

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 26/03/2025

Higher Education Institution's Response

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

In Greek:

Μάστερ στην Ποινική Δικαιοσύνη και Ανθρώπινα
Δικαιώματα

In English:

Magister Legum – LLM – Master of Laws in Criminal
Justice and Human Rights

- Language(s) of instruction: Greek
- Programme's status: New
- 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)

The Committee noted the following strengths:

- Being a relatively new Department of Law (only established in 2006 with law students admitted in 2008), there is an impressive track record of achievement.
- Good synergies between the legal sector and scholarship in the disciplinary area of criminal justice which further strengthen QA for this programme.
- Good level of stakeholders' engagement in the areas of criminal justice and human rights, with potential for future participation in curriculum design and feedback on the programme, particularly in what concerns the human rights elements.
- There are pockets of good academic practice observed in the delivery of the stream which could be considered for the future development of the programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
The QA system in place may benefit from more specific measures such as anonymisation of the assessments (wherever possible), and having a rubric in place for the assessments to further ensure high quality standards.	<p>The instructors and coordinator of the Programme are in favor of implementing anonymised marking of assessments and have already asked for guidance from central University services on practical means to implement this practice for marking of assessments, including through Blackboard.</p> <p>Regarding the rubric, the department has clear assessment criteria and guidelines included in the Handbooks of existing LLM programmes (in Greek), including a sample feedback form on the basis of relevant criteria, such as structure, bibliography, synthesis of arguments etc. Please refer to Annex I: Assessment Criteria and Rubric to review these as translated in English.</p>	Choose level of compliance:
Going forward, internal and external moderation processes should be more visible to ensure transparency.	Given the current University Policy (please refer to the link) of teaching load allocation, a single instructor sets the course content, assessment topics and marks the submitted assignment. Therefore, it is not feasible to have internal and external examiners acting as moderators for all marking. In light of the Committee's suggestion, in relation to borderline marks, the instructors intend to act as	Choose level of compliance:

	<p>moderators in each other's modules as per below: the instructor for Mobility of Persons in the EU will act as moderator for Environmental Law in Europe and vice versa. And the instructor for Business and Human Rights will moderate borderline grades for Gender and Human Rights and vice versa.</p>	
<p>In terms of the Admission Criteria, it would be beneficial to specify what the criteria are for EU applicants in line with Recognition of academic diplomas - Your Europe and The Lisbon Recognition Convention - ENIC- NARIC.</p>	<p>The admission criteria for all applicants refers to holding a relevant degree from a recognized university. To assure this, applicants who hold an LLB from Universities abroad must follow the procedures that Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (KY.S.A.T.S). KYSATS recognises qualifications, such as degrees, diplomas or certificates which are issued by recognised Higher Education Institutions or by institutions, the programmes of which have been educationally evaluated-accredited. The reference of evaluation for the recognition of titles awarded are the titles (degrees) awarded by public universities of Cyprus in the same discipline and the titles awarded by State Higher Education Institutions of Cyprus. Its noted that KYSATS is a member of the NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centres), ENIC (European Network of National Information Centres on academic recognition and mobility) and MERIC (Mediterranean Recognition Information Centres) networks. Internally, the Post Graduate School as well as the the LLM coordinator are checking through the selection process that applicants degrees are in line with the KYSATS regulations.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	<p>Language requirements are clearly stated. For good knowledge of English, which is an admission requirement, IELTS of at least 6.5 is required (applicants holding an LLB from UK or English-speaking universities are exempted).</p> <p>Pre-application consultation opportunities are commonly given for applicants to clarify recognition-related queries.</p>	
As the programme is delivered in Greek, with some materials delivered in English, it would be advisable to also include within the admission criteria the desirable knowledge/proficiency of “legal Greek”.	It is presumed that LLB holders meeting the high admission criteria of the programme have sufficient knowledge/proficiency of ‘legal Greek’.	Choose level of compliance:
Clear identification of KPIs (recruitment numbers, continuation, progression, awards, student satisfaction) to ensure a proper follow-up and monitoring of QA.	<p>The following KPIs are introduced to monitor QA:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Application Numbers: Total number of applicants each year (also indicating how they learnt about the LLM). 2. Enrollment Numbers (and faculty-to-student ratio): Total number of students enrolled in the master's program each year. 3. Retention Rate: Percentage of students who continue in the program from one semester to the next. 4. Course Completion Rate: Percentage of enrolled students who successfully complete the required courses. 5. Graduation Rate: Percentage of students who complete the program within the expected timeframe. 6. Diversity of Student Cohort: Representation of gender and nationality (Cypriot or Greek) within each cohort. 7. Student academic background: Percentage of students from UCY, private 	Choose level of compliance:

