

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 9 February 2024

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
University of Cyprus
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Faculty of Humanities
- **Department/ Sector:** Department of English Studies
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**  
**In Greek:**  
Διδακτορικό στην Αγγλική Λογοτεχνία και τις Συγκριτικές Πολιτισμικές Σπουδές  
**In English:**  
PhD in English Literature and Comparative Cultural Studies (3-8 years/240 ECTS, conventional)
- **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. Introduction

*This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.*

The Committee enjoyed the hospitality of the University of Cyprus on its campus.

Committee members were provided with detailed documentation before the meeting. The Committee met on Zoom before the evaluation visit and discussed the questions it intended to ask the various groups. Christiana Maki from CYQAA outlined the procedure for the visit.

On 8 February 2024 the Committee met with various leadership teams, administrators, teachers and students. The Committee also had an opportunity to visit the library facilities, and were taken on a guided tour by two of the librarians.

The Committee met with current and former PhD students on the program.

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Bas Aarts	Chair, Professor of English Linguistics	University College London
Kiene Brillenburg Wurth	Professor of Comparative Literature	University of Utrecht
Paul Crosthwaite	Professor of Modern and Contemporary Literature/English Literature	University of Edinburgh
Alexandros Evgeniou	Student	Open 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.*

Procedures for quality assurance are in place for the University and the PhD programme, which was initially approved in 2001 and accredited in 2017. The programme has highly qualified and inspiring staff members who are internationally recognized in their fields and who have the professional depth and experience to assess the eligibility of a prospective PhD student.

Most of the PhD students come from Cyprus and Greece, often combining their studies with (full- or part-)time work (often in teaching). Paying 4000 euros for their PhD, students get the same sum + 500 euro returned for the duration of their PhD trajectory to visit conferences. They are assigned a supervisor and an advisor.

### Strengths

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

The committee observed several strengths in the programme:

- The programme has a well-articulated framework, with a clear vision of comparison as an evolving



academic practice: languages/cultures, arts/media, intergenerative approaches, and theory (including psychoanalysis, philosophy, anthropology, postcolonial, and gender studies), as well as history are their main fields of comparison at present.

- The comparative nature of the programme is bound up with its interdisciplinary nature. The committee feels that this interdisciplinary element enhances the quality of the programme. At the same time the programme ensures the mastery of specialized knowledge.
- The programme has a clear commitment to the development of (critical) skills.
- The programme has a very clear set of learning outcomes that are integrated into the individual components of the trajectory in which the individual student will be placed.
- The programme is designed in such a way that students are assigned a supervisor as well as an advisor, while in principle all members of the team are open to giving feedback on a student's work. This system works well to maintain the programme's high quality.
- Tailored to the specific interests of the students, the course trajectory and comprehensive examination can be adapted to changes in the student's research. Such a tailor-made trajectory makes the programme comprehensive and specialized at the same time, giving students enough space and time to pursue their special interests and fulfill their particular needs.
- Given the above, the comprehensive examination is relevant to both the dissertation and the prospective (teaching) careers of the PhD students.
- As regards quality assurance, comprehensive examinations are assessed by the main supervisor and, where necessary, two other assessors. The assessment is recorded in a written report. The committee was shown several such reports and was struck by their detailed and critical nature.
- There is also an annual assessment in place, where supervisors hand in a report on the student.
- For the final assessment of the dissertation, a committee consisting of 5 scholars is put in place.
- Supporting quality control structures are provided by the Graduate School and Department.
- The PhD programme is ambitious in its international outreach and collaboration schemes, such as with Duke University and the Harvard Institute of World Literature. The latter's summer school is held at the University of Cyprus this year and will enhance the department's international visibility.
- The committee was impressed by the quality of the programme and in fact takes the view that it is an attractive opportunity for students from European countries where there are no—or no longer—any regular in-University PhD trajectories in place (please see more below under: Recommendations).
- Where possible, staff members try to integrate international research projects (ERC) and networks (COST) into the programme. This is crucial to keeping up the high standards of scholarly work in the programme. However, they need the options, willingness, and flexibility of the university to realize such integration. (See more below under Areas of improvement.)

### 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 Department might consider more frequent supervisor reports, perhaps once per semester.
- Community building informs the quality of any educational programme. The Department would

have more opportunities for community building for its PhD students once the new building on campus finally materializes. Housed in a peripheral building, the staff cannot do this at present.

