

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 9 March 2024

External Evaluation Report (Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Theological School of the Church of Cyprus
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** NA
- **Department/ Sector:** Psychology
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Εφαρμογές Ψυχολογίας και Συμβουλευτικής στην Κοινότητα

In English:

Applications of Psychology and Counselling in the Community

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme's status:** Choose status
- **Concentrations (if any):**



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].

In Greek: NA

In English: NA

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The committee met on 8 and 9 March 2024.

On 8 March the ECC members conducted a site visit, in which they spoke to

- University management and the internal review committee
- Department heads and programme coordinators
- Teaching Staff Associated with the Programme
- Representative students
- Programme Administrators

The Theological School of the Church of Cyprus (TSCC) is classified as a **Private Institution of Tertiary Education** (PITE) and this report is written in accord with the pertaining regulations (see https://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/enop/non-ind/1996_1_67/index.html).

Discussions on the day concerned the nature, aims, and coherence of the programme; the systems for student support and for oversight of student welfare; the ways in which Practicums (renamed as “Experience in the Community”) were run; module content, and the (excellent) administrative support.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Martin Corley	Professor	University of Edinburgh, UK
Terry Hanley	Professor	University of Manchester, UK
Christina Athanasiades	Professor	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece
Elisavet Panagiotou	Student Representative	University of Cyprus

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*
- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
 - (a) sub-areas*
 - (b) standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
 - (c) some questions that EEC may find useful.*
- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*
- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*
- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*
- **The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.**

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

Sub-areas

- 1.1 Policy for quality assurance
- 1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review
- 1.3 Public information
- 1.4 Information management

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
 - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
 - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
 - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
 - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
 - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
 - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
 - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
 - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
 - *benefits from external expertise*
 - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*

- *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
- *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
- *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
- *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
 - *selection criteria*
 - *intended learning outcomes*
 - *qualification awarded*
 - *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
 - *pass rates*
 - *learning opportunities available to the students*
 - *graduate employment information*

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
 - *key performance indicators*
 - *profile of the student population*
 - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*

- *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
 - *learning resources and student support available*
 - *career paths of graduates*
-
- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*
- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*
- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*

- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The programme is well-conceived as a meaningful contribution to Cypriot society. It takes an interdisciplinary approach with the purpose of upskilling those whose professional or vocational lives may bring them into contact with people requiring “psychological first aid” (initial advice in difficult circumstances). During the visit it was made very clear that graduates of this programme should not be considered to be qualified counsellors; this was confirmed by the students at the visit, who were very clear about the purposes and limitations of the training they had received.

The programme is taught at Masters level and comprises modules totalling 120 ECTS (of which 70 are compulsory).¹ All modules are weighted 10 ECTS; students study 30 ECTS (approx 9 hrs/wk) per semester for 4 semesters. An optional dissertation can be taken across semesters 3 and 4 for 30 ECTS, in place of 3 elective modules.

Quality Assurance is regulated by an Internal Quality Committee (IQC). Given the small size of the course (a maximum of ca. 30 students on programme) and of the School, the IQC and those responsible for module delivery overlap: This is to be expected. Care has been taken to obtain student feedback, which is generally positive, and where needed, the programme has been revised in response to that feedback (see strengths).

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The programme has been well conceived, with some thought going into the collection of modules that might best serve its purposes. An example of this is the inclusion of a module entitled *Non-Profit Organisation Management*, ideal for students who might consider further work in the voluntary sector.

Recent changes driven by student feedback include a move from 7.5 ECTS to 10 ECTS per module, motivated by workload considerations, and the decision to make the dissertation optional, acknowledging the range of motivations for students to study the course.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Three minor areas for improvement are recommended. One is to consider clarifying (in the programme literature, for example) that the programme is focused on *skill* rather than on *knowledge* (that is to say, that the primary graduate attribute will be practical skills that students are able to make use of in their careers).

The second improvement is to take under consideration some of the language used in the modules and in their descriptions. The committee acknowledge that our impression of language used is based on the translated application (the original application was in Greek; 2 committee members read the English translation) and that this suggestion should be taken in that light. Some suggestions would be to avoid module titles like *Individual Differences and Deviations* (*Individual Differences* is fine) or *Juvenile Delinquency* (what about *Adolescent*

¹ taken from Table 2; Table 1 indicates 60 compulsory credits

Development)? Terms like “retardation” (in module 610 descriptor) are also best avoided (“learning difficulties”, for example).

Third, students interested in pursuing future research opportunities would benefit from access to an elective module providing a broader coverage of psychology (we understand that a suitable model may be found on the undergraduate syllabus).

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant

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

Sub-areas

2.2 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

2.3 Practical training

2.4 Student assessment

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*
- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*

- *Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

The School adopts a varied diet of learning opportunities. This includes traditional lecture format, seminars focused upon developing practical skills, and practical work within the local communities. The varied nature of the input appears congruent with the aims and objectives of the varied nature of the programme — notably one in which supports the students to develop theoretical knowledge about the application of psychology and counselling in community settings, the development of practical basic counselling skills, and the introduction to commonplace research skills.