	<p>universities of Cyprus, Greek universities, UK universities, other.</p> <p>8. Student academic performance: average grade per course per semester.</p> <p>9. Event organization and participation: Number of events organized by the Department each academic year in the field of Criminal Justice and Human Rights and number of LLM students and alumni attending.</p> <p>10. Student Satisfaction: satisfaction score from students' exit surveys regarding their educational experience. A dedicated meeting of the Department reviews student satisfaction each year and introduces changes if needed.</p>	
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2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3)

The Committee noted the following strengths:

- A general strength of the LLM programme is that the intended learning outcomes support the need for students to engage actively with the teaching materials highlighting their need to develop analytical critical skills and thinking.
- Our general assessment of the programme is that it appears to support student-centred learning, teaching and assessment through interactive methods and a variety of assessment types, combined with tutorials with the aim to support students methodologically and substantively.
- Another positive aspect of the programme, is that there also seems to exist a well-functioning learning and teaching relationship where students also easily can get access to teachers for support in their learning.
- A strength of the programme is also the close link between teaching and practice where teachers organize training seminars and opportunities helping the students to expand their knowledge thus providing for a strong link between practical and theoretical studies. The existing formalised links and ongoing collaboration with external stakeholders makes it likely that students will benefit from stakeholder input in the development of their professional skills (eg through guest talks, collaborative projects, internships, work-based dissertations, extracurricular activities).
- There is also a strong linkage for students between teaching and research where students are often asked to be engaged in different research activities.
- In addition to the delivery of practice-oriented module content, students have been able to hone their critical research and writing skills, enabling graduates to continue with PhD studies following their LLM studies. In light of the expertise and international standing and networks of staff involved in the teaching of modules on the LLM Criminal Justice and Human Rights, the EEC is confident that research-led teaching will be delivered and equip students with relevant skills. Students' exposure to research and academic life is further increased by their involvement in research events.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
While students interviewed during the site visit gave positive feedback on the well-functioning learning and teaching relationship with members of staff, the LLM team should ensure availability for support in all students' learning to provide a level-playing field.	The ratio of teaching staff per academic intake is expected to allow for close support by staff to the students of the LLM. Also, the LLM programme will have a dedicated coordinator who will be available to answer questions and provide guidance overall. Finally, the tutorials supporting each module will address issues of methodology, familiarity with assessment methods, research/writing skills, contributing to levelling the playing field for all students.	Choose level of compliance:

<p>Although the secretaries of the Law Department confirmed their availability for dealing with student concerns, there does not seem to be a clear and transparent procedure for handling student complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning. We recommend that relevant rules and policies are adopted.</p>	<p>The University of Cyprus has a central 'Student Complaints Management Policy' in place, which was approved by the Senate on 16 April 2021. For the policy, please see Annex II: Student Complaints.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>The EEC could not confirm the existence of a formal procedure for appealing decisions on grades. The EEC recommends adopting clear rules and policies on this issue.</p>	<p>In accordance with the University of Cyprus' Postgraduate Studies Regulations,</p> <p>'the awarding of grades is the exclusive right of the faculty member. A change of grade by the faculty member is possible only in cases of an error and only with the written approval of the Chair of the Department and the Dean of the relevant Faculty, no later than 15 days after the announcement of the grades. If the change proposed by the faculty member is made later than 15 days, approval is required from the Graduate School Board. An exception is the change of grade for final year students where the change must be made no later than 3 days from the announcement of the grades.'</p> <p>However, in light of the Committee's suggestion, the matter will be brought to the attention of the University Committee on Rules and Regulations by Prof. Constantinides who is a member of the Committee in the next meeting of the Committee on 31 March 2025.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>While the grading system was provided (p 10 of the application), the EEC missed access to general criteria for assessment of</p>	<p>The department has clear assessment criteria and guidelines included in the Handbooks of the LLM (in</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