- Administrative staff carry a heavy responsibility in (technically) facilitating international online PhD defenses. The committee observes that UCY could have a central structure or office in place to manage these crucial tasks, or add a special team member or student assistant for such tasks.
- Prominent, effective, and strategically targeted marketing and promotion on the part of the University (e.g. by advertising in international markets where comparable programmes are not readily available) will be key to the programme achieving its full potential in terms of recruitment.
- More specifically, the committee sees lots of opportunity in more co-supervised projects with professors from universities in countries (such as in the Netherlands) without comparable PhD programmes in the humanities, ensuring the possibility of a more regular influx. For a number of excellent international RMA students, an online or onsite jointly supervised project with the UCY programme would be a welcome opportunity. Rather than marketing alone, interprofessional relations are evidently important to realizing such projects.
- The committee considers the failure to host the ERC Consolidator Project MUTE in the Department a lost opportunity for the PhD programme. A project like this would have:
  - consolidated more international collaborations and added to the prestige of the PhD programme
  - created a fertile ground for the successful application of more prestigious projects, as the PI could have helped PhD students in writing successful grants
  - created opportunities for more research activities at UCY (workshops and conferences organized as part of the ERC project)
  - created opportunities for community building and international networks for other PhD students
- The committee therefore strongly recommends that the University address weaknesses in its regulatory framework to host prestigious research projects and PI's.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1.1	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.*

- Dissertations are supervised by a supervisor and an advisor (plus: all staff members are open to giving feedback to written drafts) and are evaluated by a final committee consisting of five scholars, ensuring rigor and consistency.
- The individual research projects of the students are placed well within the context of the Department and the research of individual staff members.
- Students are very well monitored and supervised throughout their PhD trajectory, both in onsite and online settings.
- Students have very good job opportunities after finishing their PhD and land in a diversity of professions, ranging from teaching and the cultural sector to the Diplomatic service.

### Strengths

- Students benefit from the dedication, intellectual rigor and breadth of comparative skills in their supervisors.
- One of the former PhD students, and one of the present PhD students, stressed the exceptionally high quality of the PhD programme compared to other programmes.
- The programme allows for stipends and scholarships on a competitive basis.

- As already pointed out above, paying 4000 euros for their PhD trajectory, students receive the same sum + 500 euro returned to visit conferences and create networks.
- The online student pointed out that their 4500 euros were well spent on creating an online scholarly community/network that informs the quality of their research. The committee thus sees the individual lump sum as a fruitful means to enter the professional world of research.
- The individual PhD projects are topical and relevant to today's world and its challenges.
- The admission to the PhD programme is highly competitive, even while influx to the programme is modest. Clearly, the staff are committed to their intellectual values and quality standards.
- The students are well placed with their supervisors in the programme and feel that their course requirements as well as the comprehensive exam are relevant to their dissertation work as well as – in the case of professional teachers – their work in education.
- The UCY library is well stocked and an inspiring space to study for PhD students.

**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 mentioned elsewhere, the students would benefit from a more closely knit intellectual community at UCY. Such a community can only be created once the Department gets its promised building on campus.
- The influx of students is modest. Seen from one perspective this is an advantage as students profit from the supervisor's/advisor's dedication to them. Seen from another perspective, more students allow for a community to grow. We have made recommendations under section 1 for such a higher influx.

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>
2.1	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.*

We spoke to a large group of professors in the Department from all the disciplines in the department. We found all of them to be highly competent and engaged.



### Strengths

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

- Having been recruited on the basis of established procedures, the staff is very well qualified to lead this programme, with the relevant degrees, experience, publishing, and teaching records, as well as international recognition.
- Staff are engaged in continuous training and required to keep up the standards in their research output and international activities in order to stay eligible for research funding.
- The committee was struck by staff members' passion for the PhD programme, and by the students' high evaluations of their PhD trajectories (highly competitive in comparison to programmes abroad, as one student said; another mentioned the high quality of the online version of the programme).
- Staff are enthusiastic about their work, very dedicated, and caring.
- Staff relations are excellent.
- Staff have excellent research profiles and collaborate internationally.
- Staff are regularly able to take sabbatical leave (one term every three years), enabling them to concentrate on their research without teaching duties.
- Staff have higher degrees obtained from universities across the world.

### 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 would like to express some concerns about staffing. To ensure the future viability of the PhD programme (and others too), and also to maintain the high quality of research and teaching in the department, staffing levels need to be adequate in all areas. The department would especially benefit from additional expertise in postcolonial studies (potentially combined with specialisms in modern poetry/poetics).

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

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

- The program has a comprehensive and robust evaluative system in place to assess the quality of incoming students. Applications go through several boards and committees, on the level of the Department, the School, the Graduate School, the Planning and Development Committee, the Senate, and the University Council.
- Admission includes a research proposal, indicating possible impact of the proposed research, and in some cases an interview. Upon admission, a student is assigned a supervisor and specific course requirements tailored to this specific student and their specific research interests.

