

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 28.1.2026

## Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
University of Cyprus

- **Town:** Nicosia

- **Programme of study**  
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)

**In Greek:**

Γλώσσα, Γραμματισμός και Εκπαίδευση [6-16  
ακαδημαϊκά εξάμηνα, 240 ECTS, Διδακτορικό (PhD)]

**In English:**

Language, Literacy and Education

[6-16 academic semesters, 240 ECTS, Doctorate  
(PhD)]

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek and/or 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)

### Strengths identified in the report

- Clear Academic Identity: Well-defined focus on sociocultural and linguistic approaches distinguishes the programme while addressing contemporary research needs.
- Comprehensive Structure: Multiple assessment checkpoints (comprehensive exam, proposal, dissertation) ensure systematic progression and quality control.
- Flexible Delivery: The 6-16 semester timeframe and bilingual instruction accommodate diverse student needs while exemptions recognize prior learning.
- Aligned Learning Outcomes: Intended outcomes are specific, measurable, and directly aligned with EQF doctoral-level descriptors.
- Strong Research Culture: Active faculty research portfolios and international publications create an authentic doctoral research environment.
- Robust Quality Assurance: Systematic QA framework with external committee participation ensures objective evaluation and continuous improvement. (the general recommendation concerning the QA policy documents notwithstanding)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
ECTS Consistency: Documentation shows inconsistency between 240 and 273 ECTS. Recommendation: Clarify and standardize ECTS requirements across all programme documents.	For the PhD program 240 ECTS are needed and this has been clarified in all the relevant documents.	Choose level of compliance:
Examination Guidelines: Limited detail on comprehensive examination format and preparation. Recommendation: Publish detailed guidelines specifying format, scope, criteria, and retake policies.	Although the department allows a degree of autonomy for the way each program organizes and structures its comprehensive exam, in our program we offer clear guidelines to the students at the beginning of the semester with the readings they need to study and the way the final paper will be structured. Taking into consideration the discussion we had with the evaluation committee, we will add criteria and publish more details on our website by the end of the spring semester 2026 (May).	Choose level of compliance:
Progression Pathways: Timeline between milestones requires clearer articulation. Recommendation: Develop visual timeline showing typical progression through key milestones and decision points.	This was a useful suggestion, and we will add the milestones and the progression pathway for the PhD on our website and on the relevant material we use for promoting the program by the end of March 2026.	Choose level of compliance:

<p>Research Methods: Specific training opportunities need clearer specification. Recommendation: Detail research methods courses and workshops available within the programme.</p>	<p>In the program the students have one core module on research methodology (choice between Discourse Analysis and Quantitative Methodology). Students are also encouraged to take the course Qualitative Methodology if they have not completed it in their Master's degree. In addition, students have to attend specific seminar that focus on analyzing and presenting data on language and literacy. For this year our first planned seminar will be in February 2026 as part of the International Conference on Literacy organized in Nicosia.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>Supervision Framework: Limited documentation on supervisor allocation and expectations. Recommendation: Publish supervision guidelines including selection procedures, meeting frequency, and issue resolution mechanisms</p>	<p>This was also a useful remark by the committee. Although there is a specific supervision schedule (meet online or in person every month with each PhD student) and also have group meetings (twice a semester) with all the PhD students, this is not visible in the description of the program. We will add more details on the supervision schedule and the way the comments are recorded on our website by the end of the academic year (August 2026).</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