<p>the different examinations on the modules. The EEC recommends that such criteria are published prior to assessment and made available to the students.</p>	<p>Greek). Please refer to Annex I to review these as translated in English. The LLM Handbook is shared with the students at the start of the semester. The assessment criteria are also reminded to students by each instructor, which may adjust the criteria as necessary to the requirements of the specific module in the module's Syllabus at the start of the academic semester.</p>	
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3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

The Committee noted the following strengths:

- The teaching team of the proposed LLM Programme Sustainability and Human Rights is expected to deliver high quality research-led teaching, with colleagues complementing each other very well in terms of subject expertise.
- The extensive teaching experience of staff promises high quality teaching and adequate support for students to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme of Criminal Justice and Human Rights.
- All teaching staff suggested for teaching on the LLM programme has full-time employment which is adequate for ensuring the continuity and quality of the programme.
- Due to their significant collaborations and networks within the HEI, ministries and with external stakeholders in Cyprus and abroad, all teaching staff is likely to deliver teaching on the LLM Criminal Justice and Human Rights in a way that meets current societal and job market needs in the field.
- The staff members assigned to teach the relevant modules are also considered to be very competent and appreciated by the interviewed students, PhD students and stakeholders substantiating that they are well-qualified and suitable for teaching the suggested modules in the LLM programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
A general issue which is relevant for this programme is the quite limited number of staff available for teaching the modules. It is recommended that the Department has a clear contingency and recruitment plan to ensure that there is a sufficiently large pool of teachers that can teach on the programme.	The Department is currently in the process of recruiting two new members of staff: one on Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure and one on International Human Rights Law. Both are expected to be in the position to teach at least one of the LLM courses (Criminal Procedure and Evidence and Law of the European Convention of Human Rights respectively) if need be.	Choose level of compliance:
In terms of quality and development of the teaching staff, it is strongly recommended that supervision of LLM theses is properly recognised and credited to the supervising staff member in their workload allocation.	This is an issue that has been discussed numerous times at Department, School and University level with a clear position by the Department of Law in favor of recognizing supervision and marking of LLM dissertations towards teaching workload. Most lately, the School of Social Sciences and Education (under which the Department of	Choose level of compliance:

	<p>Law is included) adopted the following recommendations that have been forwarded to the Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs:</p> <p>A. Change in the Teaching Policy to allow co-supervision of undergraduate and postgraduate theses by faculty members and other teaching staff provided they hold a PhD.</p> <p>B. It is also proposed that the supervision of theses and dissertations be considered over a three-year period, so that it can be credited toward the teaching workload.</p> <p>Unless the policy at University level changes, there is no means for workload recognition for LLM supervision at department level, as the conditions for workload are determined by the law governing the University of Cyprus academic staff.</p>	
Another key issue here is gender parity as the suggested modules are all taught by male colleagues. It is strongly recommended by the EEC that future recruitment for the programme of coordinators and teaching staff prioritise female colleagues as long as they satisfy the criteria for the advertised position, going beyond positions of TA or second marker of dissertations.	The Department is currently in the process of recruiting two new members of staff: one on Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure and one on International Human Rights Law. It is expected that at the end of the recruitment process gender parity will be applied in relation to the academic excellence of the applicants. If a female colleague is hired, she will be asked to be involved in the LLM, by teaching one of the LLM modules and/or giving guest lectures on topics of her expertise.	Choose level of compliance:
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4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

The Committee noted the following strengths:

- A very positive innovation is the practice of having an academic advisor for each of the students which can support the student's progress in their studies.
- There exist clear rules on the awarding of degrees.
- All graduates receive a free Diploma Supplement in English language.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Admission criteria lack some clarity and transparency, in particular in respect of how they are applied with regard to non-Cypriot grades and prior qualifications. It is recommended that the rules on recognition of previous grades, studies and qualifications are made more transparent and accessible.	<p>Admission criteria are clearly stated and published with regards to non – Cypriot grades (Annex X). Additionally, the Department is flexible to recognize previous experience, especially for candidates that obtained their university degree more than a decade ago, thereby promoting lifelong learning. For such candidates, that may not meet the requisite level of degree grade, it's been taken to account their professional and other relevant experiences.</p> <p>Past experience has shown that a small number of legal professionals enriched the learning environment, particularly during the discussions in class.</p> <p>It is noted that it is the Department's practice to provide justification for rejection of LLM applications through the online application system of the University of Cyprus, thereby contributing to the transparency and clarity of admission criteria.</p>	Choose level of compliance:
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5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