### Strengths

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

- There is a strong relationship between the faculty's staff and its students.
- Students have access to the library to work on their studies and access helpful sources, where they have a quiet place to do their research.
- Students are able to communicate with an expert on mental health to assist them in their student life.
- Students favored UCY, owing to the relationships that they had built with the faculty's staff during the years of their previous studies.

### 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.*

- Students say they would appreciate having an academic community to push them, to stay in touch with each other and to learn from one another.
- Students support moving the Department to the main campus.
- A former student, who graduated in 2013, claimed that the teaching staff should stay more in touch with its students, in particular via the consistent provision of written feedback. This evaluation seems to be no longer applicable to present staff.

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

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

## Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

### Sub-areas

- 4.5 **Teaching and Learning resources**
- 4.6 **Physical resources**
- 4.7 **Human support resources**
- 4.8 **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.*

- Students can avail themselves of all modern teaching and learning resources.
- Students are aware of the services they are provided with by the University.

### Strengths

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

- The 24/7 library at UCY is superb, with a huge collection of both physical and electronic books. The library offers hundreds of workstations in a very pleasant environment, conducive to study and research.
- Student mental health support services are easily accessible, with impressive speed.
- Each student has an advisor to whom they can turn in case of issues or problems.
- IT support services for students are capable of fixing any technical issue that occurs at the University: students and staff have the ability to talk to an expert about any personal issues they are facing during their studies or work.
- The very friendly and helpful administrative staff has been well trained and a lot of effort is put into their work.

### 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 Department is housed in a building which is off-campus. This is less than ideal in terms of access to facilities such as the library. Despite having been promised a new building for a long time, this has not materialized yet.
- The University should consider hiring more administrative staff, either full-time staff or part-time students due to the current staff being overloaded.
- It is concerning that the administrative staff does not get paid for its overtime work at the University.
- Student support is not available after 14:30, although the University is open until 18:00. If technical difficulties occur, the administrative staff is obligated to take care of it.

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

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

### 5. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

**Sub-areas**

- 5.1 **Selection criteria and requirements**
- 5.2 **Proposal and dissertation**
- 5.3 **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.*

- All PhD students to whom the committee spoke had previously studied at the University for their Bachelor's or Master's Degree.
- All PhD applicants must submit a research proposal before they are admitted to the University.
- PhD students gain their degree following the completion of their research and its successful presentation and defense before the faculty's committee.
- About 10% - 15% of the PhD students drop out of their studies each year.
- PhD students must have a strong study history to gain entry to the programme, due to its competitive nature.

### Strengths

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

- All PhD graduates have found a job that correlates with their studies.
- The majority of PhD students report they were assisted by their supervisor and the administrative staff with difficulties that they experienced during their studies.
- Overall, students are satisfied with studying and working with their supervisor to gain their PhD degree.

### 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.*

- Given that it is relatively common for students to drop out of their PhD studies, typically owing to the pressures of paid work and/or caring responsibilities, any measures that can be introduced to encourage student retention would be very welcome (most obviously, additional studentships/stipends).
- Some students noted a degree of isolation during their studies, and the desirability of a greater sense of community among the postgraduate cohort. The growth in PhD student numbers that the department hopes to achieve would of course help to address this issue, though so too would centralization of the department's operations on the main campus. Activities such as the Department Research Forum and Graduate Research Seminar are also positive initiatives in this regard, and the department's commitment to continuing to develop activities that will foster community, inclusion, and belonging among PhD students is commendable.

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

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

#### **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.*

Overall, the Committee was impressed by the quality and depth of the PhD programme at UCY. It is a programme with a clear vision on what comparison entails, with a deep commitment to research, and at the same time well-gearred towards the wishes and needs of professionals in, for instance, the educational sector. All students have landed well in the job market.

The staff members have excellent profiles to meet the needs and interests of their PhD students and to train them towards becoming independent scholars with an international network. We were impressed by the strongly theoretical and interdisciplinary profiles of staff members, which evidently are conducive to the quality of the PhD programme. This programme has the best of both worlds: its training towards a comprehensive examination at once provides students a broad disciplinary grounding and equips them to specialize in a particularly scholarly area.



The Committee again emphasizes the need for the University to host prestigious international projects in this respect. The Committee observed that the students' individual profiles feed into the quality of its overall programme and, possibly, its MA programmes.

The Committee would like to thank the faculty and the University for its hospitality.

### Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Bas Aarts	
Kiene Brillenburg Wurth	
Paul Crosthwaite	
Alexandros Evgeniou	

**Date:** 9 February 2024