

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 28th September, 2020

External Evaluation Report (Programmatic)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Cyprus
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Faculty of Social Science and Education
- **Department/ Sector:** Department of Education
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

PhD – Curriculum, Teaching and Comparative Education 6-16 semesters; 273 ECTS, 3rd Cycle

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme's status**
New programme: Choose an item.
Currently operating: X



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 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

Due to the unusual circumstances (Covid19) that has engulfed much of the world, there was no on-site visit. Instead the Review team met with the various groups with an important stake in the programme.

We welcomed an initial presentation from the Vice-Rector of the university, who was able to outline strategic priorities for the University more generally, to discuss features like the Graduate School, the importance of interdisciplinarity, and the move toward some programmes using English. This latter development was aimed at recruiting non-Cypriot academics into the staffing mix to help internationalise the university. It is clear that there is a close relationship between the university and the wider public sector and relevant industries. The University has a very good standing in relation to international research funding, and the university also has a strategic fund to help generate research activity across the University.

Efforts to also bring in virtual learning was also noted by the Vice-Rector, however the historic preference for the Open University to have this as its competence has meant that other universities have not been able to enter into this territory. This may change as Covid has created a set of conditions that require new actions.

The Review team was well supported by the CAQAA during its virtual site visit. There were no difficulties with the technology.

We also had the chance to meet the academic coordinators, the academic teams, students, and administrators as well as view a virtual lesson.

We did not feel that this situation prejudiced our capacity to review the programme.



B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Susan L Robertson	Professor and Head of Faculty of Education	University of Cambridge
Xavier Bonal	Professor	Autonomous U of Barcelona
Wilfried Admiral	Professor	University of Leiden
Marina Neophytou	Student	Cyprus University of Technology
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

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 PhD programme is complex. Since it includes courses that are shared with the master programme, it allows some students to claim credits for two courses already completed in the Master degree. It is less clear whether this rule applies to students coming from different masters.

In terms of design and development, it is a very complete training programme. It includes compulsory and elective courses and guarantees a good methodological training, which is essential for ensuring students' research capacities. The programme facilitates the inclusion of students in ongoing research projects carried out by the staff of the programme. That provides an interesting research experience for the students.

Students have the opportunity to show and discuss the progress of their theses in seminars and must present the theoretical and methodological chapters to a supervising committee who then approves the progress of the theses and gives feedback to students.

The programme includes systems of internal and external quality assurance, aligned with those of the Faculty and the University of Cyprus. The public information of the programme is accurate. In the interviews, students confirm their satisfaction with the overall design and development of the programme.

Strengths

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

The programme is flexible in its design, giving opportunities for doing the thesis part-time (from 3 to 8 years). The design of the courses and the methodological preparation of the students is guaranteed by an efficient design that combines courses with personal supervision and other activities. Students' are given the opportunity to participate in research projects carried out by the Department staff. Students are also enjoying opportunities for publishing, for presentations in conferences, and attendance at conferences given by renowned scholars. The efficiency of the programme in terms of graduates is high.

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.

1. The number of ECTS seems to be very high (273), especially if there are students coming from two years master' degrees (120 ECTS). Systems of flexibility could be studied depending on previous experience.
2. Although the capacity of the programme is limited by the number of scholars working in these areas, the quality of the programme suggests the possibility of taking more PhD students per year. An invitation to national or international scholars to supervise students could make this possible (even by means of participating in a European Joint Doctoral Degree).



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

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

2.2 Practical training

2.3 Student assessment

2.1 Process of teaching and learning

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 and 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 programme (273 ECTS) can be completed between 6 (min) and 16 semesters (max). Generally, PhD students graduate in 5 years (10 semesters). The programme starts with 5 compulsory courses (4 specialization courses and one research methodology course of 12 ECTS each). Students must choose the courses that were not studied as part of their Master programme (if enrolled in that programme) or linked to their dissertation research.

