Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 06/08/2024

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  University of Nicosia
  Intercollege

- **Town: Nicosia**

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

  In Greek:

  Προπαρασκευαστικό Πρόγραμμα Εκμάθησης της

  Αγγλικής Γλώσσας (1 Έτος)

  In English:

  Foundation Programme for Learning the English

  Language (1 Year)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English

- **Programme's status:** New

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

eua EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION   INQAAHE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION   ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

5 Lemesou Avenue, 2112, Nicosia
T: + 357 22 504 340
F: + 357 22 504 392
e -mail: info@dipae.ac.cy

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.*

Introduction

We would like to thank the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for their thorough and professional evaluation of the Foundation Programme for Learning the English Language. We appreciate the time and effort dedicated to this comprehensive review and the collegial approach taken during the evaluation.

We are grateful for the committee's recognition of the strengths and positive aspects of our programme. The EEC highlighted the inclusion of instructional content that facilitates integration into higher education by acquainting students with academic language expectations and academic culture. Additionally, the committee acknowledged our commitment to providing a robust framework for student development and academic success.

The feedback has been invaluable in identifying areas for improvement, and we are committed to addressing these recommendations to further enhance the quality of the programme. The insights provided by the committee will significantly contribute to the continuous improvement and success of the Programme.

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
Particularly noteworthy is the inclusion of instructional contents facilitating integration into higher education by acquainting students with academic language expectations as well as academic culture. This said, **there are two areas that are in need of potential improvement. One is insufficient focus on speaking skills in academic contexts.** Such skills should be either emphasized to a greater extent in the modules or a separate module should be devoted to this area, perhaps together with listening. **The other is related to the need for greater emphasis on the development of learner autonomy together with effective use of language learning strategies**.	The Programme Coordinators and the teaching faculty welcome the two recommendations of the EEC, and offer appropriate changes in compliance with these recommendations: 1. In relation to the observed lack of extensive focus on speaking skills, appropriate changes were implemented in the syllabi of all four course (see Annex I) by introducing appropriate teaching materials and assessment throughout the semesters. 2. To encourage learner autonomy further, more independent study and performance activities are introduced such as independent research, work with library database and electronic media, and presentations and discussions in class.	Choose level of compliance:
Steps need to be taken to ensure the same measures for ensuring quality with respect to the foundation program run by the University of Nicosia and Intercollege;	We would like to thank the committee for their feedback regarding the quality assurance measures for the English Language Foundation Programme. Both institutions are highly committed to quality assurance, and to address the recommendation and streamline processes, an inter-institutional committee will be created. This committee will consist of the programme coordinator from each institution, and a representative from each institution's Internal Quality Assurance Committees. This committee will meet yearly to ensure the streamlining of	Choose level of compliance:

	processes and the alignment of quality assurance standards.	

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
The course content could be better aligned with the learning aims.	We would like to thank the committee for their insightful feedback and recommendations. In accordance with the suggestions provided, we have made several improvements to the course content. The course content across the four courses is now augmented in terms of student participation, taught skills, and course outcomes, thus aligning better with the learning aims of the programme.	Choose level of compliance:
More emphasis on speaking skills in the courses would be beneficial to students.	We appreciate the committee's valuable feedback regarding the emphasis on speaking skills. As previously noted, changes have been implemented to place a stronger emphasis on the students' speaking skills. This has been achieved through the incorporation of specific public speaking and discussion activities in all courses, thus complementing the rest of the language skills (listening, reading, and writing). These adjustments aim to provide a more balanced and effective language learning experience.	

3. Teaching staff
(ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations **by EEC**	Actions Taken by the Institution	For Official Use ONLY
It is not clear why teaching **presentations** are not required from candidates with over 5 years of teaching experience. Experience in teaching alone does not guarantee the quality of teaching and might create bias towards applicants with longer experience but potentially less effective teaching skills.	We would like to thank the EEC committee for their feedback. Teaching presentations will now be required from all candidate faculty members applying to the programme, regardless of their years of teaching experience. This measure ensures that all candidates demonstrate their teaching effectiveness and allows for a comprehensive assessment of their teaching skills.	Choose level of compliance:
Part-time faculty do not benefit from promotion or professional development opportunities which should be considered in the future.	Both institutions recognize the importance of professional development for all faculty members, including part-time staff. Part-time faculty are encouraged and allowed to participate in various training and development programmes. These include programmes under the Pedagogical Support Unit (PSU) and the eLearning Pedagogical Support Unit (EPSU). Both units offer comprehensive training on teaching and learning theory, research skills development, and technical training on the use of learning management systems and other educational technologies.

In addition, workshops and training sessions are also available, to ensure faculty members are well-equipped with the latest pedagogical methods and technologies.

In terms of promotion opportunities, there is a clear policy that includes opportunities for part-time faculty to apply for promotion. The promotion process is transparent and based on documented achievements in research, teaching, and service. This policy ensures that part-time faculty | |

	members have pathways to advance their careers within the institution. Additionally, both institutions are committed to continuous improvement and regularly review and update their professional development and promotion policies to better support all faculty members. This ongoing investment ensures that part-time faculty have access to the necessary resources and opportunities for their professional growth and advancement.	

