ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

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

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Doc. 300.1.2

Higher Education Institution's Response

Date: 03 June 2022

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

  In Greek:

  Μέσα Μαζικής Ενημέρωσης και Επικοινωνία (3 έτη, 180 ECTS, Διδακτορικό)

  In English:

  Media and Communications (3 years, 180 ECTS, PhD)
- **Language(s) of instruction:** 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 300.1.1/2 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.*

- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*

  - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
  - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*

- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4).*

- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development
(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

We would like to thank the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for their professional and thorough work during the onsite evaluation of the PhD in Media and Communications programme. We would also like to express our appreciation for the collegial and constructive approach with which they conducted their evaluation.

The programme was considered to be fully compliant with all criteria European of all sections. No deficiencies in the quality indicators have been identified by the EEC.

We take note of the EEC's point on areas of improvement being a more 'transparent outline of progression, as well as clearer guidelines regarding the allocation of points' and aim to improve in these key areas through discussion and dialogue at Departmental level with the Vice Rectors Officer For Research.

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

The PhD programme is considered to be fully compliant with criteria 2.1, 2.2 and 2. The programme is small, currently three students, faculty devote ample time to each student they are supervising. The programme is also rigorously monitored by the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research (VRFR) Office and operates according to the University's Code of Practice and Regulations for Doctoral Programmes. We have a process mapped out from the application process, acceptance and registration to thesis submission, which takes a minimum of three years (with a maximum of eight) for all PhD students. This takes the form of eighteen months to develop the research proposal, proceed with ethics review, and going through a progress review every semester and annually. During this time, students complete their literature review, develop research methodology, carry out research and write up their key chapters. The thesis submission, defence and graduation follow this for the remaining eighteen months, with ample time given for review by examiners, viva and corrections if needed. Given the existing process, and talking into account the EEC's recommendation for more transparency we will try to improve the process in consultation with the VRFR's Office with reference to Quality Assurance and CHAPTER TWELVE: CODE OF PRACTICE AND REGULATIONSFOR DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES. (See attached PDF document as Appendix)

3. Teaching staff

(ESG 1.5)

We appreciate the EEC's recognition of the high caliber research and publications of the faculty supervising on the PhD programme. Research: As this is the highest level of academic achievement by students it is imperative for us that faculty engaged with high quality research is the major asset for the programme. However, as a key area of improvement Faculty's active interest for advertising the Doctoral Studies program and developing synergies and research ties with national and internationals universities and institutions will be encouraged. Additionally we note the comment that a key area of improvement, given that 'future graduate and PhD levels" expand, will likely mean the need for additional staff. This will be a future consideration and we will be looking into it, if and when such need arises.

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

We value the EEC's recognition of how student certification on the PhD works 'smoothly' at the University of Nicosia. This is an area, which we place a lot of emphasis on given the originality, and dedication required for a doctoral thesis reflects a selective and capable amount of students.

5. Learning resources and student support
(ESG 1.6)

We would like to thank the EEC for its acknowledgement of the 'high quality' resources and support for students on the PhD programme in terms of 'teaching resources, physical spaces and human resources'. We believe what we offer students in terms of their immediate educational environment is a central factor in the qualitative experience of pursuing a PhD.

6. Additional for doctoral programmes

(ALL ESG)

We fully appreciate and agree with the EEC's overall suggested area of improvement for the PhD being to increase enrolment, particularly by utilizing the MA programme as a possible 'incubator' for students to join the PhD. We will aim to do this through enlightening students on the MA regarding the PhD, and incorporating some of the research current, PhD students are doing into relevant MA courses as guest lecturer content as well as through their participation in Departmental research seminars, symposiums and conferences.

7. Eligibility (Joint programme)
(ALL ESG)

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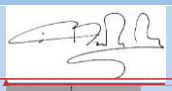
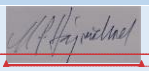
B. Conclusions and final remarks

We appreciate the time and effort made to review the PhD programme and generally, their recommendations are constructive improvements to the further development of the programme.

Regarding Recommendation 1 for increased 'transparency' on the progress of PhDs as mentioned previously we will try to improve in this area based on the existing timeline for the completion of PhDs.

Concerning Recommendation 2 on expansion of the programme for international students, short, medium and long term, we recognize the Department needs to do this with care, keeping in mind possible need for more faculty, given the labour intensive character of PhD Thesis supervision and budgetary concerns. Furthermore, the Departmental strategic plan for 2023–2025 has started being discussed and it will be developed within the framework of the School's strategies; these issues will be considered within this framework. Our key intention in this regard is to attract more applicants from outside Cyprus. We intend to do this through internal promotion at the MA level as well as through existing international research and education networks and activities.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	*Position*	*Signature*
Prof Klimis Mastoridis~~Dr. Mike Hajimichael~~	Dean~~PhD Programme Coordinator~~	
Dr. Mike Hajimichael	PhD Programme Coordinator	
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Date: 03 June 2022

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