

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 25/8/2025

Higher Education Institution's Response

- Higher Education Institution:
University of Cyprus
- Town: Nicosia
- Programme of study
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

Linguistics (3–8 Years / 240 ECTS,
Doctor of Philosophy, Conventional)

- Language(s) of instruction: **ENGLISH**
- Programme's status: Currently Operating
- Concentrations (if any):

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations

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.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area. The answers' documentation should be brief and accurate and supported by the relevant documentation. Referral to annexes should be made only when necessary.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area and by using the 2nd column of each table, the HEI must respond on the following:*
 - *the areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The institution should respond to the EEC comments, in the designated area next each comment. The comments of the EEC should be copied from the EEC report **without any interference** in the content.*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on separate document(s). Each document should be in *.pdf format and named as annex1, annex2, etc.*

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
1. Data on students numbers and performance at different stages should be more readily available to inform future planning and recruitment.	We will gladly follow up on this suggestion, especially since the data are all available for every PhD student and every PhD supervisor. Starting in the winter semester of 2025–26, it will be combined in a joint database with annual reports.	Choose level of compliance:
2. Specific research strengths of staff members should be highlighted more on the website and in recruitment areas.	We will take this into consideration for the next website overhaul in the winter semester of 2025–26 and share the EEC's suggestions with our colleagues from the other areas. We will also be clearer in future PhD announcements.	Choose level of compliance:
3. More formal processes can be established to document societal trends and the potential impact of work by PhD students in areas such as language policy, education for future planning and recruitment.	Currently, each PhD student prepares an end-of-year progress report (by June), which is signed by the supervision committee, then submitted to the Department's Postgraduate Committee and approved by the Departmental Board. More formal reports can be prepared, if needed. Most of our PhD students are employed, part-time and full-time. Also, our PhD students are typically involved in the research projects of their respective supervisors.	Choose level of compliance:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
1. Formalise research skills training and transferable skills development, through targeted workshops and minicourses.	Our students are encouraged to present their work at domestic and international conferences. This information is in their reports. One suggestion we could develop is to prepare a page on the departmental website to showcase PhD students' achievements. All information below is also available on our Facebook page. PhD students already have ample opportunities for ongoing training and professional development. The Teaching, Training and Translation Team (TTTT Lab) provides seminars and lectures every month, and the Cyprus Acquisition Team (CAT Lab) offers regular events as well. PhD students have opportunities to present their ongoing research project to our MA in TESOL or MA in TAAL students, too. Dr Karpava invites them to present their work during MA classes. The PhD students are involved in knowledge transfer activities, they gain presentation skills and get relevant feedback from discussion. Also, PhD supervisors put a lot of effort in supervision, meeting the students at least every two weeks and supporting them throughout all academic and social activities.	Choose level of compliance:
2. Consider aligning PhD thesis topics even more with the research expertise of staff/supervisors, to further enhance the quality of the PhD research and dissertations (and publications coming out of them).	At the PhD level, doctoral thesis topics are expected to be aligned with the research interests of the teaching staff. However, without funding and/or research projects, this can be difficult to implement other than by force (which we would rather avoid, among other things to keep drop-out rates manageable).	Choose level of compliance:
3. Organise more informal and formal activities (e.g. a monthly PhD meeting where also alumni can attend – either physical or hybrid) to enhance the sense of community among PhD	All activities are organised in the programme each semester. The PhD students are constantly informed about events. We will update our departmental website better with this information.	Choose level of compliance:

students in order to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation, increase theoretical and methodological cross-fertilisation between individual PhD studies, and improve study success.	For now, all past events can be viewed in the Facebook groups for the CAT Lab (www.facebook.com/groups/237641742946198) and the TTTT Lab (www.facebook.com/groups/281271006636272). We would also like to note that our PhD students do have ample opportunities for socializing with other students and academics (see above), both online and in person. If they cannot attend these events, it is due to their full- or part-time job obligations and schedules.	
4. Encourage qualified students to pursue article-based dissertations to increase their competitiveness on the job market.	This is an interesting suggestion which we will follow up with the Graduate School regarding policy.	Choose level of compliance:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
1. Make more use of (international) visiting staff or participate in (online) staff and/or student exchanges to widen the scope of expertise and experience.	See above on event opportunities. We do try additional activities with visiting teaching staff coming from our MA programmes (for which there is some limited funding).	Choose level of compliance:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
1. The Department should conduct a thorough review of the reasons students have dropped out with the aim of creating an 'early warning system' and a developing better ways to support students with different needs and external circumstances.	Since this information exists, we can prepare a streamlined document. Whether it will catch the peculiar situation in which we are in Cyprus remains to be seen (see also below). But we will share this information with our colleagues from the other sections in the first Departmental Board meeting of the academic year 2025–26 to develop a department-wide procedure.	Choose level of compliance:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
1. Create peer-mentoring schemes pairing new arrivals with senior PhD students.	This is an interesting suggestion which we will gladly begin to implement in the winter semester of 2025–26 with the new cohort of PhD students.	Choose level of compliance:
2. Implement follow-up surveys post-graduation to evaluate support effectiveness.	This practice already exists at UCY level for postgraduate students, but we agree that it would be good to implement it at Department level, which we will also begin in the winter semester of 2025–26.	Choose level of compliance:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
1. Templates used to record supervisions should be standardised across the programme.	This is another great suggestion. Dr Karpava already uses a template for her PhD supervision meetings and progress reports which we may implement wider (including as a suggestion to the other PhD programmes in the Department). With the new academic year 2025–26, this item will be put on the Departmental Board agenda and discussed, so that we can all agree to use a common standard for all.	Choose level of compliance:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Compliant
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Compliant
6.3	Supervision and committees	Compliant

