Development processes

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: Non-compliant
3: Partially compliant
4 or 5: Compliant

Quality indicators/criteria	
1. Department's academic profile and orientation	
1.1 Mission and strategic planning (including SWOT analysis)	**1 – 5**
1.1.1	The Department has formally adopted a mission statement, which is available to the public and easily accessible.	N/A
1.1.2	The Department has developed its strategic planning aiming at fulfilling its mission.	1
1.1.3	The Department's strategic planning includes short, medium-term and long-term goals and objectives, which are periodically revised and adapted.	1
1.1.4	The programmes of study offered by the Department reflect its academic profile and are aligned with the European and international practice.	1
1.1.5	The academic community is involved in shaping and monitoring the implementation of the Department's development strategies.	1
1.1.6	Stakeholders such as academics, students, graduates and other professional and scientific associations participate in the Department's development strategy.	1
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.	2
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.	

1.1.1   Regarding Criterion 1.1.1, we cannot assess to what extent the Department's mission statement will be public and easily accessible as the Department has not been established yet.Along with the application, a mission statement has been provided and reiterated in the presentation at the site visit. At the current stage, this mission statement is rather generic, and its formulations could be used for any kind of department

1.1.2   The feasibility study on pp. 119-20 in the application document does not present any information, details, or analysis with regard to the field of Education and its institutionalization in the form of a Department of Educational Sciences.The provided SWOT analysis is insufficient to offer any guidance for further strategic planning. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats neither relate to Education as a field of research and practice nor to institutionalising this field in the form of a Department, but they refer to very general developments such as the "discovery of natural gas in the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus" and "global or regional or political changes".

1.1.3   Due to the generic mission statement, the strategic plan is rather vague and refers to procedural aspects only (such as budget allocation and monitoring). There is no in-depth strategic planning in terms of developing the Department as a site of educational research, teaching, and outreach; also, there is no differentiation of short, mid and long-term strategic goals, making it difficult to assess in which direction the Department is expected to develop.

1.1.4   The planned programmes that are under evaluation here (BA Primary Education and PhD Education) are currently not aligned with international standards, as they do not adequately cover the respective fields of study (and practice).

1.1.5   It is not visible how insights and advice from the academic community (such as external advisors, a Scientific Advisory Board etc.) have been involved in the strategic planning.

1.1.6   It is not visible how external stakeholders from the field of Education have informed the strategic planning.

1.1.7   We cannot assess Criterion 1.1.7 as the Department is not yet operating.

Additionally, provide information on the following:

1. Coherence and compatibility among programmes of study offered by the Department.

2. Coherence and compatibility among Departments within the School/Faculty (to which the Department under evaluation belongs).

   1. Currently, there are two online programmes: an MA Special and Inclusive Education and an MSc Pedagogical and Teaching Adequacy. The prospective Department plans to host these programmes, and add two more programmes: a BA Primary Education and a PhD in Education. It has not been made sufficiently clear in the application materials or at the site visit how these programmes relate to one another and to what extent there can be synergies across the programmes. Creating a coherent portfolio of study programmes in Education should be possible but should be preceded by systematic strategic planning, including a proper feasibility study and SWOT analysis (see recommendations below).
   2.The School hosts four (existing or prospective) departments: apart from the

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Department of Educational Studies (under evaluation here), the Department of Social and Behavioural Studies, the Department of Public Relations and Communications, and the Department of Computer Science. Generally, there could be interesting and productive overlaps across these departments, e.g. regarding youth studies and education, media and education, or digital literacy and education. However, these overlaps and potential synergies have not yet been articulated in the application materials or at the site visit

Provide suggestions for changes in case of incompatibility.

It is strongly suggested mapping departments and study programmes as well as potential research areas in order to meaningfully integrate the Department of Educational Studies with the School. This includes detailed strategic planning as mentioned in the recommendations below.

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

1.2 Connecting with society		1 - 5
1.2.1	The Department has effective mechanisms to assess the needs and demands of society and takes them into account in its various activities.	1
1.2.2	The Department provides sufficient information to the public about its activities and offered programmes of study.	N/A
1.2.3	The Department ensures that its operation and activities have a positive impact on society.	N/A
1.2.4	The Department has an effective communication mechanism with its graduates.	N/A

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

1.2.1 The Department has not yet developed effective mechanisms to assess the needs and demands of society. Consequently, it is difficult to assess how the Department's activities will have a positive impact on society.