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

Strengths identified in the report

- This is a highly rigorous programme. By the time students come to complete and defend their thesis, they have been tested many times in high stakes exams.
- The topics of the theses that were shown to the panel reflect highly innovative research which clearly links to the outcomes of the programmes.
- Diverse Assessment Methods: The requirement for multiple assessment methods ensures comprehensive evaluation of student learning while reducing over-reliance on single assessment approaches. The 60% cap on final examinations encourages formative assessment and continuous learning.
- Experiential Learning Opportunities: The incorporation of organized interventions in out-of-class contexts demonstrates commitment to authentic learning experiences connecting theory with practice in real-world settings.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Consider revising the format of the Comprehensive Examination, based on reviewing examples of practice elsewhere, if this is permissible within institutional regulations.	The format of the Comprehensive Examination follows the guidelines as these are determined by the department, i.e. it is structured as a written examination or written work at the end of the semester and each programs provides the content for the students. Following the discussion we had with the evaluation committee we will discuss this matter at the department in one of the upcoming departmental boards meetings (April 2026).	Choose level of compliance:
Consider introducing a maximum word count – even as a guideline – for PhD theses on the programme.	In all the UCY PhD programs there is no maximum words, only a minimum of 10000 words. For our program we are suggesting a maximum of 100000 words (excluding appendices) and we will forward this matter at the Postgraduate Committee of our Department by March 2026.	Choose level of compliance:
Consider developing a clearer description / infographic of the PhD examination process that makes clear to those outside the institution how this takes place and what the role of external examiners is.	The various steps of the PhD are clearly stated at the guidelines for a PhD on the Graduate school’s website. There is a specific description for the examination process for the PhD ( <a href="https://www.ucy.ac.cy/graduateschool/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/2025/11/POLITIKI-3MELIS-5MELIS-ENGLISH-FINAL-10.11.2025.pdf">https://www.ucy.ac.cy/graduateschool/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/2025/11/POLITIKI-3MELIS-5MELIS-ENGLISH-FINAL-10.11.2025.pdf</a> ).	Choose level of compliance:



	We will use this information to develop an infographic which will be included on the program's website.	
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:

### 3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Strengths identified in the report

- Staff provide excellent role models for students to become engaged in rigorous, critical and socially responsible research practice.
- Supervising faculty possess deep contextual knowledge of students' research contexts enabling them to advise them sensitively.
- Supervising faculty are familiar with the department's MA graduates (who so far represent the PhD students' intake) enabling them to tailor course content, recommendations for research training to different student needs.
- The programme leaders' collegial relations (and collaborations in the MA programme) with the other academics of the department allow for short-route access to additional expertise if necessary for an individual student's progress.

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The course team in conjunction with HoD and faculty leadership might want to think about a strategy to ensure sustainability of the programme in case one of the two coordinators is not available to teach core courses. Planning on having one external academic offering a core elective once in each 2-year cycle	Longterm course planning will take into consideration any predictable circumstances that hinder one of the coordinators from teaching core courses. Other staff (e.g., members of the Department's special teaching personnel with relevant expertise) or external academics may cover for such absences, subject to budget availability.	Choose level of compliance:
A regular and on-demand offer of short-term workshops by external academics in order to complement local expertise, especially in research approaches such as Action Research or DesignBasedResearch.	In the pre-covid era we had regular visits and workshops for invited speakers from abroad on topics covering methodology and content on Language, Literacy and Education (e.g. Professor Helen Simons University of Southampton on Ethics and Ethnography, Professor Siegel, Columbia University on Literacy Methods and Content Literacy). We are planning to restart planning these workshops aiming intensive seminars focusing on methodology, pending budget availability and we will make our planning for next year by the end of this semester (May 2026).	Choose level of compliance:
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:



ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ  
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
----------------------------------	----------------------------------	-----------------------------

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

Strengths identified in the report:

- Admission procedures are well-structured and appropriately implemented.
- Prospective students receive clear and comprehensive information regarding admission requirements and processes.
- Students report high levels of satisfaction with the support provided by programme staff.
- Candidates' academic qualifications are duly recognized by the Cyprus NARIC authority.
- Student certification is systematically organized and executed, with clear monitoring of doctoral progress throughout the programme.
- Tuition fees are reasonably priced and not considered excessive, with flexible instalment options available to ensure that students are not financially overburdened

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
English language proficiency does not appear to be formally aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). It is recommended that a minimum level of B2 be officially required.	The program adapts and follows the <a href="#">admission requirements as set directly by the UCY Graduate School</a> . These include the “certification for “Very Good Knowledge” of English at level B2-C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)”.	Choose level of compliance:
Expanding the use of technology and offering distance learning opportunities is recommended to enhance the programme’s attractiveness, particularly for prospective students with time constraints or those residing in distant locations.	Given limitations set by the CYQAA on the provision of online courses in on-site programs and the program’s commitment to experiential learning, the program team will encourage instructors to consider how they can flexibly utilize online platforms and alternative course planning to make the program more appealing.	Choose level of compliance:
Additionally, since some students have expressed challenges in meeting deadlines, the adoption of AI-based tools, especially those designed to summarize extensive	AI-powered tools have been incorporated in course assignments over the past year, as per the <a href="#">University’s guidelines</a> . Students will be encouraged to follow these	Choose level of compliance:



academic materials, is advised to aid time management and boost learning efficiency.	guidelines and utilize AI-powered tools, as per each assignment's requirements.	
--	---	--

