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Καθ. Μαίρη Ιωαννίδου - Κουτσελίνη

Πρόεδρο Διοικητικού Συμβουλίου

Φορέας Διασφάλισης και Πιστοποίησης της Ποιότητας της Ανώτερης Εκπαίδευσης (ΔΙ.Π.Α.Ε.)

(Υπόψη Κυρίου Ανδρέα Παπούλα)

Γωνία Κίμωνος και Θουκυδίδου

1434 Λευκωσία

(Με ηλεκτρονικό Ταχυδρομείο και το Χέρι)

ΘΕΜΑ: Διαπανεπιστημιακό Διδακτορικό Πρόγραμμα PhD in Human Rights, Society and Multilevel Governance ((a) University of Padova (b)University of Sydney (C.) University of Zagreb (d) Panteion University and Social and Political Sciences)

Αγαπητή Κυρία Ιωαννίδου – Κουτσελίνη,

Παρακαλώ όπως βρείτε συνημμένα την απάντηση στην έκθεση εξωτερικής αξιολόγησης του διαπανεπιστημιακού διδακτορικού προγράμματος PhD in Human Rights, Society and Multilevel Governance ((a) University of Padova (b)University of Sydney (C) University of Zagreb (d) Panteion University and Social and Political Sciences), σε σχέση με την αίτηση για πιστοποίηση του από το **Χειμερινό Εξάμηνο του Ακαδημαϊκού Έτους 2017-2018**. Παρακαλούμε επίσης όπως η λήψη της απόφασης για την πιστοποίηση του Προγράμματος ληφθεί στην επόμενη Σύνοδο του Συμβουλίου στις 03 – 04 Ιουλίου 2017.

Παραμένουμε στη διάθεση σας.

Με εκτίμηση

Καθ. Edna Yamasaki Πατρικίου

Αντιπρύτανης Ακαδημαϊκών Υποθέσεων



UNIVERSITY *of* NICOSIA

SCHOOL OF LAW

**DOCTORAL DEGREE (PhD) IN HUMAN RIGHTS, SOCIETY
AND MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE**

REPLY TO THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

**Odysseas Christou
Program Coordinator**

**Nicosia
2017**

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I. Introductory Note

We refer to the Report of the external evaluation committee for the evaluation-accreditation of the program of study: 'Doctoral Degree (PhD) in Human Rights, Society and Multi-Level Governance,' which was prepared following a lengthy on-site visit at the University of Nicosia by the members of the committee.

We wish to thank the external evaluation committee for the professionalism they showed during the execution of their duties. The on-site visit at the University of Nicosia by the committee and the detailed discussion of all issues pertinent to the doctoral degree under evaluation, led to a fruitful discussion between the members of the committee and the official representatives of the University and faculty members of the program. The discussion proved to be extremely helpful due to the expertise of the members of the committee and their willingness to share their suggestions and recommendations for further improving the program. The demanding set of questions allowed us to elaborate on the philosophical and pedagogical foundations of the program and expand upon the content of the application form.

During the on-site visit, we provided the committee with a detailed Report on the adherence of the program to the Guidelines for Doctoral Degree Programs Issued by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (DIPAE) which was evaluated also by the committee.

We have assessed and reviewed carefully the external committee's report. We note that the report is extremely positive, with the program receiving a perfect score in 78 out of 104 applicable evaluation criteria (an exact 75 percent of all criteria) and a perfect score in many entire categories of criteria related to the structure of the programme, its quality assurance, its international dimension, its connection with the labour market, its administrative mechanisms, and – most significantly – a perfect score in the section on the quality criteria for doctoral programmes. This amounts to an average score of 4.62/5.00 which is a sign that the program constitutes a very good practice in the field and it is, as the committee notes, an "innovative, well-articulated and adequately resourced program."