7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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N/A

B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The PhD in Linguistics at the University of Cyprus is a solid and commendable programme. The conversations with staff revealed a deep commitment to doctoral education and a culture of close mentoring and collegial support. Supervisors demonstrated a strong awareness of their students' individual progress and challenges, and regularly went above and beyond their formal duties—sometimes continuing to support graduates well after completion of their degrees.	We would like to extend our deep gratitude to the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for this excellent evaluation of our PhD in Linguistics programme. We also thank the members of the EEC for their time and very useful feedback. The EEC's findings reflect our own views on the programme's quality and impact. From the feedback we received in the course of the EEC's visit, we gained tremendously and will systematise all relevant data pertaining to students' progress and employment outcomes.	Choose level of compliance:
Students and alumni expressed high levels of satisfaction with the academic quality of the programme, especially the supervision they received. They highlighted the accessibility and dedication of their supervisors and the intellectual freedom the programme afforded them. Some challenges were raised regarding the limited sense of community among doctoral students, which appears to be due to both internal constraints (such as limited dedicated physical space for PhD students) and external factors (students' work and travel obligations). Efforts have been made to mitigate this through research seminars and other initiatives, but the issue remains a concern for current students.	We are very glad to learn from an independent, outsider's perspective that our current, but also former, students are satisfied with the PhD programme, at least as concerns content, delivery, and support. We will of course continue to strive for excellence and improvement, though as the EEC rightly note, success does not lie exclusively in our own hands. The issue regarding office space concerns the Department overall, all post-graduate programmes. We do, however, have the individual lab spaces (TTTT, CAT), shared space in the department, and soon also more dedicated work space.	Choose level of compliance:
The PhD programme is staffed by highly qualified and internationally active scholars, and the Department has recently grown by two members since the last evaluation, strengthening its academic profile. The imminent	The imminent hiring, and hopefully others in the future, is of utmost importance to the Department, to all our teaching activities, and especially to the PhD in Linguistics programme.	Choose level of compliance:

hiring of a new faculty member in TESOL is expected to further broaden the programme's scope. While not all major areas of linguistics are represented—an understandable limitation given the department's size—there is a commendable diversity of research interests among staff, and several active research laboratories provide students with opportunities to engage in cutting-edge work.		
Despite facing several constraints, including the under-recognition of PhD supervision in the institutional workload model and the separation of academic offices from teaching facilities, the Department is delivering a coherent, rigorous, and high-quality doctoral programme. The physical and digital resources available to students are excellent, and support services are comprehensive. However, as the programme continues to grow, further investment in staff, facilities, and structural support will be essential to sustain and enhance quality.	It would indeed be great to have more recognition of working hours and effort involved in PhD student supervision. When we started inquiries with the university administration 15 years ago in 2010, the feedback was not promising and we left it at that. Attracting international students is, of course, an issue that concerns all postgraduate programmes at UCY. The subject of the doctoral programme is specialised and research-oriented. The Linguistics section is very selective and accepts only a number of students that it can manage based on the number of faculty members. At present, student intake is small but stable and allows the section to manage this workload. When the number of faculty members increases, the number of students will also increase.	Choose level of compliance:
With targeted improvements in student community-building, greater formalisation of stakeholder involvement, and continued institutional support, it has the potential to develop into one of the leading doctoral programmes in linguistics in the region.	We will do what we can to improve "student community-building" — for obvious reasons, however, we cannot comment on the aspect of "institutional support". As regards "greater formalisation of stakeholder involvement", see below.	Choose level of compliance:
Involvement and contribution of external stakeholders The application document provides no evidence of formal external	As will have become clear from our application, the Linguistics faculty are all very well connected in both informal but also formal networks	Choose level of compliance:

stakeholder involvement in the PhD in Linguistics programme's quality assurance, curriculum development, or alignment with labour market needs. During the onsite we consulted were alumni who were potential employers/stakeholders. In addition, individual staff members reported their active engagement in outreach to the wider community and organisations in Cyprus, reflecting an awareness of the programme's societal relevance. Despite robust internal quality assurance and compliance with European standards, the programme would benefit from more structured, ongoing engagement with external stakeholders, which would increase the potential to incorporate external expertise and ensure responsiveness to labour market developments.	internationally. Our diverse set of collaborators could, however, not be rallied to join the EEC's site visit, not even remotely, other than the two colleagues (who both have close ties to the Department). But generally, our PhD students have been involved in the work and activities of individual faculty members as well as the different activities our Labs are and were engaged in, such as COST Actions (continuously since 2009) and other international networks. Locally, they have access to the domestic societies CyLing (Linguistics) and CyTEA (TESOL) but international associations as well such as IATEFL.	
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C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Michalis Michael	Associate Professor, Dean of the School of Humanities	
Kleanthes K. Grohmann	Professor of Bilingualism, PhD in Linguistics Coordinator	
Phoevos Panagiotidis	Professor of Theoretical Linguistics	
Spyros Armostis	Assistant Professor of Linguistics	
Sviatlana Karpava	Assistant Professor of Linguistics	

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