These compulsory courses are scheduled for 3 hrs a week, for 13 or 14 weeks and are attended together with Master students. The compulsory courses are followed by a comprehensive examination, which is the start of four research stages (120 ECTS) and two dissertation stages (60 ECTS). The research stages start with a research proposal, which has to be approved by the department council. After 2-4 semesters of the research stages, students defend the first three chapters of the thesis (theory and method). This is a recent requirement from the University. Students set up their research and research planning with the Academic Advisor. A supervising committee is set up with a main supervisor and two other staff members.

The expertise of the teaching staff covers the content of courses of the programme, which has a mix of compulsory courses and individual research work. All teaching staff hold a PhD. Visiting academics are invited to teach in the programme and alumni, young researchers and practitioners are invited to discuss their experiences with the students.

In the compulsory courses, various teaching approaches are implemented with a mix of lecturing, group work, group discussion and debates, micro-research and student presentations. Feedback on assignments is provided by both teachers and peers. This mix of teaching approaches aligns with the learning outcomes, which are mostly about critically reviewing and examining course content. Students are encouraged to actively participate in the teaching and learning process.

Teaching is on the main campus, which is a 15 minutes bus ride from the department.

For each course, literature is uploaded in Blackboard, which will be updated each time depending on national and international developments and new scientific output.

The research process seems to be mainly individual work, under supervision. Students can indicate a preference for a supervisor, or a supervisor is assigned based on the topic of research. Students work individually on their dissertation and some formal and informal group meetings are scheduled with PhDs from the same supervisor.

No practical training is included in the programme. Because all teaching staff hold a PhD and perform research activities in the domain they teach in the programme, research and teaching are quite well linked.

Assessment of the compulsory courses is the same as in the master programme. The comprehensive exam at the end of third semester is not well described. After 2-4 semesters students have to defend the first three chapters with the supervising committee. At the end, the dissertation should be approved by a five-member examination committee, which consists of the supervising committee and two external evaluators. Each examiner writes a review report providing

feedback and recommendations. Then the thesis will be publicly presented, which will lead to one joint report by the examiners. The PhD degree is awarded on the basis of regular criteria of research assessment. In addition, publication in a peer-reviewed journal is an extra criterion.

Strengths

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

A strength of the programme is its flexibility and adaptiveness. Students – after consulting their Academic Advisor - can direct their own learning path with some choices in pacing, sequencing and time allotment of the compulsory courses. The literature for each course is updated depending on national and international developments, which allows even more flexibility. The research and dissertation stages are completely personalized.

Assessments of the compulsory courses includes a variety of assessment types, which allows for reviewing various student skills and knowledge and provide students to show their performance in various ways. The steps of writing a research proposal, and defending the first three chapters, are also ways to spread the work over time and discover possible difficulties at an early time.

There is an explicit integration of academic skills and domain-specific knowledge and skills.

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.

1. For the compulsory courses, its flexibility can be further improved with more use of blended teaching approaches, allowing, for example, a flipped classroom in which students attend lectures and review literature online prior to class leaving space to discuss, debate and collaborate physically in class. In this way, more time can be spent on student-centered learning with student input in class.
2. The course programme, and the research and dissertation stages in particular, are mostly individual work. Groups meetings are limited and connected to the supervisor. Students indicate a need to interact more with PhDs from other supervisors and to participate in meetings with PhDs from the Graduate School to have more interdisciplinary interaction and to form a research community with other PhDs. This interaction with other PhD in the Graduate School would be much easier if the department is located at or near the main campus.
3. Student can choose a research methodology course, which could mean that they are prepared for the methods to be used in their dissertation, but not as an educational research with a broad methodological expertise per se. A recommendation is to ensure that graduates have at least a basic understanding of both quantitative and qualitative research methods and some additional specific knowledge and skills in the research methodology that is used on the dissertation.



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	not applicable
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.

The staff who have been recruited to the Department are outstanding – many holding the status of Assistant Professor where in other institutions they in Europe they would have already been promoted.

Many have PhDs which have been awarded in world-leading universities abroad. Collectively those staff contributing to the programme under review publish in leading journals, are themselves well-cited, have led internationally-funded research projects, and are part of networks across Europe and beyond. This enables them to keep abreast of recent developments abroad, as well as to bring new ideas back into the academy in Cyprus. It thus meets one of the main objectives of the programme which is to make a societal and international contribution.

