

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: Date.

## Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
University of Cyprus
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **Programme of study  
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**  
**In Greek:**  
Μάστερ στις Τουρκικές Σπουδές  
**In English:**  
MA in Turkish Studies (2 academic years, 120 ECTS)
- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek with extensive use of Turkish and 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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
<p>1.1. We recommend the Department follow the guideline of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).</p>	<p>The Department has established an ad hoc Committee that provided concrete recommendations for the improvement of the method of the teaching of Turkish, especially in the first years. There has already been a preliminary discussion of the recommendations in the Department Board Meeting of 8 November 2023. According to the recommendations of the ad hoc Committee, the Department has decided to modify the courses TOM 106, TOM 107 and TOM 206 (Language Exercises I, II and III, offered in the first, second and third semesters) in a manner designed to improve the students' skills of understanding and speaking Turkish and to develop their communicative skills, thus establishing a better balance between the teaching of fundamental (grammar/theory) and practical (understanding/speaking/communicating/writing) courses. The change will be effective starting in September 2024.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>1.2. We recommend more use of the language laboratory, more advanced digital methods, better and more up to date technology to assist this aim.</p>	<p>After a decision of the University's Buildings and Grounds Committee of early November 2023, the Department has been allocated two rooms that will be appropriately modified to serve as Language Labs for issues regarding the didactics of Turkish as a Foreign Language and for preparing and testing of teaching and learning materials. The Language Lab has already</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	<p>been established as part of two research projects on the didactics of Turkish as a Foreign Language, which employs two PhD students of the Department.</p>	
<p>1.3. It would make more sense to have MA students specialize in either History/Politics or Language/Literature.</p>	<p>This is certainly the Department's long-term intention. However, under current circumstances, the Department's Master's Program does not attract enough students to sustain a program with specializations, as students in classes would probably be less than 5, which is the minimum number allowed by the University. It is expected that, with the introduction of the new Master's Program on Eastern Mediterranean Studies, currently prepared by the Department, we will direct History/Politics students there, so that we may be able to offer the current program as a Language/Literature Program.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>1.4. The Department may wish to change the language of instruction from Greek to English so as to attract more international students.</p>	<p>The majority of our master's students are locals. As this is a conventional program, conducted in person, in case of a language change, the Program will attract even fewer students than it currently does. The Department is now preparing a new Master's Program on Eastern Mediterranean Studies that will be offered online in English, in order to attract more international students.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>1.5. Certain information needs to be made readily available to students and the public. This includes pass rates and graduate employment information. Students could be more involved in activities collecting information about student progression and student</p>	<p>There are records of such data in the University's Academic Affairs and Student Welfare Service</p> <p>The Department Board has appointed two of its academic members as Alumni Liaisons, to collect data on current and former students. In this task, they may be</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

satisfaction and career paths of graduates.	assisted by the University's already existing Alumni Association. The Alumni Liaisons, will provide the data to the Department for further actions.	
1.6. The formation of an alumni association for the Department would be very helpful in providing such information.	The Department Board has appointed two of its academic members as Alumni Liaisons, to collect data on current and former students. In this task, they may be assisted by the University's already existing Alumni Association. The Alumni Liaisons, will provide the data to the Department for further actions.	

### Findings for MA Programme

The MA programme under evaluation is subject to quality assurance procedures. These procedures have a formal status operationalized by the IQA committee. Through the whole quality assurance procedure the students have the opportunity to be involved in the design and implementation of the programme through their representatives.

The MA programme is publicly available on the website and presents a clear view about the content, aims, and outcomes of the programme. The quality assurance system of the university is followed by the Department and adjustments are made when needed. Comparing previous reports with what we found on our onsite visit, the Department implements what is expected. Students and staff participate equally in the quality assurance processes and improvement of the programme. Academic freedom is guaranteed and necessary measures are taken to combat discrimination should it should occur. The MA programme provides the opportunity for students to be trained in the Department's areas of expertise including collaboration with their instructors. The programme is designed so that students progress through the programme by completing exams and assignments which correspond to the level of the programme and the ECTS. The proper evaluation processes are followed. The structure of the programmes meet the requirements of the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The programme is regularly monitored, taking into account the scientific progress and needs of the students. The Department follows the recommendations of the university regarding selection criteria and is adequately implemented. The main intended learning outcomes of gaining expert knowledge of Turkish History/Politics, Linguistics, and Literature are routinely met and students earn their qualifications. However not all information including pass rates is readily publicly accessible. During our meetings with the staff members we received limited statistical information about the students, including pass rates, student progression, and so on. We received primarily qualitative rather than quantitative information about the programme, which is to be expected.