## 5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Strengths identified in the report:

- Full exploitation of learning platform for provision of learning materials.
- In the taught part of the PhD, materials reflect intellectual history of the course topics but are also responsive to recent developments. Provision of data and small research tasks for experiential learning of different research approaches and their signature techniques.
- A very dedicated team of academic and administrative staff within the Department ensures that students are supported.
- A range of institutional services exist for students in need of support.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Prioritize the move of the Department of Education to the main campus in order to improve accessibility for students. Try to provide bookable desk space for PhD students who need quiet work away from family commitments.	The move of the Department of Education to the main campus is scheduled to take place in the immediate future, pending the completion of relevant construction works.	Choose level of compliance:
Ensure that the departmental administrative vacancy is filled on a permanent basis to maintain the high-quality support to academic staff and students.	An official decision for a 3 <sup>rd</sup> permanent departmental administrative position is in a place and approved by the University. The position is expected to be filled directly by the Human Resources services of the University, following official hiring procedures and subject to budget availability. To emphasize the urgency, the program team has forwarded the EEC's recommendation for inclusion in the agenda of the next meeting of the Department Council in February 2026.	Choose level of compliance:
Were there pressure or desire to grow the programme, additional resources and/or a redesign of the intensity of the programme would be required.	The PhD program attracts a sufficient number of students each year and given our resources in members of academic staff we are planning to maintain the current numbers (an average of 2 new PhD students per year). Since in the following two years we will have new members of staff joining the department, we will re-evaluate these numbers in the next two years.	Choose level of compliance:
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:

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

Strengths identified:

- A unique programme that combines a multidisciplinary approach to literacy and language arts .
- Highly rigorous and in-depth preparation for PhD completion.
- Very dedicated staff and experienced supervisors who are leading in their research fields.

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Consider introducing a maximum word count for the PhD thesis.	This will be forwarded for discussion in the postgraduate departmental committee by March 2026.	Choose level of compliance:
Consider introducing an annual review of PhD student progress in the years between the proposal defence and the doctoral defence.	This will be implemented beginning with the new academic year 2026-2027, following a decision by the Postgraduate School for annual evaluation of the PhD students.	Choose level of compliance:
Make the composition of the PhD defence panel and process clear for stakeholders outside the institution (e.g. through an infographic).	An infographic will be added on the program's website by the end of spring semester (May 2026).	Choose level of compliance:
Consider ways to foster a stronger community among PhD students, if there is a desire to do so (e.g. through provision of space).	At the end of 2026 we will be moving to a new building in the campus and we are planning to have more space for getting the PhD students together for presentations and seminars. We have also group PhD meetings at least twice each semester.	Choose level of compliance:
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:

## 7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations <b>by EEC</b>	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:

## B. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>This is clearly a rigorous programme with high quality outcomes. It benefits from dedicated staff with strong international reputations and linkages. Students and stakeholders speak warmly and positively about the programme. The programme has potential to grow and attract international students, given the possibility to write a thesis in English, however in its current form, given the intensity of the programme, the resources in place, and the feel level, this does not seem possible. As the programme is delivered by a small group of staff who all enjoy strong relationships and to a small group of students who know each other and the staff well, there is quite a lot of implicit knowledge. Where the programme to grow, this would need to become more explicit (e.g. language requirements). The programme has a unique selling point of focusing on literacy and language arts in a multidisciplinary and novel way – the many excellent examples of student work, dissertations and activities as well as the testimonials of graduates and stakeholders all attest to this and could be used to position the programme in a more competitive way.</p>	<p>We would like to thank the committee for their time, their valuable feedback and their positive and encouraging comments. We found the discussion we had together fruitful and productive, and we will implement their comments and suggestions (as described on the previous sections) for improving aspects of the program.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
		<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

C.

**D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives**

Name	Position	Signature
Elena Ioannidou	Associate Professor, Program Coordinator	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	

**Date:** 28.1.2026