We consider that the recommendation of the external committee, in view of the above, is clearly that the program should be accredited by DIPAE. We also note that the programme is already being offered by the other partner universities and we will join the programme in the upcoming academic year pending the conclusion of the accreditation process.

Having said the above, we have seriously taken into account all recommendations and suggestions of the external committee for further improving the new doctoral programme and will refer to them below. We note at the outset that we consider the suggestions of the external evaluation committee as very helpful and we have thus tried to incorporate them to the widest extent possible.

II. Positive Comments made by the Committee

We have selected highlights of the positive comments which are quoted below:

- p. 5: "...the proposed PhD has sound and solid foundations and the potential to succeed."
- p. 5: "It could form an important part of the University's expanding research portfolio."
- p. 5: "The staff are ideally placed and eminently well qualified to make a success of the programme."

- p. 7: "...[the] PhD programme should make a significant and valuable contribution to the University's core research activities. It ought to do much to raise the academic profile of the institution as an internationally renowned centre of excellence in research."
- p. 8: "...the institution's processes with regard to administration, student welfare and support of research degrees are robust."
- p. 10: "...the proposed PhD programme is well designed, with clear and coherent aims and learning outcomes, good management and mechanisms of delivery, and, above all, designed and delivered by qualified, committed and enthusiastic academic colleagues."
- p. 10: "...the new programme is well integrated in the University's and the Law School's strategic development plans, and increases the Law School's potential to become an important intellectual hub in the relevant fields of research."
- p. 10: "...the proposal is clear, precise and sufficiently thought through with the relevant resources in place for a successful delivery."

III. Recommendations by the Committee

We address the suggestions/recommendations of the committee for further improving the program below in each relevant section.

1. Effectiveness of teaching work-available resources

We note the extremely positive evaluation by the committee of all relevant aspects of the organisation of teaching work and resources of the program, and most especially of the academic staff associated with it.

1.1.1: The committee notes that admissions criteria are consistent with other prestigious universities offering programmes of a similar nature. It recommended that the university should adopt and publicise very clear entrance requirements, in terms of the class of degree required, in the near future. The committee further recommended that the 6.5 IELTS requirement should apply as a minimum to the writing component of the test.

Response/Action: We agree with the recommendation and will ensure that the programme webpage will include a specific tab on admission requirements. We have now amended the admission requirements to provide that the class of degree required will be a 2:1 upper second-class honours or equivalent. We have further integrated the recommendation on applying the 6.5 IELTS requirement as a minimum to the writing component. We attach as **Appendix A** the revised admission requirements.

1.1.3.4: The committee recommends the introduction of a minimum number of supervision sessions consistent with international standards.

Response/Action: The minimum required is one session per academic semester as per the internal doctoral regulations of the university, as well as the documentation of the session and the submission of the relevant form to the programme coordinator and subsequently to the Office of the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research that oversees the coordination of all doctoral programmes of the university. This seems to be consistent with international standards as indicated during the accreditation visit.

1.1.4.1: The Committee recommends the creation of designated PhD student workstations with desks and computer facilities allocated to each student, in addition to the general designated area available to doctoral students.

Response/Action: We concur with the recommendation and the decision has been made to commit to the provision of such workspace for the upcoming academic year and then to plan ahead for future incoming students for subsequent years in order to maintain this commitment.

1.1.4.2: With regard to the use of resources which are available to students, the Committee notes that the students with whom they met were unclear about how to secure home access to electronic resources.

Response/Action: The university library publishes an online guide to the necessary procedure for off-campus access which can be found at: <http://www.library.unic.ac.cy/howto/off.html>. We will ensure that student induction at the time of acceptance emphasises such information to both students and supervisors so as to provide them with the necessary research tools that are available for their use. In addition, such information will be posted on the Moodle page of the programme by the coordinator so that both students and supervisors will be made aware of it. Lastly, we will incorporate training material made available by the library staff for the effective use of the university's resources.