The learning environment was conducive to productive learning. The classrooms and learning spaces appeared appropriate for the activities that were described (e.g., the size of the space and technologies available) and the staff team were described to be accessible and available to the students. In addition, the programme team supports students to engage critically with complex and emotive material fitting for a programme such as this. Importantly, resources are also provided to support students that might be personally impacted by the engagement with programme material: e.g., an independent counselling service (as discussed below).

The assessment methods for the different units were suitably varied. These included written assessments (theoretical and summaries of learning journals), exams, and (to date) a research dissertation. Such a variety of assessment types appears consistent with programmes of this kind.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

As indicated above, the programme combines a variety of teaching formats and assessments. Such an approach enables the assessment of a diverse skill set of the students on the programme.

The assessed work is all reviewed by multiple examiners. This helps to ensure consistency in the assessment of student work.

The staff team have developed an environment in which the students feel valued and can engage in a constructive manner to develop their studies. This manifests in the development of assignments and practical programmes that are tailored to individual needs and wants.

The practical work within the local community provides the students with an excellent opportunity to apply their basic counselling skills within a real world setting.

The practical work in the local community setting enables the programme to have a meaningful connection with the wider community. Ultimately, this provides the opportunity to benefit the organizations that the students support and the individuals that they meet seeking out support.

The programme hosts a variety of events to share the student research projects and placement experiences. Dissemination of such work is to be commended.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The connection with placements that are held within the community would benefit from some further scaffolding. This would be to ensure that students are provided with appropriate support and supervision whilst engaging with community organizations. As discussed, checks of such work do occur but this is not formally recorded. A process should therefore be created so that a formal record of the institution’s approval process is transparent and recorded.

It is recommended that dual roles are considered further within some of the work related to the programme. For instance, it is recommended that individuals do not evaluate their own skills work within research projects and that programme staff do not take on supervisory roles of clinical work.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

Sub-areas

- 3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development
- 3.2 Teaching staff number and status
- 3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*
- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Teaching staff are recruited and promoted according to the regulations of the University of Cyprus, which ensures that the procedures used are comparable with those of a state-funded university.

Given the small size of the School, there will be limited opportunities for formal staff development, but the core staff form a mutually supportive group. The committee were made aware that one of the staff members listed on the submission had now retired, and that another was planning to retire; it appeared that plans for their replacement were in hand.

Fifty-seven percent of the teaching hours on the programme are provided by permanent staff. This is in line with the regulations concerning Private Institutions for Tertiary Education.

Several of the staff are research active. Programme members are currently involved in five internationally-funded projects.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The School has adopted a rigorous approach to recruitment and promotion. There is a clear motivation to recruit, and maintain, staff with a high degree of relevant competence.

ERASMUS+ exchanges are available to academic staff. Staff are also involved in EARA 2024, a major international conference on adolescent wellbeing.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The unique status of the School and the programme may make recruitment difficult (for example, many research active psychologists will require access to laboratory facilities, which are not currently provided). This also means that some staff may be teaching outside their research strengths. Within the limitations of the PITE law, it may be sensible to pursue co-appointments with other institutions for some categories of staff.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
3	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Partially Compliant

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

Sub-areas

- 4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria
- 4.2 Student progression
- 4.3 Student recognition
- 4.4 Student certification

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
 - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*

- *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Are the admission requirements for the study programme appropriate? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?*
- *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*
- *Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Admission requirements of the programme are appropriate and in place, in accordance with the standards set by the European framework and the CYQAA. Admission policy is publicly available and transparent, through the School's website and marketing processes. There is also a transfer policy for students coming from another accredited program in Cyprus or abroad.

Since this is a small institution in general, and also a new study programme (from 2019), students' progress is being monitored systematically. An assessment policy is in place that reflects expected learning outcomes. Additionally, the School collects data regarding the students' progress. According to the numbers presented, since the beginning

of the program, 69 students applied overall, 57 were eventually accepted, 10 dropped out, 14 graduated and now there are 33 students enrolled.

Students seemed to be well informed about the objectives/scope of the programme and the qualifications gained as well as the limitations in relation to qualifications for licensure in the field of psychology and counseling. According to the report, the program targets mostly a variety of professionals who would like to enhance their skills to guide and support populations at risk in the community. Certification is accompanied by a diploma supplement, in line with the European and international standards.

The students on the programme have access to a variety of programmes that could potentially increase their international mobility (e.g. Erasmus). This is positive, although large numbers of students on this programme are unlikely to take up these opportunities due to existing work and family commitments.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Students are well informed of the structure and the scope of the programme, before they start, during individual admissions interviews as well as by the Student Handbook and other relevant documents/forms.

Courses and, more particularly, Experience in the Community, Statistics and Research Methodology, are tailored to individual students' needs and prior learning/professional expertise.