2. Since the Department is not yet running, we cannot assess Criteria 1.2.2 and 1.2.41.

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

1.3 Development processes		1 - 5
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.	2

1.3.2	Planning teaching staff recruitment and their professional development is in line with the Department's academic development plan.	1
1.3.3	The Department applies an effective strategy of attracting high-level students from Cyprus and abroad.	3
1.3.4	The funding processes for the operation of the Department and the continuous improvement of the quality of its programmes of study are adequate and transparent.	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

1.3.1 From a procedural perspective, there are well-established strategies and routines concerning the recruitment and further development and promotion of staff. It is less clear, due to the limited strategic planning conducted so far, how new recruitments will be effective in ensuring competence and expertise in Educational sciences and particularly in Teacher education for primary schools.
1.3.2 Currently, a full-fledged development plan for the Department is missing (also connected to the already mentioned insufficient strategic planning). Hence, it is difficult to assess to what extent staff recruitment is, or will be, in line with the development plan.

Additionally, write:
- Expected number of Cypriot and international students
- Countries of origin of international students and number from each country

The application provides the following information:
(1) BA in Primary Education Expected Number of Students:Year 1 – 30 students
(2) MA Special and Inclusive Education Expected Number of Students:
Year 1 – 30 students Year 2 – 50 students.
Education background: Graduates of Universities from Cyprus and Greece.
(3) MSc Pedagogical and Teaching Adequacy (Masters, Distance Learning).
Number of Students:• Year 1 – 122 students.. We expect at least 115 to graduate out of the total 122, in January 2025.
Education background: Graduates of high-schools from Cyprus and Greece.
(4) Doctorate (PhD) in Education Expected Number of Students:
Year 1 – 4 students. Year 2 – 4 students,• and thereafter 4 annually.
Education background: Graduates of Universities from Cyprus and Greece.

Findings
A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

Along with the application, a mission statement has been provided and reiterated in the presentation at the site visit. At the current stage, this mission statement is rather generic, and its formulations could be used for any kind of department. The feasibility study on pp. 119-20 in the application document does not present any information, details, or analysis with regard to the field of Education and its institutionalization in the form of a Department of Educational Sciences. The

provided SWOT analysis is insufficient to offer any guidance for further strategic planning. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats neither relate to Education as a field of research and practice nor to institutionalising this field in the form of a Department, but they refer to very general developments such as the "discovery of natural gas in the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus" and "global or regional or political changes". Due to the generic mission statement, the strategic plan is rather vague and refers to procedural aspects only (such as budget allocation and monitoring). There is no in-depth strategic planning in terms of developing the Department as a site of educational research, teaching, and outreach; also, there is no differentiation of short, mid and long-term strategic goals, making it difficult to assess in which direction the Department is expected to develop.

The planned programmes that are under evaluation here (BA Primary Education and PhD Education) are currently not aligned with international standards, as they do not adequately cover the respective fields of study (and practice). It is not visible how insights and advice from the academic community (such as external advisors, a Scientific Advisory Board etc.) have been involved in the strategic planning. Similarly, it is not visible how external stakeholders from the field of Education have informed the strategic planning.

From a procedural perspective, there are well-established strategies and routines concerning the recruitment and further development and promotion of staff. It is less clear, due to the limited strategic planning conducted so far, how new recruitments will be effective in ensuring competence and expertise in Educational sciences and particularly in Teacher education for primary schools.

Currently, a full-fledged development plan for the Department is missing (also connected to the already mentioned insufficient strategic planning). Hence, it is difficult to assess to what extent staff recruitment is, or will be, in line with the development plan. Representatives of the prospective department have stressed the strategy to focus on lower numbers of students and their qualifications, rather than on large quantities. As far as can be assessed from the provided information, funding processes seem to be adequate and transparent.

Strengths
A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

There is a clear awareness of the procedural aspects of running a Department as staff can draw on the University's experience and routines regarding other departments.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

1. We strongly suggest expanding and specifying the Department's mission statement in ways that adequately reflect the discipline's (Educational studies) distinct nature and address the needs that the Department's work in research, teaching, and outreach will respond to. This requires, among other things, a meticulous feasibility study which takes

into account the current situation and developments of Educational Sciences, and departments where these are located, both in Cyprus and internationally.

2. A proper SWOT analysis more specific to the field of Education, and related academic institutions, is much needed in order to inform the subsequent process of defining the Department's orientation and needs.

3. Strategic planning should address short, mid and long-term goals in development, and relate this to specific steps and tasks, along with a clear timeline including deliverables and milestones.

4. We recommend a two-step process in the further development of the Department: first identify relevant areas of interest for the Department, based on aspects mentioned in the preceding points; second develop study programmes from there. It is paramount to observe international developments and practices, and incorporate insights from these when developing the programmes.

5. It is highly recommended to make use of the expertise of the academic community. We therefore suggest establishing a (preliminary) Scientific Advisory Board that can help with the strategic planning.

