

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: Date.

Higher Education Institution's Response

- Higher Education Institution: Cyprus University of Technology

- Town: Limassol

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

In Greek:

Διδακτορικό στα Ναυτιλιακά

In English:

PhD in Shipping

- Language(s) of instruction: English/Greek
- Programme's status: New
- Concentrations (if any): N/A

In Greek: N/A

In English: N/A



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
Information related to the programme structure should be provided in a more clear, timely and transparent manner by means, for example, of a regularly-updated student handbook. A more clearly-documented and comprehensive learning path for students is recommended. For example, progression milestones, as well as any other student obligations/achievements should be formally recorded in Individual Study Plans with the supervisors. Information towards students/perspective Candidates of the overall expected duration (for completing 240 ECTS) prior to the commencement of the programme is necessary.	We have created a short handbook that explains the expectations of the PhD in Shipping, in accordance with the University rules and regulations. Please see Appendix 1 . We also include the general guiding document of a PhD in the Cyprus University of Technology, that also covers the required criteria for the PhD award.	Choose level of compliance:
Transitional arrangements for current students should be formally documented.	A formal document has been created to specify the clear and official procedure for students wishing to transfer into the new PhD in Shipping programme upon its approval. This document is in line with the official University rules University Rules of PhD Transfers in a PhD Programme within the University (Annex 6), adjusted for the specific needs of the Department of Shipping. This protocol has been primarily designed to facilitate the smooth transition of current students from the PhD in CFS. The procedures outlined in this document are also applicable to:	Choose level of compliance:

	• PhD students currently enrolled in other departments at the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT) who wish to transfer. • External PhD students from other institutions who seek to transfer into the programme. This document will serve as the definitive guide for all transfer requests. Please see Appendix 2	
Quality assurance processes need to be better documented. There is a need to follow a quality assurance mechanism that corresponds to a clearly-structured way of doing the associated work. For example, it is recommend to integrate a timeframe of committee meetings, as well as a formal records of meetings for all associated activities, including actions and results.	During the Postgraduate Committee Meeting held on June 6, 2025, a formal resolution was passed regarding the monitoring of PhD student progress. The Committee has decided that it is mandatory for the three-member Supervisory Committee to meet with their respective PhD students a minimum of two times per year, preferably in January and July, following the completion of terms. During these biannual meetings, the PhD student is required to present a comprehensive update on their progress over the preceding six months. This presentation must cover their advancements in taught courses, ongoing research, and literature review. Furthermore, the student must present a clear set of goals, objectives, and a corresponding action plan for the next six-month period. To ensure proper documentation and accountability, the minutes of these formal meetings must be signed by all participants, including the PhD student and all three members of the committee. These signed minutes will serve as an official record and a point	Choose level of compliance:

	of reference for the subsequent formal meeting. The Committee also noted that these two formal meetings represent a minimum requirement. More frequent informal meetings between the three-member Committee and the PhD student are encouraged to discuss research progress as needed	
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:

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
It is recommended to develop a document outlining the Criteria for Successfully Completion of a PhD. Ideally, this document should link with the Individual Study Plans (ISP) previously mentioned.	The Department is proceeding with the creation of a formal document that will outline the criteria for the successful completion of a PhD. This document will address both the taught component and the research component of the degree. It will be noted within this framework that while the completion of the taught component is based on objective measures (e.g. successfully completing all related examinations, coursework, presentations and attaining a Pass mark), the evaluation of the research part of the thesis is inherently more subjective and will be assessed according to the guidelines specified. (see following cell).	Choose level of compliance:
Explicit criteria for evaluation of success relating to the overall PhD effort should be made available to all parties, including students and external members of the PhD Committee.	We concur with the recommendation regarding the clarification of PhD completion criteria. However, any departmental guidelines must operate within the framework of the central University rules for the evaluation of doctoral programmes, which are available for review here The criteria for successful completion can be divided into two parts: Taught Component: A candidate must successfully complete 60 ECTS from taught courses, with exemptions applied where relevant. This is an objective requirement. Research Component: The official University requirement	Choose level of compliance:

	states that a PhD thesis must "significantly contribute to the subject." The interpretation of "significant contribution" is inherently subjective. For instance, a high-quality thesis may not have associated publications, while a weaker thesis might be built upon several journal papers. Therefore, while we cannot establish explicit, binding criteria for the research component, the Department strongly recommends the following to guide students toward a successful defense: • A minimum of two papers published or submitted for publication in relevant, internationally recognized journals. • A minimum of one paper or abstract presented at an international conference. All publications and presentations should fall within the same thematic area as the candidate's PhD thesis. To assist students, we provide an indicative, non-binding list of high-quality journals and conferences in Appendix 3. This list is also presented to students during the SHP 810 course "Introduction to Academic Research:". These recommendations serve as a benchmark for the expected quality and output of the research, but the final evaluation will rest on the thesis's overall contribution to the field.	
Candidates' participation in teaching activities is	To prepare our PhD candidates for a successful academic	Choose level of compliance:

recommended and should be well documented/clearly communicated; for this, the utilisation of the ISP could streamline all associated actions.	career, the Department strongly encourages active participation in teaching and supervision activities. Candidates have several avenues to gain valuable pedagogical experience during their studies. 1. Teaching Assistants (TAs) PhD candidates can apply annually for paid Teaching Assistant positions. This role allows them to gain experience by assisting in lectures, grading assignments, invigilating exams, or conducting laboratory sessions. Please note that eligibility for this role is subject to certain economic criteria, including a maximum salary threshold for part-time PhD students who are employed elsewhere. Currently, two of our PhD students are serving in this capacity. 2. Special Scientists (Course Leaders) In cases where a PhD candidate possesses exceptional expertise in a specific area, they may be appointed as Special Scientists. This advanced role involves taking full responsibility as the course leader for a module, typically at the undergraduate level. For example, one candidate with a legal background is currently leading a course in Shipping Law. 3. Thesis Supervision Assistance PhD students are also encouraged to assist in the supervision of undergraduate and postgraduate student theses. This opportunity is available when the master's or bachelor's thesis topic aligns closely with the PhD candidate's own research, providing an	
---	--	--

	opportunity to develop mentorship skills.	
Apart from the standard support that the designated supervisor will provide, it would be beneficial to establish additional line(s) for student/Candidate support, such as the designation of a “PhD representative”, or any other informal support network.	During the "Introduction to Academic Research" course, current PhD students were briefed on the available lines of candidate support. In a related development, a directive was issued in June 2025 to the cohort of students who are transitioning into the new PhD in Shipping program. Students were informed of this directive during the final session of the Introduction to Academic Research (evening of June 6th) , and were asked to appoint or elect their PhD representative, and inform the Department on their decision by the end of July. The key details and responsibilities of this role are as follows: • Term of Office: The representative will serve a one-year term, from September 1st to August 31st. A student may hold this position for a maximum of three terms. • Eligibility: The representative must be a full-time PhD student. • Departmental Meetings: Beginning in September 2025, the PhD representative will be formally invited to the informal Departmental Meetings when agenda items include doctoral studies. It is noted that these meetings are expected to become formal proceedings once the Department achieves	Choose level of compliance:

	autonomous status, anticipated within 2026. • Contingency for Absence: In the event of a long-term absence of the representative (e.g., a semester abroad, maternity leave, or extended sick leave), a temporary representative must be appointed by the PhD students to serve for the duration of the absence.	
Given the small size of the programme, access to courses provided by other institutions (i.e., through joined doctoral networks) should be enhanced. Funding for participation in research activities (such as conferences and training) should be available in a transparent and fair manner to students/candidates.	The current provisions for PhD students to engage in external academic activities and the department's long-term strategic goals for doctoral training are as follows: Part A: Current Opportunities for PhD Students 1. External Courses: Students are permitted to enrol in courses offered by other institutions, provided that two conditions are met: there is available funding to cover the costs, and the course is deemed to provide significant value to the student's research and development. 2. Research Activities (Conferences & Training): Participation in research-related activities, such as attending international conferences or specialized training schools, is highly encouraged. These opportunities are available to all students, subject to funding constraints.	Choose level of compliance:

	3. Available Funding Sources: To support these activities, several funding mechanisms are in place: ○ The student's Main Supervisor can cover costs, either in part or in full, from their personal research accounts. ○ The University provides a stipend of €1,000 to every PhD student upon the successful completion of their Comprehensive Examination. This amount can be utilized for purposes such as conference participation. ○ Students are eligible to apply for short-term mobility visits to Universities abroad through Erasmus. There is a dedicated Erasmus International Mobility Office at the University that can arrange such visits and facilitate planning and networking. ○ Students may also apply for additional funds through various competitive calls announced across the University. Part B: Future Plans for Doctoral Education	
--	---	--

	The Department of Shipping has ambitious long-term plans to enhance its doctoral program. Key future objectives include: • Participation in Doctoral Networks: We aim to actively participate in prestigious programs such as the Marie Curie Doctoral Networks. • Joint PhD Programmes: We plan to establish alliances with other leading universities to offer joint PhD degrees. The realization of these plans is a long-term goal that will require time and the strategic appointment of further faculty members to build the necessary critical mass and research capacity within our Department.	
--	---	--

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Formal guidelines for PhD supervisors should be created. Less experienced PhD supervisors should be given the opportunity for additional training and further developing their mentoring skills.	The Postgraduate Committee has prepared the following guidelines to ensure high-quality PhD supervision and to provide robust support for supervisors, particularly those with less experience. To foster professional development, the Department strongly encourages junior faculty members to participate in any available training opportunities related to PhD supervision, such as those provided by the University or the European University of Technology (EUT+). In addition to external training, the Department has established an internal mentoring procedure to support junior staff. Within this framework: • Senior Staff are appointed as mentors to their junior colleagues. • As part of their role, mentors are expected to actively advise their mentees on best practices and methods for improving their supervision skills. Finally, to ensure that every doctoral candidate benefits from experienced oversight, the Department has a mandatory structural requirement: for each PhD student, at least one member of the three-person supervision committee must be a	Choose level of compliance:

	senior staff member (Associate or Full Professor).	
A more effective way of managing the PhD supervisor workload should be introduced, for example formally designating an upper limit to the number of students/candidates under supervision.	Following discussions at the Department level and a formal decision by the Postgraduate Committee on June 6, 2025, the Department will implement a Credit System to guide and balance PhD supervision workloads. As the University does not set a central maximum limit on the number of PhD students per faculty member, the Department is establishing the following framework as a strong recommendation. The Credit System is defined as follows: • Main Supervisor: Allocates 1 credit per student. • Co-Supervisor (Member of the Three-Member Committee): Allocates 0.5 credits per student. Recommended Maximum Workload: • Junior Faculty (Lecturer / Assistant Professor): A recommended maximum of 3 credits. • Senior Faculty (Associate / Full Professor): A recommended maximum of 5 credits. Faculty members who wish to exceed these recommended credit limits must submit a formal request for permission to the Postgraduate Committee. The request must include a detailed explanation outlining how the	Choose level of compliance:

	additional workload will be managed effectively without compromising the quality of supervision.	
For the time being the programme shows primarily an internal focus; it is recommended to consider mobility opportunities for staff and students.	This section outlines the current mobility and networking opportunities available to both staff and students, acknowledges existing limitations, and details future strategic plans for enhancement. Part A: Current Opportunities While acknowledging the point raised, several mobility and networking mechanisms are currently in place: • For Faculty: Staff members have access to various opportunities for networking. They can use funds allocated to their personal budgets for networking visits abroad or utilize existing Erasmus+ agreements for short-term academic visits. Furthermore, the Department's invited seminars series is strategically designed to facilitate networking with leading academics from around the world. • For Students: Students also have the option to undertake short visits through Erasmus+ agreements. Such an activity is currently being planned to take place in the fall of 2025, for one of the active PhD students with a short visit to Dublin City University for research collaboration. However, we recognize that mobility is less	Choose level of compliance:

	feasible for our part-time PhD students who are concurrently employed in the industry. Part B: Future Strategic Plans The Department has long-term plans to significantly expand these opportunities. Future goals include: Participation in Doctoral Networks: We aim to engage with prestigious international programs, such as the Marie Curie Doctoral Networks. Establishment of Joint PhDs: We plan to form strategic alliances with other universities to offer joint doctoral degrees. Achieving these ambitions will require time and the deliberate building of a critical mass through the appointment of additional faculty members to our Department	
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:

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
A harmonisation effort in relation to issuing calls for PhD candidates should be considered.	The University issues two fixed calls for PhD candidates annually across all Departments and Schools. The typical timeline is as follows: For September Start: Expression of Interest Request (Internal Deadline): The University Student Service requests departmental input, typically in February (e.g., Feb. 21, 2025). Advertisement Period: Vacancies are advertised from early March. Application Deadline: Mid-April. For January Start: Expression of Interest Request (Internal Deadline): Typically in September. Advertisement Period: Vacancies are advertised from early October. Application Deadline: Mid-November. Departmental Procedure for Managing PhD Calls To proactively manage our contributions to these calls, the	Choose level of compliance:

	Department has established the following internal process: Postgraduate Committee Meetings: The Postgraduate Committee will hold dedicated meetings to decide which PhD positions will be issued for the upcoming cycle. Meeting Schedule: These meetings are scheduled to occur approximately one month prior to the University's internal deadline for expression of interest. This corresponds to: - One meeting in January to prepare for the September intake. - One meeting in early September to prepare for the January intake. Enhanced Dissemination: Following the committee's decision, the Department will ensure further dissemination of the approved calls through its own channels, including social media, websites, and professional networks.	
Programme should consider online teaching and recording as an alternative to physical presence, especially when students are absent.	In response to the recommendation that the programme should consider online teaching and recording as an alternative to physical presence, particularly for student absences, we can confirm that steps are already being taken to integrate these modalities.	Choose level of compliance:

	Current and Near-Term Implementation: - The mandatory course "Introduction to Academic Research" has already been successfully delivered in a hybrid format, which included options for live online participation and access to lecture recordings. - A similar hybrid approach has been proposed for the second mandatory course, "Topics in Shipping," which will run for the first time from September to November 2025. Constraints and Future Developments: - It is important to note that the existing MSc courses, which PhD students can take as electives, must be offered in a physical-only format as per their current accreditation. - However, the new MSc programme, which is expected to receive accreditation in 2025, has been designed with hybrid courses. Upon approval, these flexible hybrid courses will also be made available to all PhD students, significantly increasing the options for remote and asynchronous learning.	
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:



--	--	--

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
A dedicated portal, utilised for the dissemination of relevant information to the programme should be considered.	We are currently in the process of redesigning the University's main webpages and Intranet. Once this is finished, we will have a new, dedicated webpage for our PhD programme and a portal for current students to find announcements. Until the new systems are live, we are using the Moodle page for the "Introduction to Academic Research" course to communicate with all active PhD students. As all students are registered for this course, it serves as our main channel for providing important information about the programme. Any announcement in the portal is automatically sending an e-mail notification to the students.	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:

6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
Effective management of the supervisors' workload should be formalised (refer to previous sections for further recommendations).	Addressed in previous section (3)	Choose level of compliance:
It is worth considering integrating workshops that are dealing with themes like communication skills, philosophy of science, paper writing, qualitative methods, intellectual property, data management etc., to support the students/candidates during their overall PhD effort.	Several of these topics are already addressed in the course SHP810 - "Introduction to Academic Research", which covers communication skills, philosophy of science, intellectual property, and data management. In addition, qualitative research methods are included in the compulsory course SHP 820 - "Research Methods", scheduled for the Autumn term (September to November 2025). The University also regularly offers short workshops on academic writing and communication skills, which are advertised to students and strongly encouraged as supplementary learning opportunities	Choose level of compliance:
The requirements and prerequisites for completing a PhD should be clearly defined, transparent, and well-structured from the beginning. This ensures that students fully understand the academic expectations and can plan their studies effectively.	Please see previous sections (2,3) on this.	Choose level of compliance:
A well-organized curriculum, including both mandatory and elective courses, should be made available on-line in advance. Course availability per semester, along with specific dates and times, should be provided ahead of time to allow students to create a structured academic plan.	Following the approval of our program, we plan to publish the taught component requirements on our website, which will include four compulsory courses (SHP 810,820,830, 850 and four electives offered at our postgraduate programmes). However, as the program is still pending approval, we are	Choose level of compliance:

	currently unable to display this information on public webpages. Regarding course availability, elective offerings will depend on the semester in which they are scheduled (Autumn, Spring, or Summer), in alignment with the ongoing restructuring of the MSc program. One of the four compulsory courses, Seminars, runs throughout the academic year, although students will be registered in either the Autumn or Spring term, not both. Topics in Shipping will consistently be offered in the Autumn term to accommodate MSc students who may wish to take it as an elective during their third semester. The remaining two compulsory courses SHP810 – “Introduction to Academic Research” and SHP820 – “Research Methods” will be scheduled based on student numbers. Our intention is to offer Introduction to Academic Research during the first semester of study, and Research Methods in the second semester.	
A clear roadmap of course requirements should be provided, so that students can make informed decisions about their research focus, workload distribution, and time management.	Please see previous sections.	Choose level of compliance:

7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
N/A	N/A	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
The overall status of the programme under evaluation is considered by all members of the EEC as satisfactory. The expertise of staff is ensuring that high academic standards are maintained. The development of the programme with an established university is ensuring that facilities, procedures and resources are available and adequate.	Thank you, no comments or actions from our side on this.	Choose level of compliance:
It is viewed as a strategic advantage that the programme provides a response to the needs of the industry and also helps to promote an important sector for the Cypriot economy. At the same time, the programme supports the strategic vision of the host university.	No comments from our side. Moving forward, we aim to strengthen our collaboration with both local and international industry partners and actively explore opportunities for Industrial PhD fellowships funded either directly by the Industry, or through collaborative programs funded by local funds (for example, through the Research & Innovation Foundation call for PhD in Industry)	Choose level of compliance:
The size of the programme ensures adaptability and flexibility to meet the needs of forming PhD effective researchers within the domain of shipping. However, as the programme grows, its size and available resources and the limited formal structures currently in place may be viewed as a risk.	We acknowledge this as a potential risk; however, we note that recruitment efforts are already underway, with one position currently in the process of being filled. Additionally, the University has expressed its commitment to supporting our Department with further faculty appointments in the coming years, which we believe will ensure the necessary academic resources are in place. Regarding formal structures, we appreciate the feedback and have already begun implementing relevant changes, as outlined in previous actions. Furthermore, the Programme will undergo regular reviews as part	Choose level of compliance:

	of our quality assurance processes, taking into account feedback from current students, external stakeholders, and academic partners.	
It is recommended that from now on emphasis should be placed on documenting and formalising further procedures and criteria necessary for the delivery of the programme. More guidance is available in the previous corresponding sections.	The Department thanks the EEC for this recommendation. We have duly taken this into consideration and we are in the process of establishing formal procedures to ensure the effective and consistent delivery of the programme in the coming years.	Choose level of compliance:
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Choose level of compliance:

C.

D. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Thalis Zis	Assistant Professor, Co-ordinator of the PhD Programme	
Photis Panayides	Professor, Co-ordinator of the Department of Shipping	
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: 26/06/2025