### Strengths for MA programme



The Department rigorously follows the policies recommended by the university and immediately take actions to remediate any problems that arise. The programme of study is designed so that students fulfill the primary departmental outcome of producing graduates who are proficient in the Turkish language and experts in Turkish history, politics, and literature so as to meet Cypriot society's needs. The programme has a precise and well defined set of expected learning outcomes. The Department offers many public activities including cultural events which are enthusiastically attended by members of the public.

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations for MA programme

We recommend the Department follow the guideline of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). We recommend more use of the language laboratory, more advanced digital methods, better and more up to date technology to assist this aim. It would make more sense to have MA students specialize in either History/Politics or Language/Literature. The Department may wish to change the language of instruction from Greek to English so as to attract more international students. Certain information needs to be made readily available to students and the public. This includes pass rates and graduate employment information. Students could be more involved in activities collecting information about student progression and student satisfaction and career paths of graduates. The formation of an alumni association for the Department would be very helpful in providing such information.

## 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
<p>2.1. Students are burdened by having to specialize in History/Politics, Language, and Literature. It would be better training at this advanced level when students could choose a single path to specialize and deepen their specialist knowledge.</p>	<p>See above point 1.3.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>2.2. Assigning student-led discussion exercises would further develop students' communication skills in Turkish.</p>	<p>According to the recommendations of the ad hoc Committee, the Department has decided to modify the courses TOM 106, TOM 107 and TOM 206 (Language Exercises I, II and III, offered in the first, second and third semesters) in a manner designed to improve the students' skills of understanding and speaking Turkish and to develop their communicative skills, thus establishing a better balance between the teaching of fundamental (grammar/theory) and practical (understanding/speaking/communicating/writing) courses. The change will be effective starting in September 2024.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>2.3. Students have the opportunity to obtain financial assistance.</p>	<p>The Department employs two students from the master's Program every semester, giving them the opportunity to support themselves financially. Students may also work in university services, such as the Library or the Academic Affairs and Student Welfare Service. Moreover, the School of Graduate Studies allocates to the Department an amount of money, which the Department Council awards as</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>



	scholarships to deserving Graduate Students.	
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### Findings for MA programme

In comparison with the BA programme, we notice that the applied methodology is student-centred in the entire MA programme. Students work closely with their supervisors and other teaching staff in their papers and research, seminars, and colloquia. Assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Students find that professors are accessible outside classtime, giving supportive feedback, including them in their research, and actively involved in their professional development. Students are able to meet regularly with their professors.

### Strengths for MA programme

The teaching staff currently active in the MA programme use innovative teaching methods and a great variety of learning environments. Teaching staff collaborate well with students in research and application of theory and practice. We observed that at least one professor, for example, involves students in his/her own research. The theses students complete demonstrate mastery of either History/Politics or Language/Literature. Students have the opportunity to obtain financial assistance.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations for MA programme

Students are burdened by having to specialize in History/Politics, Language, and Literature. It would be better training at this advanced level when students could choose a single path to specialize and deepen their specialist knowledge. Assigning student-led discussion exercises would further develop students' communication skills in Turkish. Students have the opportunity to obtain financial assistance.