6. It is further highly recommended to involve external stakeholders in the strategic planning. A Department of Educational Sciences that is not in touch with the realities of education will not be able to make a contribution to society and relevant research.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
1.1 Mission and strategic planning	Non Compliant
1.2 Connecting with society	Non Compliant
1.3 Development processes	Partially Compliant

2. Quality Assurance
(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8)

Sub-areas
2.2 **System and quality assurance strategy**   2.3 **Quality assurance for the programmes of study**

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: Non-compliant
3:   Partially compliant
4 or 5: Compliant

Quality indicators/criteria	
2. Quality Assurance	
2.1 System and quality assurance strategy	**1 - 5**
2.1.1 The Department has a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of the Institution's strategic management.	N/A
2.1.2 Internal stakeholders develop and implement a policy for quality assurance through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.	2
2.1.3 The Department's policy for quality assurance supports guarding against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against students or staff.	4
2.1.4 The quality assurance system adequately covers all the functions and sectors of the Department's activities:	
2.1.4.1 Teaching and learning	3
2.1.4.2 Research	3
2.1.4.3 The connection with society	2
2.1.4.4 Management and support services	5
2.1.5 The quality assurance system promotes a culture of quality.	4
2.1.6 Students' evaluation and feedback	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

2.1.1 We cannot assess Criterion 2.1.1 as the Department is not established yet. Judging from existing procedures at other Departments, we can assume that quality assurance will be made public. However, as commented on above, strategic management is in need of improvement with regard to research, teaching, and outreach.

2.1.2 External stakeholders who are specific to the field of Education are insufficiently involved.

2.1.4.1 Teaching and learning: While there are solid mechanisms in place to ensure smooth student progression in the academic settings, there is less consideration of potential challenges arising from practice-related aspects of the programme. While placements are clear parts of the programme, aspects relating to the operation of placements are currently underdeveloped. There is little information on how the courses will be kept up-to-date, or how the courses will be aligned with on-going cutting-edge research in the educational sciences internationally. The course bibliographies in the syllabi provided show a large number of dated references, or covered the field of Education only to a very limited extent. There is a lack of critical reflection, and where appropriate, inclusion of frameworks designed at the national and transnational levels for education and primary education, such as those developed by UNESCO or the Council of Europe.

2.1.4.2 Research: Strategic planning regarding promising areas of research in education, including primary education, and potential institutional structuring in the form of research clusters is currently at a very early stage and only insufficiently developed.

2.1.4.3 The connection with society: Due to the lack of a proper feasibility study and SWOT analysis specific to the field of (primary) education, as well as a lack of involvement of external stakeholders specific to (primary) education, the Department is not assessed to have established a well-functioning connection with society that can be drawn on in beneficial ways for the quality assurance process.

2. Quality Assurance	

2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study	1 - 5
2.2.1	The responsibility for decision-making and monitoring the implementation of the programmes of study offered by the Department lies with the teaching staff.	4
2.2.2	The system and criteria for assessing students' performance in the subjects of the programmes of studies offered by the Department are clear, sufficient and known to the students.	N/A
2.2.3	The quality control system refers to specific indicators and is effective, which have been presented and discussed.	4

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2.2.4	The results from student assessments are used to improve the programmes of study.	4
2.2.5	The policy dealing with plagiarism committed by students as well as mechanisms for identifying and preventing it are effective.	3
2.2.6	The established procedures for examining students' objections/ disagreements on issues of student evaluation or academic ethics are effective.	4
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.	N/A
2.2.8	Names and position of the teaching staff of each programme are published and easily accessible.	4
2.2.9	The Department has a clear and consistent policy on the admission criteria for students in the various programmes of studies offered.	4
2.2.10	The Department flexibly uses a variety of teaching methods.	3
2.2.11	The Department systematically collects data in relation to the academic performance of students, implements procedures for evaluating such data and has a relevant policy in place.	4
2.2.12	The Department analyses and publishes graduate employment information.	N/A
2.2.13	The Department ensures adequate and appropriate learning resources in line with European and international standards and/or international practices, particularly:	
	2.2.13.1 Building facilities	4
	2.2.13.2 Library	3
	2.2.13.3 Rooms for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons	2
	2.2.13.4 Technological infrastructure	5
	2.2.13.5 Academic support	5
2.2.14	There is a student welfare service that supports students in regard to academic, personal problems and difficulties.	5
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.	5

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2.2.16	Mentoring of each student is provided and the number of students per each permanent teaching member is adequate.	5
2.2.17	The provision of quality doctoral studies is ensured through doctoral studies regulations, which are publicly available.	N/A
2.2.18	The number of doctoral students, under the supervision of a member of the teaching staff, enables continuous and effective feedback to the students and it complies with the European and international standards.	N/A
2.2.19	The Department has mechanisms and funds to support writing and attending conferences of doctoral candidates.	5
2.2.20	There is a clear policy on authorship and intellectual property.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

2.2.13.2 Library: There is dedicated staff managing library resources. However, if more programmes are added, in particular those with a heavy focus on learning materials and equipment such as primary education, the library will need to expand in order to accommodate these additional requirements. Also, more on-site students will mean an increased number of students using on-site facilities, so the library could be in need of more student space.