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
The institution cannot award a certificate in this programme. Please make sure this amendment is made and only a certificate of attendance is issued.	We appreciate the committee's guidance on this matter. Both institutions will ensure that only a certificate of attendance is issued for this programme, as per the committee's recommendation. A sample of this certificate is available as Annex 3.	Choose level of compliance:
The documentation could have included more detail on how students' progress will be assessed and monitored within the programme.	We thank the committee for their comment. Students' progress will be meticulously assessed and monitored throughout the English Language Foundation Programme. As outlined in the annexed course syllabi (Annex 2), faculty members will use a variety of assessment methods to evaluate students' performance and progress. These methods include: 1. **Assignments:** Regular assignments will be given to assess students' understanding and application of the course material. 2. **Final Examination:** A comprehensive final examination will be conducted to evaluate the overall proficiency and knowledge acquired by the students. 3. **Attendance:** Regular attendance is mandatory and will be monitored as it is crucial for continuous learning and participation. 4. **Class Participation:** Active participation in class discussions and activities will be encouraged and assessed to gauge students'	Choose level of compliance:

	engagement and comprehension.	
	In addition to the above methods, faculty members can also assess students through:	
	- **Quizzes and Tests:** Periodic quizzes and tests will help in assessing students' grasp of the material on a regular basis.	
	- **Presentations:** Students will be required to prepare and present topics, which will help in developing their speaking and presentation skills.	
	- **Peer Reviews:** Students will participate in peer review sessions where they evaluate each other's work, promoting critical thinking and collaborative learning.	
	- **Projects:** Group and individual projects will be assigned to foster teamwork and in-depth understanding of specific topics.	
	These diverse assessment methods ensure a comprehensive evaluation of students' progress, addressing different learning styles and skills.	
	Furthermore, an inter-institutional committee will oversee the consistency and quality of the Foundation Programme across both institutions. As mentioned earlier, this committee will consist of the programme coordinator from each institution, representatives from the University Internal Quality Assurance Committee, and the School Quality Assurance Committees of both institutions. This committee will meet yearly to coordinate and align quality	

	standards, ensuring that all processes are streamlined and effectively implemented across both institutions.	

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
Provision of **online forums** in which students have the opportunity to give feedback to the professors (anonymously or not) with their own comments and recommendations on how the programme and specific courses can cater to their individual strengths and needs.	To address this recommendation, the Programme Coordinators would like to clarify that such anonymous feedback is already available at both institutions in the form of online semester course and faculty evaluations. These evaluations cover feedback on both course content, delivery, and faculty. The new Foundation Programme will be included in this evaluation process.	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
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7. Eligibility (Joint programme)
(ALL ESG)

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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 **course content** could be better aligned with the learning aims.	Following the committee's recommendation, the course content has been aligned to the best practices used in similar Foundation Programmes and the requirements of the Ministry of Education in Cyprus.	Choose level of compliance:
More emphasis on **speaking skills** in the courses would be beneficial to students.	The development of speaking skills has been augmented in all courses of the new Programme through the wider use of presentations and group discussions.	
Part-time faculty do not benefit from promotion or professional development opportunities which should be considered in the future.	As stated earlier, part-time faculty can participate and are encouraged to participate, in various training and development programmes, including those offered by the Pedagogical Support Unit (PSU) and the eLearning Pedagogical Support Unit (EPSU). There is also a clear policy for their promotion based on documented achievements in research, teaching, and service.	
Steps need to be taken to ensure the **same measures for ensuring quality** with respect to the foundation program run by the University of Nicosia and Intercollege	An interdisciplinary committee will be formed, consisting of the Programme Coordinator of each institution, representatives from the University Internal Quality Assurance Committee, and the School Quality Assurance Committees of both institutions. This committee will ensure the alignment and coordination of quality measures across both the University of Nicosia and Intercollege.	

We would like to thank the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for their professional attitude and thorough work during the evaluation of the Foundation Programme for Learning the English Language proposed by the University of Nicosia and Intercollege. We would also like to express our appreciation for the collegial approach with which they conducted their evaluation. We do appreciate the Committee's recommendations for improvement, which will enhance the quality of our programme, and we have addressed them in the corresponding section of this response.

We thank the EEC once again both for the positive evaluation, as well as for the constructive comments and suggestions, and the fruitful discussion that we had with the Committee members during the online visit. We also thank the EEC for the time and thoroughness they dedicated to the evaluation of the programme, and for helping us to improve the programme through the suggestions made. In preparation for the new academic year, we have already taken action and incorporated all recommendations of the Committee as indicated in our response.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Prof. Klimis Mastoridis	Dean of School of Humanities and Social Sciences, UNIC	
Prof. Polina Mackay	Head of Department of Languages and Literature, UNIC	
Prof. Rossitsa Terzieva-Artemis	Programme Coordinator, UNIC	
Chris Constantinou	Deputy Executive Director Intercollege	
Chrysanthi Papaioannou	Program Coordinator-Intercollege	

Date: 06/08/2024