### 3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>3.1. We find it concerning that there are limited opportunities for higher-ranking members of staff to be given time off so that they can develop themselves professionally including doing what is necessary to be promoted to full professor.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, with only three members of the Department being permanent staff currently, nothing can be done at this moment, as at least two of the three are bound to serve as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson at any given time. With the promotion of current junior faculty, the situation will hopefully improve in the future. Towards the end of 2023, the University allocated a new position to the Department, which has just opened it on the subject of “Turkish Historical Linguistics”. The Department also needs the appointment of a new member as Special Teaching Staff. Meanwhile, the Curriculum is carried out to a certain extent, with the help of Visiting Professors or Special Scientists.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>3.2. We recommend staff be given the opportunities offered by Erasmus and other funding agencies to develop their networks, methodologies, and research and be given time away from teaching and administrative duties.</p>	<p>Members of the staff have been using the Erasmus Program for brief visits to foreign universities although not as much as they should. The Department and the Erasmus coordinator will encourage colleagues to take more advantage of the opportunities offered by the Erasmus Program.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>3.3. Prioritising the hiring of women in future hires would redress the balance where most of the students are female, and most of the teaching staff male.</p>	<p>The Department agrees that this is certainly desirable, and it should be promoted where possible.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
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### Findings for MA programme

Students regularly evaluate the teaching performance of their instructors and make an exit survey at the end of their studies. On the basis of recent hires, we can confirm that the process of recruitment works well; however the process takes too long that negatively impacts the stability of the Department. Staff hires are in accordance with the needs of the Department, equally split amongst the Department's three areas of teaching, helping it to achieve its objectives. We are unable to discern if the School offers opportunities for continued learning for staff members. Currently there are eight staff members equally divided across the disciplines which meets the aims and requirements of the Turkish Studies programme. However, as the Department's name is Turkish and Middle Eastern Studies, we find that the Department should be restricted to its current profile in Turkish studies, or add up to four staff members who could provide courses or a complete programme in Middle Eastern Studies.

### Strengths for MA programme

The MA programme operates with the same teaching number of staff is suitable for offering Turkish studies as the BA programme. That the majority staff members are full time offers stability for the programme. Visiting staff enhance the Department, offering new approaches to the programme. Certain publications and research projects of the staff are directly applicable in the courses of the teaching programmes. There is a good colleague to colleague relation and solidarity between the teaching staff members working collectively in favour of the Department, as we also observed in BA education. We notice that senior staff members help and encourage the junior colleagues both in teaching and in individual career development.

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### Areas of improvement and recommendations for MA programme

We find it concerning that there are limited opportunities for higher-ranking members of staff to be given time off so that they can develop themselves professionally including doing what is necessary to be promoted to full professor. We recommend staff be given the opportunities offered by Erasmus and other funding agencies to develop their networks, methodologies, and research and be given time away from teaching and administrative duties. Prioritising the hiring of women in future hires would redress the balance where most of the students are female, and most of the teaching staff male.

#### 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
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##### Findings for MA programme

Regulations concerning admission and progression are appropriate and regulated by law. Recognition for prior learning and experience is ensured according to regulation. Academic advisors monitor the progress of students and provide personalized guidance and support. The Department applies the principles of the LRC and the European Network and Information Centres. Student progression may be hindered by the fact that many students work while studying. Specific Admission requirements are available online on the website of the Department and are regularly updated.

##### Strengths for MA programme

All practices are transparent and published. The website is in English and Greek. There is a very good professor/student ratio which makes it possible for individual development of students. During onsite interviews, students evaluated the Department information available online very favourably.

##### Areas of improvement and recommendations for MA programme

No recommendations.

## 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
5.1. Moving to the new campus will be beneficial for students. Students will be afforded better teaching infrastructure. Students appear to be relatively unaware of what is available outside the Department.	<b>This is one of the Department's permanent demands, but it is an issue that lies entirely within the responsibility of the University. Recently, the Department has been informed that after the completion of a new building in the new campus (February 2024) all classes of the Department will be transferred to the new campus.</b>	Choose level of compliance:
5.2. The Department may wish to change the language of instruction from Greek to English so as to attract more international students.	<b>See point 1.4. above.</b>	Choose level of compliance:
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### Findings for MA programme

Teaching is undertaken on the old campus. Although the latest technology is used, the buildings do not support teaching of languages and lab work. On our onsite visit we were not shown the Department, classrooms, study spaces, computer labs, language labs, offices, or meeting rooms. We were only shown the library. Students are assigned mentors. Non-academic services are available to the students on campus.