1.1.10: The committee notes the inappropriate weight of doctoral supervision in the teaching allocation of academic staff, especially given the intellectual rigour of the task. They recommend that the task is more formally and transparently included in the workload allocation of academic staff in order to achieve a fair and equitable workload distribution.

Response/Action: The recommendation is welcome and will be discussed as an issue of general university policy.

1.2.1: The committee notes the need for more advanced and specific methodological training in preparation for the conduct of doctoral research such as empirical methodology.

Response/Action: It was noted during the visit that this is currently the case in practice. However, the committee's suggestion to include an additional course on research methods as an elective part of the curriculum similarly to training in legal methodology is well taken. We attach as **Appendix B** the syllabus of the course on research methods suggested by the committee, which is already offered by the School of Law at the postgraduate level. A similar recommendation is made in the general comments on section 3 with regard to the specific training on research ethics. We confirm that the university currently offers training on research ethics which take place at university level. We will ensure that such training is available also to students of this specific program. Such training is also included in the course syllabus that is included in Appendix B referred to above.

1.2.5: The Committee recommends that each student should be formally required to present their work to each other at least on an annual basis and also in other contexts including, for example, an annual research presentation day attended by academic staff and national and international conferences.

Response/Action: The recommendation is received favourably, and is one to which we already adhere for the most part. The School of Law has instituted a practice according to which doctoral students in the PhD Programme in Law present their work at a research seminar attended by academic staff but is also open to the public on an annual basis. Our intention is to extend the practice to the doctoral programme under accreditation as well. In addition students are expected to present their work at national and/or international conferences and before the Academic Board.

2. Program of study

We note that the committee evaluates the learning outcomes of the program as appropriate and that this section has also received very high grades as a whole including the evaluation with perfect scores in the areas of purpose, objectives and learning outcomes, quality assurance, international dimension, and connection with the labour market.

2.2.2: The committee's primary concern in this area is about the breakdown of ECTS. The program allocates 60 ECTS per year and the end product at the conclusion of the first year is a 5,000-word research proposal. The committee argued that the credit allocation to this output is excessive, since additional activities expected are not reflected in the credit point allocation.

Response/Action: The suggestion is well taken; we will ensure that both internal and external documentation of the programme specifies the significant research milestones associated with student progress, such as the preparation of a comprehensive literature review within the first year, as well as the formulation of the philosophical and methodological framework for further research, in addition to the research proposal. It is reiterated here that the usage of the research proposal as a milestone does not regard it as a sufficient criterion for the 60 ECTS allocation but as a specific examination point of student progress. During the on-site visit the committee accepted that if these are included as milestones, then the allocation would be satisfactory.

2.4.5.1: see comments and response/action on 2.2.2.

2.4.5.6: see comments and response/action on 1.1.1.

2.4.7: The committee recommended providing more formal opportunities for student feedback in the form of regular evaluation of the assistance provided by their own supervisor and the program as a whole is welcome.

Response/Action: The recommendation is welcome and will be adopted.

3. Research work and synergies with teaching

We note the positive evaluation of this section as well and the high grades received.

3.1.1 and 3.1.7: The remaining recommendations in this area concern the ringfencing of staff research time and activities from the demands of other professional responsibilities.

Response/Action: The recommendations are received favourably. In response to the recommendation, the University has committed that it will approve an annual budget for the program which will include also the related expenses (traveling and accommodation) for members of the academic board and students to attend the academic board meetings and will support the research activities of faculty of the program.

3.1.3: see comments and response/action on workstation allocation in 1.1.4.1.

4. Administration services

We take note of the positive evaluation of this section and the high grades received.

4.3.2: The primary recommendation made by the committee is the establishment of a dedicated scholarship that includes a stipend for living expenses so as to attract the right calibre of students and to provide specific amounts of funding.