2.2.13.3 Rooms for practical and laboratory lessons: The university is in dire need of making and designing space that can be used for training primary school teachers in settings that are realistic and typical of primary school classrooms. It was our impression during the site visit that this has so far not been anticipated in the strategic planning of facilities, and it is also not part of the application materials. (See also the comments of the evaluation committee on facilities in the programme report). Since the number of doctoral candidates is expected to be rather low, there is little risk, in quantitative terms, that students will not have access to supervising capacity. However, there is a serious lack of supervisory expertise and capacity in the field of education, which will affect the quality of supervision negatively if this is not adequately addressed.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

There are clear policies in place that address and guard against intolerance and discrimination. This has also been confirmed by staff and students at the site visit. Management and support services work well to support quality assurance processes. There is an overall awareness among all staff of the importance of creating, and adhering to, a culture of quality. Students are incorporated in quality assurance mainly through course evaluations.

Judging from existing procedures at other Departments, we can assume that quality assurance will be made public. However, as commented on above, strategic management is in need of improvement with regard to research, teaching, and outreach. External stakeholders who are specific to the field of Education are insufficiently involved.

As regards teaching and learning: While there are solid mechanisms in place to ensure smooth student progression in the academic settings, there is less consideration of potential challenges arising from practice-related aspects of the programme. While placements are clear parts of the programme, aspects relating to the operation of placements are currently underdeveloped. There is little information on how the courses will be kept up-to-date, or how the courses will be aligned with on-going cutting-edge research in the educational sciences internationally. The course bibliographies in the syllabi provided show a large number of dated references, or cover the field of Education only to a very limited extent. There is a lack of critical reflection on, and where appropriate, inclusion of frameworks designed at the national and transnational levels for education and primary education, such as those developed by UNESCO or the Council of Europe.

As regards research: Strategic planning regarding promising areas of research in education, including primary education, and potential institutional structuring in the form of research clusters is currently at a very early stage and only insufficiently developed.

As regards the connection with society: Due to the lack of a proper feasibility study and SWOT analysis specific to the field of (primary) education, as well as a lack of involvement of external stakeholders specific to (primary) education, the Department is not assessed to have established a well-functioning connection with society that can be drawn on in beneficial ways for the quality assurance process.

Decision-making and monitoring the implementation of the programmes very clearly lies with the teaching staff. Cooperation among staff take place, or are planned to take place, at the council meetings and individually.

We cannot assess Criterion 2.2.2 as the programmes under evaluation are not yet running, and we have not been provided with material that addresses students directly for these programmes. From existing programmes and student handbooks, we can assume that assessment criteria are clear, and students are informed about them. Similarly, Criterion 2.2.3 is difficult to assess with regard to its effectiveness, however it is apparent from other programmes that there is an established quality control system in place. As far as published information is concerned (Criterion 2.2.7), we can assume that the Department of Educational Sciences will adhere to the established practices at the university.

Both student assessments and evaluations are taken seriously, and are used in order to develop the existing programmes further. We assume that this will also be the case for the programmes under evaluation. There are established procedures in place to deal with students' objections and disagreements, and student welfare services are well-established as well as structures of mentoring. Names and positions of the teaching staff have so far been published for existing programmes; we cannot assess how this will be done for the programmes under evaluation but assume that they will follow the established procedures. There are clear admission policies in place. Whether or not graduates' employment information will be published cannot be assessed (Criterion 2.2.12).

There are detailed policies dealing with issues of academic integrity and fraud, however they focus more on raising students' awareness of illicit academic behaviour rather than on training them to put into practice academic skills and competences. Courses on academic writing are offered, however there is little indication of learning by doing, e.g. through focusing on writing in progress in the individual courses. There is a clear policy on authorship and intellectual property.

As far as learning resources are concerned, building facilities, technological infrastructure, and academic support are in place and well developed in order to meet student demands and needs. As concerns the library, there is dedicated staff managing library resources. However, if more programmes are added, in particular those with a heavy focus on learning materials and equipment such as primary education, the library will need to expand in order to accommodate these additional requirements. Also, on-site students will mean an increased number of students using on-site facilities, so the library could be in need of more student space. As concerns rooms for practical and laboratory lessons, the university is in dire need of making and designing space that can be used for training primary school teachers in settings that are realistic and typical of primary school classrooms. (See also the comments of the evaluation committee on facilities in the programme report.)

As far as doctoral studies are concerned, clear procedural regulations are in place. Measures to ensure scientific quality, meaning that PhD dissertations make substantial contributions to the field, are less detailed. Since the number of doctoral candidates is expected to be rather low, there is little risk, in quantitative terms, that students will not have access to supervising capacity. However, there is a serious lack of supervisory expertise and capacity in the field of education, which will affect the quality of supervision negatively if this is not adequately addressed.