There is also support for students' welfare, through in-house administration services and scholarships funded by the School.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The Committee recommends supporting the School's and the Programme's recognition in the local community by continuing to advertise its compliance with national and international standards for higher education.

The graduate students' profile makes it difficult to take advantage of mobility opportunities.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

- 5.1 Teaching and Learning resources
- 5.2 Physical resources
- 5.3 Human support resources
- 5.4 Student support

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*

- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Overall, the School ensures that the students are offered support in their learning experience both by administrative and academic staff. The classrooms of the school are well equipped both materially and technologically (e.g., desks, chairs, space availability, projector devices) to support the delivery of the courses. The school maintains a small library room and a study room which is available for the students to support their learning experience. Given the size of the institution, and the number of students currently enrolled on the programme offered by the School, this is considered adequate to cover the needs of the students. There is currently a building under construction which will host bigger library premises and thus further enhance the students' learning experience as well as contribute to the School's readiness to accept larger numbers of students, if desired in the future.

Regarding learning resources, the School's library is part of the Cyprus Library Consortium and EBSCO, which grants their library access to a large number of electronic resources. This helps to ensure that students have access to appropriate resources to enable them to successfully complete their studies. Moreover, the School has a Virtual Learning Environment, Moodle, for the programme which enhances communication between lecturers and students and also enables the exchange of study material. Alongside, the School provides students with the opportunity to attend workshops introducing them to additional software that helps to facilitate their studies—e.g., workshops about Refworks and how to conduct searches in electronic databases. The above activities and offers run in addition to an induction week which introduces the students to the School premises and facilities.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

The non-profit character of the school allows for the maintenance of a student fund where the tuition fees paid by the students are used by the School to support the students financially and technologically (i.e. students receive a laptop upon their registration, their dissertation is printed and bound by the School, students who excel in their studies receive monetary prizes).

Each student has an academic advisor to support them if they face difficulties during their studies. Alongside this, the School recruits an external counsellor to provide support to the students when needed. We found this an essential practice, given the small size of the institution students may abstain from

talking freely about their difficulties to people directly involved with the School, with whom they already have established relationships.

The administrative staff of the school are faced with a workload which is currently well managed and this allows the staff to be able to support the students in their queries promptly.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

As the coordinators of the programme already acknowledge, the School needs to employ a full-time/permanent member of IT staff in the near future. This will (a) support staff and students with technology issues and (b) provide support in cases of cyber attacks, which have become a common phenomenon in universities. Currently the School is outsourcing this service.

The School is part of the ERASMUS+ programme and encourages students to participate in international exchanges. Given that a large proportion of the MA students in full-time employment or mature students, there is low interest in participating in this programme.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
5	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

- 6.1 Selection criteria and requirements
- 6.2 Proposal and dissertation
- 6.3 Supervision and committees

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
 - *the stages of completion*
 - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
 - *the examinations*
 - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
 - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
 - *the chapters that are contained*
 - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
 - *the minimum word limit*
 - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
 - *regular meetings*
 - *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
 - *support for writing research papers*
 - *participation in conferences*
- *The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?*
- *Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?*
- *Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?*

Findings

A short description of the situation in the Higher Education Institution (HEI), based on elements from the application for external evaluation and on findings from the onsite visit.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
6	Selection criteria and requirements	Choose answer
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Choose answer
6.3	Supervision and committees	Choose answer

D. Conclusions and final remarks

Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

The committee would like to thank the School for its warm welcome and hospitality. Special mention should go to the administrative staff, who orchestrated a flawless visit, with access to all relevant information easily available.

We were impressed by the dedication of the staff we met to this unique programme. Thought has clearly gone into creating a degree designed to be pragmatically useful to those who might need to advise, or offer support, to those in their charge—for example, teachers, army members, and priests. The strongest evidence of the success of this approach came from students and graduates of the programme, who were able to very clearly articulate what they had gained from their studies. We formed the opinion that the skills gained could make a useful contribution to Cypriot society. Although the course clearly has a church-informed basis, the applications of the skills learnt were not strongly limited by this.

One minor issue with the programme was some of the language choices made (NB., as earlier, we appreciate that this may be a matter of translation), addressed in §1 above. We also note that it is urgently necessary to hire an IT professional to maintain the School’s network and mitigate cyber risks. A further recommendation is to adopt procedures that ensure student safety, and accountability for their welfare, when they are acting in the community in the School’s name (see §2).

Ultimately, what the creators of this programme have done is to identify a need (or perhaps a “gap in the market”) and to create a unique proposition with which to fill it. On the basis of the present review, we believe that the effort has been quite successful. For those who, explicitly, are not seeking a professional degree, but who would benefit from upskilling in emotional support, this is a well-constructed, pragmatically-oriented, programme.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Martin Corley	
Terry Hanley	
Christina Athanasiades	
Elisavet Panagiotou	

Date: 9 March 2024