It is clear their research expertise feeds into their teaching, however it is not evident from reading lists whether their own work is used or not (aside from one or two exceptions).

Some of the reading lists feel dated, though it was assured that students help update the literatures that are being used to teach with.

Staff teach 2 courses a semester. Though workload and staffing were noted as an issue in the self-assessment, there was good evidence that there was relevant and available expertise to teach the programme. There is a fair distribution of teaching between junior and senior colleagues.

Feedback is given to staff via an evaluation at the end of a course.

Strengths

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

The Department attracts distinguished visitors who can contribute to the intellectual life of the Department and thus to the students enrolled on the programme. The Faculty also hosts international conferences. This profiles the Faculty and enables students to more easily make a contribution. Evidence of a range of assessment strategies being used in teaching.

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.

1. Put a process into place to review and update reading lists so that when students are viewing these, they see that the courses are completely up to date.
2. Engage in formative and summative assessment of the courses. This might be done through a mid-semester meeting with the coordinators to ensure that areas of improvement or concerns can be dealt with and be effective for the current cohort.
3. Make teacher development, and teacher development programmes within the University more explicit, and the expectation with regard to staff and their development.

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

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 admission policy of the programme is well defined. Requirements are transparent and public, and include aspects, such as relevant background, level of English, master's degree from a recognized university, an interview, and a project proposal. The programme has designed an interesting system of follow up of students' progress. A committee of three members of the staff (including the supervisor), monitors the progress of the PhD student. The student has to submit the theoretical and methodological progress of his/her thesis in the mid-term (3 chapters). That allows them to keep record of the situation of each student during the thesis. In addition, supervisors work closely with students to ensure adequate progress of their theses.

We did not see explicit reference to systems of recognition and certification so we are unclear whether they are accurate and aligned with European regulations; we assume so, however.

Strengths

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

The evaluation of a relevant proposal aligned with the characteristics of the Master facilitates an adequate process of selection of the candidates. Together with the personal interview it becomes a good basis for selecting promising students.

The PhD programme shows the capacity to attract some students previously enrolled in the master programme (around 50% of PhD students come from the Master). The admission process is based

on objective criteria and the rules are transparent. The programme includes flexibility in terms of time, to facilitate the realization of theses by students that must work at least part-time.

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.

1. Indications of 'good level of English' could be better specified in the public facing paperwork (e.g. IGCSE IELTS certificates) and the thresholds needed.
2. Systems of monitoring and follow-up are positive, but they could be improved by evaluating the progress of each student on an annual or bi-annual basis.

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

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.

Blackboard is used as virtual learning environment with all teaching and learning resources included. Turnitin is used to detect plagiarism. No experiences with plagiarism are mentioned, which can be explained by the fact that most assignments are context-based and focused on individual problems and questions that are studied.

Students and teachers have access to well-equipped physical resources, although all of them are located at the main campus and teachers are based on the department location. The library offers a great selection of publications and study facilities. The library also organizes student seminars and indicates an Open Access preference. The IT infrastructure at the premises is good.

Two fully equipped labs are available: a research lab with computers and software for quantitative and qualitative analyses and a pedagogical lab for video-taped teaching and micro-teaching (with cameras, stations for video analysis, scanner/printer). Both students and teachers indicate a wish to have all facilities (including workstations) in one place, the main campus.

The Academic Advisor is an important resource for individual planning of pace, sequence and time allotment of the courses and research phases. The administrative staff supports students to find their way to the right people and other types of support. The Psychology Support Centre (PSC) offers free psychological support and organizes workshops. A career office is in place and housing, sports centre and student clubs are available on campus. A 'newcomers' meeting is scheduled in Summer, with information about the study program and student life, including feedback from current students.

Strengths

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

All resources are well-equipped and are in place. The Academic Advisor is crucial as student mentor guiding students through their programme.

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.

1. Online accessibility of the resources might be improved. Students indicated a wish to have access to teaching and learning materials from a distance.