Strengths
A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Overall, there are clear established procedures for quality control. Management and support services work well to support quality assurance processes, and there is an overall awareness among all staff of the importance of creating, and adhering to, a culture of quality. There are clear policies in place that address and guard against intolerance and discrimination. There are also established procedures in place to deal with students' objections and disagreements, and student welfare services as well as structures of mentoring are well-established. Existing programmes seem to sufficiently and effectively take into account each student's individual situation, allowing for a certain degree of flexibility without however compromising established academic standards.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

1. The department needs to map the range of different types of external stakeholders and ensure that an adequate representation of different stakeholders is involved in quality assurance.
2. While students are part of the process of quality assurance through course evaluations, their role could be expanded, for example through student representation in the programme committees.
3. The chosen focus on primary education (BA) and education (PhD) makes it essential that relevant expertise in this field is adequately represented in the teaching staff of the programme. It is therefore highly recommended to map existing expertise and strategically think about what kind of expertise will be needed in order to prepare future primary teachers (BA), as well as think about the directions in which educational

research at the Department should be established and supported, and to which areas the Department wishes to contribute in particular, in order to build an environment in which PhD students can meaningfully pursue PhD studies that are in alignment with international standards and that can make a contribution to Educational sciences.

4. As an alternative recommendation for the BA Primary Education, we would like to add that choosing a different field for designing a BA programme can be a viable option. Teacher training in primary education is a highly demanding field that needs to take into consideration a wide range of theoretical and practical approaches, making necessary rather extensive resources regarding organisation of study and training, mentoring, mock classrooms and equipment, etc. It may be worth considering less complex BA programmes to be offered. As an alternative recommendation for the PhD in Education, we would like to add that narrowing down the field of Education for designing a PhD programme can be a viable option. Depending on the academic staff's expertise and plans for further recruitment, it may be wise to focus on a specific area within the broad field of Education, also to ensure a good match of supervisors and PhD topics.

5. While staff responsibility for programme implementation reflects, on the positive side, a good extent of autonomy among teaching staff, there seems to be, on the negative side, too little regularised alignment across teaching staff and management. This however is needed to ensure the coherence and compatibility of programmes both in terms of teaching contents and teaching methodologies. We therefore recommend installing a platform apart from the Department Council on which reflection and discussion can take place systematically across programmes. This could also be linked to specific areas of pedagogical training which should be planned proactively rather than only in response to problems.

6. It is recommended to expand the university's policies on academic fraud, plagiarism, use of GenAI etc. through focusing on skills development among students, so that they become trained in academic writing in different stages of their development, and across courses.

7. The Department needs to carefully consider the consequences of adding practice-related programmes such as Primary Education as this will require substantial investments in staff recruitment in areas of primary education, and in infrastructure, e.g. by having collections of relevant learning equipment that needs to be easily available to students (some of which can require much space), and by designing primary school classrooms so that students can be trained effectively and realistically.

8. The Department needs to carefully consider the consequences of having a PhD programme in education, as this means investing considerably in supervision expertise and capacity in the field of education. Given the current staff situation, this means that much more staff experienced in these areas needs to be recruited in order to be able to offer a PhD programme that is in alignment with international standards.

Please √ what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
2.1 System and quality assurance strategy	Partially Compliant
2.2 Quality assurance for the programmes of study	Partially Compliant

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3. Administration
(ESG 1.1, 1.3, 1.6)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: Non-compliant
3:   Partially compliant
4 or 5: Compliant

Quality indicators/criteria		
3. Administration		**1 - 5**
3.1	The administrative structure is in line with the legislation and the Department's mission.	4
3.2	The members of the teaching and administrative staff and the students participate, at a satisfactory degree and on the basis of specified procedures, in the management of the Department.	4
3.3	The administrative staff adequately supports the operation of the Department.	5
3.4	Adequate allocation of competences and responsibilities is ensured so that in academic matters, decisions are made by academics and the Department's council competently exercises legal control over such decisions.	5
3.5	The Department applies effective procedures to ensure transparency in the decision-making process.	N/A
3.6	Statutory sessions of the Department are held and minutes are kept.	N/A
3.7	The Department's council operates systematically and autonomously and exercise the full powers provided for by the law and / or the constitution of the Department without the intervention or involvement of a body or person outside the law provisions.	N/A
3.8	The manner in which the Department's council operates and the procedures for disseminating and implementing their decisions are clearly formulated and implemented precisely and effectively.	5
3.9	The Department applies procedures for the prevention and disciplinary control of academic misconduct of students, teaching and administrative staff, including plagiarism.	5
3.10	The Department has appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints.	5

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3.11	Internationalization of the Department and external collaborations.	3