The Committee noted the following strengths:

- **Library:** Students benefit from access to the University's excellent Learning Resource Centre Library Stelios Ioannou (awarded 3 star EFQM "Excellence Award"), providing books, electronic resources, workspaces and student training. The library meets various needs through group study rooms, "living-room" style reading areas, silent areas as well as traditional library spaces. Flexible working arrangements are facilitated by fully automated services, 24/7 access to some workspace, and the specifically developed app that indicates the location of requested resources and is available in Greek and English – relevant for this programme's target group of working students.
- **Skills development and employability:** The Law Department has to date achieved an excellent employment rate of its LLM graduates. Staff is committed to linking the delivery of substantive specialist knowledge with current developments in the field. For instance, students/graduates of the LLM stream Criminal Justice and Human Rights confirmed the successful inclusion of ongoing legal developments in the teaching. They also highlighted how useful their studies have been for their legal practice. Given the scope of existing collaboration with external stakeholders relevant for the proposed LLM Criminal Justice and Human Rights, the EEC is confident that there will be a fruitful and active engagement with current developments and existing needs for expertise. This should enable the teaching team to tailor their module content – and have a positive impact on the development and employability of graduates.

The EEC understands (based on our on-site visit discussions with staff) that resources have been provided to the LLM stream Criminal Justice and Human Rights, enabling colleagues to set up an institute for the advancing of criminal law studies and structured interaction with legal practice and ongoing law reform endeavours. The EEC understands that within this initiative additional support will be provided to students, regarding both their academic/research and writing skills as well as increasing their links to the world of legal practice and criminal law development within Cyprus.

- **Timetable:** Classes are held in the evening, which facilitates access to suitable teaching rooms and makes it compatible with work commitments of students – working students being the primary target group for this programme.
- **Student support:** Students are allocated advisers. Students highlighted the accessibility of staff for their learning/research needs. The availability of the Department's administrative team enables students to seek support regarding practical matters. Students have access to the University's welfare services.

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<u>Adequate staff recognition and gender-sensitive workload allocation:</u> The currently small number of staff and students allows for effective direct/informal access to support. However, the EEC recommends that the Department, Faculty and University revisit their	The Department is committed to gender equality, in accordance with the University's Gender Equality Plan (please refer to the link). Administrative committee work is allocated on the basis of overall administrative workload of each academic member, both within the department and in	Choose level of compliance:

<p>expectations and allocation of responsibilities to ensure that staff gets adequate credit and recognition for their contribution to student support. Moreover, the EEC recommends that the work allocation is gender-sensitive, enabling all staff to find time for their own professional development while meeting the Departments' teaching and student support needs as a community of colleagues. Both will be necessary to ensure the delivery of a high-quality and sustainable programme with a growing number of LLM students and their potentially varying needs (eg different educational and linguistic backgrounds and prior exposure to research and writing processes or practice-based assignments).</p>	<p>representing the Department to University Committees.</p> <p>While the small number of faculty members and the current gender imbalance may reflect an imbalance in allocation of responsibilities, the Department rotates the kinds and weight of responsibilities among faculty members to ensure a fair and balanced allocation of work overall.</p> <p>The allocation of administrative work is also adjusted to accommodate maternity and parental leave as well as following an equitable allocation of sabbatical leave.</p>	
<p><u>Support of research/writing skills development:</u> The EEC invites the teaching team to reassess systematically the way in which they support the development of research/writing skills of students.</p>	<p>Methodological aspects for carrying out academic research and developing writing skills will be covered by the tutorials offered to LLM students by PhD candidates at the department.</p> <p>Additionally, each instructor will spend some time during teaching to address methodological aspects relevant to the specific type of assessment assigned for each module.</p> <p>Moreover, the Institute for the advancing of criminal law studies will provide further support to students, regarding their academic/research and writing skills.</p> <p>Finally, following the recommendation of the Committee, the teaching staff will make available resources to students in a centralised database on methodology</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	issues. This can be set up as a separate 'module' with no ECTS credits, with its own dedicated Blackboard page and maintained by all teaching staff. The module will be available to students by September 2025,	
<u>Availability of administrative and practical support:</u> The EEC understands that increased secretarial support has freed academic staff from certain clerical responsibilities (eg social media, website) to allow them to focus on academic student support. The EEC recommends that adequate support is made available also for the needs of the new cohort of students. While there is experience with working students from running the existing LLM streams, additional needs might need to be met, eg if there is an increasing number of international students enrolling for the LLM Sustainability and Human Rights. This could include the needs for practical support regarding housing and transport. There also needs to be consideration and clear communication of what support is accessible for students during the evening, given that classes will be held outside normal office hours, without relying entirely on the good will of academic staff.	<p>The possible increase in number of international students enrolling for the LLM Sustainability and Human Rights is not expected to affect the availability of administrative and practical support for working students of the LLM Criminal Justice and Human Rights. Support is provided for international students through the following dedicated services of the University of Cyprus:</p> <p>International Students and Staff Office: providing comprehensive support and information to international students before, during, and after their arrival in Cyprus, including information on visa and residence permits.</p> <p>Academic Affairs and Student Welfare Service: providing support to students, including in relation to matters relating to housing.</p> <p>Past experience with working students attending classes during the evening has shown that there have been no practical problems that require the provision of specific administrative support by the Department. The LLM Handbook will include all information about support by the University that is accessible for students during the evening.</p>	Choose level of compliance:
<u>Electronic resources:</u> Students currently enrolled on the LLM stream Criminal Justice and Human Rights mentioned that	Technical problems affecting access to electronic resources do happen occasionally and are beyond the Department's capabilities. The University	Choose level of compliance:

they missed access to some electronic resources, referring specifically to Taylor & Francis and CUP resources. To the extent resources allow, we recommend revisiting the resource needs for the delivery of the LLM Criminal Justice and Human Rights as a stand-alone LLM programme, which aims to prepare students for legal practice as well as for further research in the field.

operates 'helpdesk' service that students can submit by email their calls for assistance. The Department has a dedicated Library coordinator who reports such problems to the Library as soon as they are brought to his attention. The staff of the Library are very experienced and efficient and address such problems with the publishers promptly. Cooperation with the Library throughout the years has been excellent. Other than that, the Department does not have a say in the handling of technical problems and logistics by the Library, which functions in a centralized manner. The Department has prioritized the resource needs for its LLM programmes in its budget programming, adding and/or updating such resources on a yearly basis.

6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

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

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D. Conclusions and final remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
<p>Given the relatively small number of colleagues and the current lack of gender equality in the department, together with the currently unknown number of students enrolled on this and other LLM programmes, the EEC considers it important to regularly revisit overall workload allocation. A gender-sensitive approach seems important to ensure the quality and sustainability of this and other LLM programmes (eg the implications of extensive dissertation supervision and LLM-related administrative responsibilities for staff capacity to cover other tasks within the department).</p>	<p>The Department is committed to gender equality, in accordance with the University's Gender Equality Plan (please refer to the link). Gender equality has been improved in the last few years of the Department's operation and ongoing hiring processes are likely to lead to a more gender-balanced membership of the department.</p> <p>Overall workload allocation is expected to considerably improve with the increase in the number of academic staff from 10 to 14 in the next academic year. As a result, current administrative responsibilities will be reviewed and reshuffled to ensure an even more equitable allocation of workload.</p> <p>Allocation of workload is already gender-sensitive. Service and administrative roles are assigned equitably among colleagues without gender bias.</p> <p>The assignment of a female academic member as Coordinator of the Programme's new LLM in Sustainability and Human Rights demonstrates the Department's commitment to promoting the development of female colleagues and assigning leadership positions in a gender-sensitive manner.</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>
<p>The EEC recommends regular exchange between staff to ensure that the overall purpose of the programme remains at the core of each module.</p>	<p>This is something that the teaching team does regularly, by exchanging syllabuses and course content prior to the start of each semester, and by holding regular meetings to exchange views and experience, including the co-organization of an event each semester with the Equality</p>	<p>Choose level of compliance:</p>

	Committee of the Cyprus Bar Association, which exemplifies synergies among the modules offered.	
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E. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Aristoteles Constantinides	Programme Coordinator	
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Date: 26 March 2025