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

6. Additional for distance learning programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

- 6.1 Distance learning philosophy and methodology
- 6.2 Distance learning material at the appropriate level according to EQF
- 6.3 Interaction plan and Interactive weekly activities
- 6.4 Study guides

6.1 Distance learning philosophy and methodology

Standards

- *The distance learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.*
- *Feedback processes for students in relation to written assignments are set.*
- *A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on distance learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.*
- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*

6.2 Distance learning material at the appropriate level according to EQF

Standards

- *Twelve weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*
- *The distance learning material and activities take advantage of the capabilities offered by the virtual and audio-visual environment and the following are applied:*
 - *Simulations in virtual environments*
 - *Problem solving scenarios*
 - *Interactive learning and formative assessment games*
 - *Interactive weekly activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities for reality reconstruction and further processing based on hypotheses*
 - *They have the ability to transfer students to real-life situations, make decisions, and study the consequences of their decisions*
 - *They help in building skills both in experiences and attitudes like in real life and also in experiencing - not just memorizing knowledge*
- *A pedagogical planning unit for distance learning, which is responsible for the support of the distance learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*

6.3 Interaction plan and Interactive weekly activities

Standards

- *A specific plan is developed to safeguard and assess the interaction:*
 - *among students*
 - *between students and teaching staff*
 - *between students and study guides/material of study*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the students and teaching staff focusing on interaction and the specificities of distance learning.*

6.4 Study guides

Standards

- *A study guide for each course, fully aligned with distance learning philosophy and methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:*
 - *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*
 - *Presentation of course material, and students' activities on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)*
 - *Weekly outline of set activities and exercises and clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
 - *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
 - *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
 - *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
 - *Synopsis*
- *Study guides, material and activities are appropriate for the level of the programme according to the EQF.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Is the nature of the programme compatible with distance learning delivery?*
- *How do the programme, the material, the facilities, and the guidelines safeguard the interaction between students, students and teaching staff, students and the material?*
- *How many students upload their work and discuss it in the platform during the semester?*
- *Are the academics qualified to teach in the distance learning programme?*

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>
6.1	Distance learning philosophy and methodology	Choose answer
6.2	Distance learning material at the appropriate level according to EQF	Choose answer
6.3	Interaction plan and Interactive weekly activities	Choose answer
6.4	Study guides	Choose answer

7. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

7.1 Selection criteria and requirements

7.2 Proposal and dissertation

7.3 Supervision and committees

7.1 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*

7.2 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.*

7.3 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.

The selection criteria and requirements are publicly available and clear. Students have a minimum of 6 semesters and a maximum of 16 semesters to complete the PhD. The steps along the way are outlined in the policies, including the outcomes at each stage.

Students complete a comprehensive exam which must be scheduled once per year (they have only 2 chances to pass; assuming a pass they move to the next stage whilst a failure means one further opportunity). Comprehensives must be sat between semester 3 and semester 7).

The preparation of the proposal and its examination takes place between 2 and 4 semesters after the comprehensive exam. The committee structure (3) and who (supervisor/in the department/beyond the department) is clearly specified. This is pass/fail and there are two chances.

A new step has more recently been added which is the submission of three chapters (no credits). Several students noted that this was confusing. Given that chapter writing does not always begin with the first three (Chapter 1 can often come at the end), it might be useful for the Department to monitor what this step offers and what the added value of more examining offers.

The fee structure is clearly stated as are the rules for defending and the appointment of the examiners.

The structure of the thesis is specified in the policy, as is the basis for awarding the PhD (completion of the course work, passes at the steps along the way, and a PhD thesis that has an extensive bibliography, makes a scientific contribution, is original and adds significant knowledge, has a clear abstract and can be written in an international language but the abstract must be in one of the official languages of the university. The minimum work limit is 10,000 which seems to be very low and not in line with international practice (which is closer to 50,000-80,000 words).

Students state supervision is very good, and there are clear structures in place to support students. The graduation rate attests to good practice.

Strengths

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

The use of steps along the way to ensure progress is good practice especially when the date to completion is quite a wide flexible one. This more flexible window for completion minimises excessive administration over intermissions that can be seen elsewhere.

