



PresidentOffice/OUT/092017/2826

27th September 2017

Prof. Mary Ioannidou - Koutselini
Chairperson
DI.PA.E.
Lemesou Avenue, 5
2112 Nicosia

Dear Prof. Ioannidou – Koutselini,

Subject: Response to External Evaluation Report for the new program of study- Master's in Environmental Sciences at The Cyprus Institute.

We would like to thank the External Evaluation Committee for the comprehensive evaluation report on our proposed Master's program in Environmental Sciences. Below please find our response to the comments made and clarifications requested within the report.

1. EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING WORK- AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Organization of Teaching Work

In the proposed prospectus, there is insufficient information about English language requirements for the MSc program and it was unclear whether it is the same as for PhD program. Also, there was misleading information on the first degree requirement. For example, prospectus cites only "strong background in the selected field of study" while application for accreditation makes it more specific by emphasizing "strong background in natural sciences, mathematics or engineering". The external evaluation committee believes that the latter explanation is more explicit in comparison with prospectus. Tables on pages 27, 35, 43, and 49 of the prospectus provide confusing information on "ECTS" and "periods" and need revising.

The prospectus has now been revised to address the Committee's comments as follows:

- The typos the committee pointed out in the tables (Pages: 27, 35, 43, and 49) have been corrected.
- The English language requirements for the Master's program is the same as the requirements for our accredited PhD programs. This is now explicitly mentioned in the prospectus.
- The information in the prospectus about the Admission Requirements for undergraduate degree that the committee comments upon refers to the general admission requirements for our Master's programs. We have now amended the prospectus to also include the specific requirements for this program.



Teaching

The external committee wants to point out that the electronic support for individual courses should be provided using platforms such as “moodle”, “blackboard” or similar.

The small size and research-oriented nature of the Doctorate programs that the Institute currently offers did not warrant the operation of such a platform. Upon decision to also offer Master's degrees, we have indeed budgeted for an electronic support platform, which we plan to have fully installed and configured within 2018. Meanwhile, we have created dedicated webpages for each course that serve both as a source of information for the course including detailed curriculum, guidelines on assessment, lecture notes etc. and as communication platform between the instructor and the students taking the course.

Teaching Personnel

The External Committee points out that each individual course description should have the split of the assessment requirements and give explanation of marks (i.e. percentage of exams, assignments, quizzes, etc., along with the format of coursework).

The breakdown of the assessment requirements and explanation of marks for each course are included in the individual course descriptions. Additionally, on webpages dedicated to each course we now include details and guidelines on exams, quizzes, assignments, etc.

As many researchers who will be involved in the proposed program have little or no prior experience in taught courses at the Master's level, the Cyl should consider training these young academics.

We acknowledge that a number of researchers acting as course instructors lack substantial experience in teaching courses at the Master's level. Therefore, each and all the instructors that do not hold an academic position have been assigned a senior faculty member as a mentor and course supervisor.

4. ADMINISTRATION SERVICES, STUDENT WELFARE AND SUPPORT OF TEACHING WORK

Administrative Mechanisms

We point out only the lack of specific criteria for the continuous improvement of the efficiency of statutory administrative mechanisms.

The Administrative Committee of Cyl is responsible for the operation of the Graduate School. The Committee ensures that the administrative mechanisms (policies, procedures, workflows) that are in place are being followed and are effective. The Committee is responsible for making and monitoring the implementation of changes to these rules, regulations and mechanisms, when deemed necessary. Apparently, this was not clear in the application or during the on-site visit. This will be made explicit in the documents and website of the School.

Financial Resources

The external evaluation committee, has insufficient knowledge on the policy for internal funding distribution.



Our established policy stipulates that the funds earned by the school through tuition fees are distributed as follows: 40% to the Graduate School for funding its activities related to the program, 30% to the Cyprus Institute as overheads, 20% to the program for training activities, scholarships etc. related to the program and 10% to the student's research supervisors to be utilized only for training and research of the student. It has been the policy of Cyl up to now, to revert all the received overheads back to school for developmental purposes.

Kind regards,

Prof. Costas N. Papanicolas
President