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Click to enter text.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The administration functioning of the Department is very effective. It is clear that the strong sense of commitment to students is a value based shared by the administrative team. There was ample evidence of very effect processes and procedures in place in all components of the administrative team. This is evidence of highly effective practice. As the Department develops and becomes clearer about it's strategic direction the demands on the team will change and diversify. In this context would be important for the team to be clear about what is working well for them and why this is the case in order to preserve and maintain current levels of effective practice All of the standards described above are address and often exceeded in the operations of the administrative team. The site visit provided the EEC with the opportunity to see some evidence of very innovative and agentic activity on the part of members of the team. It is refreshing to witness a team of people who are clear about what they need to do and who do it willingly and with good humor.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

1. The overall positive culture and commitment to students evident among the team
2. Evidence of proactive and innovative approaches to different tasks associated with different roles within the administrative team.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

We recommend mapping the Departments international networks in the field of Education

Please select what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
3. Administration	Compliant

4. Learning and Teaching
(ESG 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.9)

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

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: Non-compliant
3:   Partially compliant
4 or 5: Compliant

Quality indicators/criteria	
4. Learning and Teaching	
4.1 Planning the programmes of study	**1 - 5**
4.1.1	The Department provides an effective system for designing, approving, monitoring and periodically reviewing the programmes of study.	3
4.1.2	Students and other stakeholders, including employers, are actively involved on the programmes' review and development.	1
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).	N/A
4.1.4	The programmes of study are in compliance with the existing legislation and meet the professional qualifications requirements in the professional courses, where applicable.	N/A
4.1.5	The Department ensures that its programmes of study integrate effectively theory and practice.	1

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

4.1.2: There is no evidence of active involvement of students and other stakeholders in the field of education, including employers, in programme review and development. And advisory board is noted in the organization chart but does not yet exist. The evaluation revealed a lack of systematic mechanisms to incorporate external feedback into teaching and learning decisions.

4.1.5: The integration of theory and practice in programmes of study is insufficient. Practical components and courses (including school experiences) are not effectively embedded into the

curriculum, potentially limiting students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings.

4. Learning and Teaching

4.2 Organisation of teaching		1 - 5
4.2.1	The Department establishes student admission criteria for each programme, which are adhered to consistently.	4
4.2.2	Recognition of prior studies and credit transfer is regulated by procedures and regulations that are in line with European standards and/or international practices.	5
4.2.3	The number of students in the teaching rooms is suitable for theoretical, practical and laboratory lessons.	4
4.2.4	The teaching staff of the Department has regular and effective communication with their students, promoting mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship.	5
4.2.5	Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process.	4
4.2.6	The teaching staff of the Department provides timely and effective feedback to their students.	4
4.2.7	The criteria and the method of assessment as well as the criteria for marking are published in advance.	5
4.2.8	The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.	N/A
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.		

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

This is a new Department in the School of Education and Sciences which has been applied for simultaneously in addition to two new taught programmes, namely the BA Primary Education and the Doctorate (PhD) in Education. Additionally, two existing programmes are also intended to be included in the new Department. These are the MA Special and Inclusive Education and MSc Pedagogical and Teaching Adequacy.

The proposed new Department appears to have an effective system for designing, approving, monitoring, and periodically reviewing programmes of study based on established institutional

processes across other departments. However, certain areas require improvement in monitoring processes and aligning program updates more dynamically with trends in the multiple subfields within education as well as student feedback. The intended learning outcomes, course content, assignments, and final exams have been aligned in the study guides with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The programmes demonstrate academic progression. The student admission criteria are established and clear, ensuring transparency in student selection and enrolment. As reflected in the application, recognition of prior studies and credit transfer appear to follow standardized European and international procedures, with clear policies ensuring smooth academic mobility. Class sizes are appropriate. There are processes in place to reflect that teaching staff maintain regular and effective communication with students. Student-centred learning is articulated as a priority for the Department. There is room for improvement in consistently applying innovative teaching methods in the proposed education programmes. Timely and effective feedback is generally provided across existing programmes and would likewise be expected to extend to new programmes and a new department. The general assessment criteria and methods are communicated.

Strengths
A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

1. There are well-defined student admission criteria, transparent assessment methods, and effective communication between students and faculty.
2. Class sizes are appropriate for both theoretical and practical courses.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

1. The absence of structured input from educational stakeholders (students, experts in the field of education and educational research, teachers, school principals, children, parents), limits the relevance and responsiveness of programme updates. A formal mechanism for gathering stakeholder feedback and incorporating it into teaching and learning should be established.
2. Programmes lack adequate practical components, such as internships, field experiences, and hands-on projects, potentially limiting the application of theoretical knowledge in real-world settings.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
4.1 Planning the programmes of study	Partially Compliant
4.2 Organisation of teaching	Compliant

5. Teaching Staff *(ESG 1.5)*

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: Non-compliant
3:   Partially compliant
4 or 5: Compliant