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.

1. Review minimum word limit for the thesis and bring this into line with practice and international practice.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
7.1	Selection criteria and requirements	compliant
7.2	Proposal and dissertation	compliant
7.3	Supervision and committees	compliant

8. Additional for joint programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

- 8.1 Legal framework and cooperation agreement
- 8.2 The joint programme

8.1 Legal framework and cooperation agreement

Standards

- *The joint programme is offered in accordance with legal frameworks of the relevant national higher education systems.*
- *The terms and conditions of the joint programme are laid down in a cooperation agreement. The agreement in particular covers the following issues:*
 - *Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme*
 - *Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation, including funding, sharing of costs and income, resources for mobility of staff and students*
 - *Admission and selection procedures for students*
 - *Mobility of students and teaching staff*
 - *Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures*
 - *Handling of different semester periods, if existent*

8.2 The joint programme

Standards

- *The partner universities apply joint internal quality assurance processes.*
- *The joint programme is offered jointly, involving all cooperating universities in the design, delivery and further development of the programme.*
- *Aims and learning outcomes are clearly stated, including a joint syllabus, language policy, as well as an account of the intended added value of the programme.*
- *Study counselling and mobility plans are efficient and take into account the needs of different kinds of students.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- Does the joint study programme conform to the requirements of a study programme offered at the specific level?
- Is there a system that assures the quality of joint provision and guarantees that the aims of the programme are met?
- Do the mechanisms for ensuring the quality of the joint study programme take into consideration the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)? Are they adopted by all the universities involved?
- Is the division of responsibilities in ensuring quality clearly defined among the partner universities?
- Is relevant information about the programme, e.g. admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures, well documented and published by taking into account the specific needs of students?
- What is the added value of the programme of study?
- Is there a sustainable funding strategy among the partner universities? Explain.

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>
8.1	Legal framework and cooperation agreement	Choose answer
8.2	The joint programme	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 PhD programme on Curriculum, Teaching and Comparative Education is an excellent programme of advanced research for professionals of education, researchers and policymakers. It makes effective use of courses that are shared with the Masters' programme on Curriculum, Teaching and Comparative Education. It has very strong elements built into it to ensure that student progress through the various stages is evaluated rigorously, with opportunities for revisions and resubmissions. The staff of the programme are outstanding, with excellent academic records and ongoing international research projects in the field of comparative education and curriculum development studies. We view the programme as equivalent to those in the leading research institutions engaged in education sciences in Europe and beyond.

The review of the programme has identified a number of aspects that could improve the programme. These have to be understood as recommendations to enhance what is already an excellent programme.

1. The premises of the Department of Education, situated outside of the university campus, does not help to construct a sense of community and engagement with the rest of the university. It would be important to address this problem to optimise the learning experience of students and the engagement of the Faculty in the wider activity of the university.
2. The number of ECTS seems to be very high (273), especially if there are students coming from two years master' degrees (120 ECTS). Systems of flexibility could be studied depending on previous experience.
3. The course programme, and the research and dissertation stages in particular, are mostly individual work. Groups meetings are limited and connected to the supervisor. Students indicate a need to interact more with PhDs from other supervisors and to participate in meetings with PhDs from the Graduate School to have more interdisciplinary interaction and to form a research community with other PhDs. This interaction with other PhD in the Graduate School would also be much easier if the department is located at or near the main campus.
4. Enable PhD students to access the Independent Studies option.
5. Engage in formative and summative assessment of the courses. This might be done through a mid-semester meeting with the coordinators to ensure that areas of improvement or concerns can be dealt with and be effective for the current cohort.
6. Systems of monitoring and follow-up are positive, but they could be improved by evaluating the progress of each student on an annual or bi-annual basis.
7. Online accessibility of the resources might be improved. Students indicated a wish to have access to teaching and learning materials from a distance.
8. Review minimum word limit for the thesis and bring this into line with practice and international practice.



E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Susan L. Robertson	
Xavier Bonal	
Wilfried Admiraal	
Marina Neophytou	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 29th September, 2020