Response/Action: The University has committed to providing one new full scholarship per academic year which is in line with the practice of other partner universities and which aim at attracting the right calibre of students. The University will consider as a matter of its general policy additional funds for

including a stipend for living expenses as suggested in case of high-calibre international students. Students will be informed in advance as to what financial aid they shall receive upon admission to the program.

5. Doctoral programs of study

It is important to note that the committee makes no additional recommendations in this crucial area for the quality assurance of doctoral programs other than to reiterate the usefulness of the program and to welcome its establishment. We also note that the program received a perfect score in this category of criteria that addresses specifically doctoral programs.

III. Conclusion

We thank the committee once again both for the positive and fair evaluation, as well as the constructive comments and suggestions and the fruitful discussion that we had with its members during the lengthy on-site visit. We also thank the committee for the time and thoroughness it dedicated to the evaluation of the program and for helping us improve the program through the suggestions made. We have already taken action and incorporated nearly all recommendations of the committee, with the exception of those which would need discussion and potential decision at Senate level as they are not applicable only to this specific program. The recommendations and evaluation of the committee are seriously taken into account for the further improvement of the program of study.

We are pleased with the fact that the committee stated in their own final remarks that they “have found the proposed program to be well designed, with clear and coherent aims and learning outcomes, good management and mechanisms of delivery and, above all, designed and delivered by qualified, committed and enthusiastic academic colleagues.” (p. 29) We consider this endorsement under the conditions of external peer review as a resounding vote of confidence in the programme and its potential for academic success.

Dr. Odysseas Christou
Programme Coordinator



Appendix A: Revised Admissions Requirements

As per the provisions of the Joint PhD Agreement, anyone who fulfils the requirements for the admission to a doctoral degree course according to the rules in force in any of the Partner Universities' country may apply for the joint doctoral degree programme. As a consequence of the admission procedures, each student is admitted to the joint doctoral programme in the Home University as well as in any of the other Partner Universities.

For the School of Law of the University of Nicosia, the criteria as they apply for the specific programme are as follows:

- (1) **Academic Qualifications:** An accredited Bachelor's degree in Law, Politics, International Relations, European Studies, Public Administration or a related field (LLB, BA or equivalent) in addition to an accredited Master's degree in Law, Politics, International Relations, European Studies, Public Administration or a related field (LLM, MA, MSc or equivalent). The degrees should be 2:1 upper second-class honours or equivalent. Copies of degrees awarded must be submitted as part of a complete application package.
- (2) **Application form:** Applicants must submit an application form for admission and enrolment to the programme. The application form requests general information about the applicant, their qualifications, and relevant experience.
- (3) **Curriculum vitae:** a complete CV specifying all academic and professional background and activities.
- (4) **Letters of Recommendation:** Applicants must obtain two recommendation letters from individuals who have known the applicant in an educational and/or professional environment. At least one of the recommendation letters must be from an academic institution where the applicant has studied previously.
- (5) **English Language Proficiency:** TOEFL (paper based test 600, computer based test 250, Internet based test 100) or IELTS 6.5. The IELTS 6.5 applies as a minimum requirement for the writing component of the test. For students who graduated from an English-speaking University, English language is not a requirement.
- (6) **Previous theses/dissertations and any published work of academic relevance (if any).**
- (7) **Initial Research Proposal:** An initial proposal (1,500 – 3,000 words) outlining the research topic, aims and objectives, research questions and proposed research methodology.
- (8) **Statement of Purpose:** Applicants are required to submit a comprehensive outline highlighting their academic and individual competencies and state why they believe they

are suitable for admission to the Programme, as well as their reflections regarding the expectations and value of the Programme for their personal advancement and career development.