### Strengths for MA programme

Students' mobility within and across universities is encouraged and supported. BA students often continue on to MA and PhD programmes, including in the same Department. Non-traditional students, including part-time and mature students, are also supported.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations for MA programme

Moving to the new campus will be beneficial for students. Students will be afforded better teaching infrastructure. Students appear to be relatively unaware of what is available outside the Department. The Department may wish to change the language of instruction from Greek to English so as to attract more international students.



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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



## 6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
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## 7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

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## B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
B.1. We suggest using more language laboratories, the most up to date learning technologies, and the best methodological approaches to teaching foreign languages to better support student learning of Turkish.	On the Department's Language Laboratory see point 1.2 above. Moreover, the Department will encourage language instructors to attend training on the didactics of Turkish as a Foreign Language.	Choose level of compliance:
B.2. We suggest a better balance between activities teaching grammar on the one hand, and practicing reading, writing and speech on the other.	According to the recommendations of the ad hoc Committee, mentioned above at point 1.1, the Department will modify the Curriculum, introducing courses designed to improve the students' skills of understanding and speaking Turkish and to develop their communicative skills, thus establishing a better balance between the teaching of fundamental (grammar/theory) and practical (understanding/speaking/communicating/writing) courses.	Choose level of compliance:
B.3. More generalisation at the BA level and more specialisation at the MA level, which is opposite the way the programmes are currently designed, would make more pedagogical sense.	See above, point 1.3.	Choose level of compliance:
B.4. The Department should analyse the cause of the high attrition rate at the BA level and take necessary measures to reduce it.	See the Form on the Undergraduate Program.	Choose level of compliance:
B.5. The Department can be encouraged to better track student progress through their studies through additional evaluation of the programme as a whole.	See above, point 1.6.	Choose level of compliance:
B.6. Members of staff should be freed from being overburdened by School administrative duties	See above, point. 3.1.	

that hinder their own career progressions.		
B.7. Moving to the new campus will enhance the learning and teaching environment of the Department and interaction with other staff, student and Departments.	See above, point. 5.1.	
B.8. Increasing the number of PhD students will enhance the learning environment of the Department.	See the Form on the Doctoral Program.	
B.9. It would be to the Department's benefit to encourage more international exchange among staff.	See above, point. 3.2.	
B.10. We suggest preparing statistical information about the job prospects and career patterns of alumni.	See above, points 1.5.-1.6.	

The EEC committee identifies the following key strengths:

- The staff of the Turkish and Middle Eastern Studies Department is fully committed to their important educational mission.
- Overall the Turkish and Middle Eastern Studies Department plays a very important intellectual and non-academic role on the island of Cyprus and in the international academic community.

The EEC committee identifies the following key areas for improvement:

- We suggest using more language laboratories, the most up to date learning technologies, and the best methodological approaches to teaching foreign languages to better support student learning of Turkish.
- We suggest a better balance between activities teaching grammar on the one hand, and practicing reading, writing and speech on the other.
- More generalisation at the BA level and more specialisation at the MA level, which is opposite the way the programmes are currently designed, would make more pedagogical sense.
- The Department should analyse the cause of the high attrition rate at the BA level and take necessary measures to reduce it.
- The Department can be encouraged to better track student progress through their studies through additional evaluation of the programme as a whole.
- Members of staff should be freed from being overburdened by School administrative duties that hinder their own career progressions.
- Moving to the new campus will enhance the learning and teaching environment of the Department and interaction with other staff, student and Departments.
- Increasing the number of PhD students will enhance the learning environment of the Department.
- It would be to the Department's benefit to encourage more international exchange among staff.

We suggest preparing statistical information about the job prospects and career patterns of alumni.



### C.Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
<b>Theocharis Stavrides</b>	Associate Professor, Department Chair	
<b>Börte Sagaster</b>	Associate Professor, Department Vice-Chair, Graduate Program Co- Ordinator	
<b>Michalis N. Michael</b>	Associate Professor, Dean of the School of Humanities, Undergraduate Program Co- Ordinator	
<b>Gulshen Sakhatova</b>	Assistant Professor	
<b>Nikos Moudouros</b>	Assistant Professor	
<b>Ahmet Yıkık</b>	Lecturer	
<b>Zenonas Tziarras</b>	Lecturer	

Date: 18 December 2023