Quality indicators/criteria	
5. Teaching Staff	**1 - 5**
5.1	The number of teaching staff - full-time and exclusive work - and the subject area of the staff sufficiently support the programmes of study.	1
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.	1
5.3	The visiting Professors' subject areas adequately support the Department's programmes of study.	1
5.4	The special teaching staff and special scientists have the required qualifications, sufficient professional experience and expertise to teach a limited number of programmes of study.	2
5.5	The ratio of special teaching staff to the total number of teaching staff is satisfactory.	N/A
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.	N/A
5.7	The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching staff is sufficient to support and ensure the quality of the programme of study.	4
5.8	Feedback processes for teaching staff in regard to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.	5
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies. 5.1; 5.2; 5.3; 5.4 The lack of alignment between the research profiles, expertise and teaching experience of staff and the domain education is at the core of these low scores and all of the low scores are explained by this. It is important to point out that the expertise and scholarly standing of the staff is not the issue here, on the contrary, in each of their fields they are very accomplished, this significant shortcoming is solely derived from the lack of explicit alignment with education of most of the staff in the Department Click to enter text.	

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Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

The staff are very committed to their work and to ensuring the highest quality of student experience. They are also deeply committed to the academic integrity of their programmes. This commitment to quality was a very strong message from the leadership of the University, the School and among the broader team itself. Currently there are two programmes linked to the Department. Both of these programmes are distance learning programmes and are both at masters level. There is expertise evident within the staff in in relation to both of these programmes and the focus and content of both align well with some of the current staff in the department. However, more broadly in terms of staff expertise and as stated in the BA primary review, there are several issues that need to be addressed to ensure that the department can deliver on this commitment to high quality. Currently, within the team, there is a clear lack of alignment between the relevance of the qualifications and expertise of most of the staff with the field to education as experienced in schools at both primary and post primary levels. As the cohort of students on the current programmes are already qualified and in the workplace there is a better fit between some of the expertise among the staff and the overall programme outcomes of the current two programmes. When we looked beyond this current profile of students, the EEC could not identify the level of expertise in education that would be required to grow and develop an education department that could provide programmes along the full continuum of teacher education.   The number of the teaching staff with experience and or backgrounds in education is not at the required level to support a full suite of programme in study in education. The research and publication profiles of most of the staff are not in the field of education. In this context, it is difficult to see how staff research and teaching will align. It became clear from the discussions during the site visit that an overall appreciation of the complexity of teacher education and all its component parts were not adequately explored by the staff. There is some evidence that in the deliberations on the PhD, the broad sensibility of what a PhD entails is well appreciated, and this appreciation contributed to the thinking behind the PhD proposal. This is present in the general sense but not as it applies to educational research. However, reflecting on this type of engagement with an area should provide a sense of the type of engagement that is required when considering a more substantial move into the provision of a broader range of education degrees.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

1. The commitment to quality in terms of programme and student outcomes
2. The ambition for the future of the Department among the team that has yet to be fully articulated

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

1. The level of expertise among the staff in relation to is a notable gap in the current profile of staff
2. A more proactive approach to ensuring greater dispositions among the team towards education as applied to teaching and children and young people

3. The development of a strategic plan that will outline how the current staff can be supported to develop research and teaching that aligns more readily and explicitly with the domain of education
4. A strategic plan for future recruitment to address gaps in expertise and capacity.

Please √ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
Teaching staff number, adequacy and suitability	Non Compliant
Teaching staff recruitment and development	Non Compliant
Synergies of teaching and research	Non Compliant

6. Research
(ESG 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6)

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2:   Non-compliant
3:   Partially compliant
4 or 5:   Compliant

Quality indicators/criteria	
6. Research	**1 - 5**
6.1	The Department has a research policy formulated in line with its mission.	1
6.2	The Department consistently applies internal regulations and procedures of research activity, which promote the set out research policy and ensure compliance with the regulations of research projects financing programmes.	4
6.3	The Department provides adequate facilities and equipment to cover the staff and students' research activities.	4
6.4	The Department has the appropriate mechanisms for the development of students' research skills.	3
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.	3
6.6	The Department ensures that research results are integrated into teaching and, to the extent applicable, promotes and implements a policy of transferring know-how to society and the production sector.	1
6.7	The Department provides mechanisms which ensure compliance with international rules of research ethics, both in relation to research activity and the rights of researchers.	2
6.8	The external, non-governmental, funding of research activities of teaching staff is similar to other Departments in Cyprus and abroad.	3
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.	4
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.	

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6.1 The new Department has a proposed research policy in place based on established practices, however, it lacks proper implementation and alignment with a mission in the field of education. There are no clearly defined long-term strategies or action plans that effectively support research development to reflect a Department of Education.

6.2 The application does not show evidence to ensure compliance with ethical standards in educational research, in particular for working with vulnerable populations.

6.6 There is limited evidence of how synergies across teaching and research will be attained and no formal policy ensuring that research informs curriculum development.