- (9) Individual Interviews: The Department Doctoral Programme Committee will hold an individual interview of the applicant prior to deciding. The Department Doctoral Programme Committee, having examined the applicant's suitability against the entry criteria, having reviewed the application and interviewed the applicant, will determine his or her suitability and the appropriateness of their initial proposal.
- (10) In view of the limited number of applicants to be admitted to the programme, the Department Doctoral Programme Committee will decide on the basis of merit and by evaluating specific criteria who are the most suitable candidates to be admitted to the programme. The Committee will exercise its judgment, taking into account the overall quality, merit and feasibility of the research proposal, the quality of the prior research work of the candidate and the candidate's academic and other relevant qualifications as included in the curriculum vitae and the applicant's replies and performance during the individual interview.
- (11) In assessing the research proposal, the Committee will also examine the extent to which it corresponds with the objectives of the PhD programme as described in Annex 1 of the Joint PhD Agreement, i.e. producing researchers with a multi/interdisciplinary profile, mainly in the fields of law, politics, economics and sociology, where both theoretical dimensions and empirical analyses are given relevance in the overall approach to be embraced. The proposal should aim to address the multi-level dimensions of human rights implementation policies, focusing on the most innovative and critical developments, so as to critically assess the effectiveness and consistency of doctrines and practices and their impact. Focus should be on the global dimension; the European regional context as well as other regional systems; the nation-wide dimensions, preferably with a comparative approach; or the local community actors and dynamics. Institutions and private actors' roles can be addressed. The proposal should aim to reflect the subjects addressed in the human rights instruments, as well as the practice that comes along with their implementation.
- (12) The decision to admit the selected students to the programme must be approved by the Academic Board of the programme.

Appendix B: Course Syllabus for MIREL-662 – Research Methodologies



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



Course Title	Research Methodologies				
Course Code	MIREL-662				
Course Type	Elective				
Level	Postgraduate – 2 nd cycle				
Year / Semester	2 nd semester				
Teacher's Name	Dr Odysseas Christou				
ECTS	10	Lectures / week	1	Laboratories / week	N/A
Course Purpose and Objectives	<p>The main objectives of the course are to:</p> <p>Familiarize students with the logic and methods of social science research.</p> <p>Provide students with solid empirical, theoretical and normative foundations for the understanding of social science research in general and research in international relations in particular.</p> <p>Introduce students to the research design methodologies of conceptualization and operationalization so as to contribute to their ability to understand, interpret and explain the main theories in their specific research field.</p> <p>Develop students' necessary skills to design and conduct their own research and to participate in and contribute to academic knowledge.</p>				
Learning Outcomes	<p>After completion of the course, students will be able to:</p> <p>Demonstrate extensive knowledge of research methods used in the fields of International Relations in particular and Social Sciences more generally.</p> <p>Present a thorough understanding of the complexity of the study area and its relationship to other adjacent research areas.</p> <p>Critically analyze the scope of research application in this research area.</p> <p>Communicate in the English language both orally and in written form at a high level of competence as necessary for the design and conduct of research.</p> <p>Utilize computer skills (word processing, Internet use and e-mail) as study and communication tools.</p> <p>Demonstrate learning skills that will enable them to participate in research of</p>				

	international phenomena with minimal supervision. Make effective use of library resources, bibliographic sources and other existing academic research.		
Prerequisites	None	Required	None
Course Content	Introduction to Method and Social Science ² Doing Social Research Theory and Research Ethics in Social Research The Literature Review Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches Sampling Approaches Survey Research The Experiment Nonreactive Research and Secondary Analysis Analysis of Qualitative Data and Field Research		
Teaching Methodology	Lecture, discussion, individual work and tutoring, analysis of case studies.		
Bibliography	Burns, Robert B. 2000. <i>Introduction to Research Methods</i> . Sage Publications. Klotz, Audie, and Deepa Prakash, ed. 2008. <i>Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide</i> . Palgrave Macmillan. Neuman, Lawrence W. 2013. <i>Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches</i> . Pearson. Van Evera, Stephen. 1997. <i>Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science</i> . Cornell University Press.		
Assessment	Interim individual studies, final project, presentation		
Language	English / Greek		