6.7 The proposed new Department lacks robust mechanisms to ensure compliance with international research ethics standards, both in terms of research conduct and the protection of researchers' rights.

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

Findings:

The department appears to value research and there is inclination to support research activity by staff members. This is clear in pursing the application for a PhD in Education. The new Department appears able to provide adequate research facilities and equipment, which effectively support the research activities of both teachers and students. While the Department outlines some opportunities for student research, there is no structured framework to ensure that all students actively engage in research skill development. Faculty members publish research in a variety of fields and at a variety of levels, however the volume and impact of publications in the field of education are not evident. The Department has set out an open-access policy. There are not clear mechanisms or processes evident for high-quality research dissemination. Other departments within the School have secured some external funding, but there is no structured approach to increase research grant applications in general or specific related to funding streams in the field of education. Internal funding mechanisms appear to be in place and follow European and international practices, ensuring a reasonable level of support for research activities

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

1. The institution and the School in which the new Department sits provides sufficient research facilities and equipment, effectively supporting faculty and student research activities.
2. The new Department has outlined internal funding mechanisms ensuring researchers receive some financial support for their projects.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

1. The staff do not have substantial publication research activity in the field of education or specifically in the field of primary education, or a record of attracting research income from private and public funding bodies in the field of education.

2. The new Department lacks a clear and structured research strategy, resulting in limited long-term planning and research development in the field of education.
3. There is no formalized approach to incorporating research findings into teaching, reducing opportunities.
4. The proposed new Department does not provide evidence of a robust system for ensuring compliance with research ethics standards in the field of education or monitoring external research funding regulations, which may impact the quality and credibility of its future research output.

Please √ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	*Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant*
Research mechanisms and regulations	Partially Compliant
External and internal funding	Partially Compliant
Motives for research	Partially Compliant
Publications	Non Compliant

7. Resources *(ESG 1.6)*

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2: Non-compliant
3: Partially compliant
4 or 5: Compliant

Quality indicators/criteria	
7. Resources	**1 - 5**
7.1 The Department has sufficient financial resources to support its functions, managed by the Institutional and Departmental bodies.	4
7.2 The Department follows sound and efficient management of the available financial resources in order to develop academically and research wise.	4
7.3 The Department's profits and donations are used for its development and for the benefit of the university community.	N/A
7.4 The Department's budget is appropriate for its mission and adequate for the implementation of strategic planning.	3
7.5 The Department carries out an assessment of the risks and sustainability of the programmes of study and adequately provides feedback on their operation.	3
7.6 The Department's external audit and the transparent management of its finances are ensured.	N/A
7.7 The fitness-for-purpose of support facilities and services is periodically reviewed.	N/A
Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies. Click to enter text.	

Findings
A short description of the situation in the Department based on evidence from the Department's application and the site - visit.

According to the application and associated documents along with the site visit discussion, the new Department appears to have sufficient financial resources to support its operations. The processes for the new Department appear to follow sound practices, allowing for academic and research development. Budgeting and spending procedures are well-defined and there is a process for systematic monitoring. While the budget for the new Department appears to be adequate for its mission, there is a lack of a clear and detailed strategic financial plan. The

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absence of a structured plan may hinder long-term financial sustainability and the alignment of financial resources with the future goals. The institution conducts feasibility studies to assess the sustainability of its programmes, but these studies were not made available to the ECC. A more robust risk assessment framework and continuous monitoring mechanisms would be helpful to ensure long-term viability.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

1. The new Department appears to have sufficient financial resources to support its academic and research activities.
2. The management of resources for the current programmes, other departments, and School appears to be effective.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

1. The new Department does not have a comprehensive long-term financial strategy, making it difficult to align resources with future expansion and development goals in the field of education.
2. In the medium term (3-5 years), the resources made available to the new Department should be reviewed frequently in line with the increase of student and staff numbers. Also, there should be planning for the provision of specific funding aiming to support and strengthen expertise in the field of education as well as the research environment (e.g., via esteem-bearing international presence).

Please √ what is appropriate for the following assessment area:

Assessment area	Non-compliant / Partially Compliant / Compliant
7. Resources	Compliant

D. Conclusions and final remarks

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks, which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the Department under review may be achieved.

There is a strong commitment in the School and in the University to set up this Department of Education Studies. There are a number of strengths identified in this report specifically in relation to the provision and allocation of resources and intended support for students. Overall, only three sub-areas were deemed to be fully compliant, seven sub-areas of partially compliance and six sub-areas non complaint. This profile of compliance would indicate that there are significant shortcomings that need to be addressed as detailed in the sections above in order for the Department standards to align with best practice in international Schools of Education.

E.   Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Name	*Signature*
Gerry Mac Ruairc	
Barbara Schulte	
Sarah Anderson	
Ms Agelina Aggelidou	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 01/03/25