

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report

(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

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

In Greek:

Γλώσσα, Γραμματισμός και Εκπαίδευση [3-8
ακαδημαϊκά εξάμηνα, 90 ECTS, Μεταπτυχιακό]

In English:

Language, Literacy and Education [3-8 academic
semesters, 90 ECTS, Master]

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek and/or English
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating
- **Concentrations (if any):**



The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws” of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The External Evaluation Committee visited the Main Campus of the University of Cyprus on 27 October, 9:00-17:00

A series of meetings was conducted throughout the day (October 27 2025) with key staff, students, external stakeholders and administrative staff involved with the programme and the wider Department, faculty and Institution including the Head of Department, the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs who all made presentations on relevant aspects of the University, Faculty and Department connected with the programme under review.

The Committee was given ample opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification on aspects of the documentation provided as well as discuss other parts of the programme and obtain relevant information from the participants

The Committee was also given a tour of the library facilities.

The full schedule is appended to the report.



B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Christiane Dalton-Puffer	Professor of Linguistics and English Language Education	University of Vienna, Austria
Helen Kelly-Holmes	Professor of Applied Languages and Sociolinguistics	University of Limerick, Ireland
Athena Theodotou	Student Member	Open University of Cyprus
George Tsoulas	Professor of Linguistics	University of York, UK
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:*
 - *is a part of the strategic management of the program.*
 - *focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study program.*
 - *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*
 - *is developed with input from industry leaders and other stakeholders (i.e. industry leaders, professional bodies/associations, social partners, NGO's, governmental agencies) to align with professional standards.*
 - *integrates employer surveys to adapt to evolving workplace demands.*
 - *regularly utilizes alumni feedback for long-term effectiveness assessment.*
 - *is published and implemented by all stakeholders.*

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*

- *Aligns course learning outcomes with student assessments using rubrics to ensure objectives are met.*
- *Connects each course's aims and objectives with the programme's overall aims and objectives through mapping, aligning with the institutional strategy.*
- *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*
 - *collaborates with industry experts for curriculum development.*
 - *conducts joint reviews with external academic specialists to maintain academic rigor.*
 - *performs periodic assessments with external stakeholders to ensure continuous alignment with market needs.*
 - *establishes collaboration with international educational institutions or/& other relevant international bodies for a global perspective.*
 - *conducts regular feedback sessions with local community leaders for societal relevance.*

2.1 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*

In addition, the program has established mechanisms of transparency & communication to ensure that

- Professional bodies validate program descriptions and outcomes.
- Community leaders actively participate in ensuring that the program's public information is relevant and resonates with the local and societal context.
- External auditors review public information for accuracy & consistency vis-à-vis the actual implementation of the program.
- Industry-specific & societal information is regularly updated with expert inputs.
- Alumni testimonials are included for a realistic portrayal of program outcomes.

2.2 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed using specific indicators and data i.e:*
 - *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*
 - *industry trend analysis.*
 - *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*
 - *data exchanges with professional networks*
 - *employer insights concerning career readiness*
- *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?*
- *How and to what extent are external stakeholders involved in the quality assurance process of the program?*
- *How is external stakeholder feedback gathered, analyzed and implemented,?*
- *In what ways do external stakeholders assist in making program information publicly available?*
- *How do external stakeholders contribute to evaluating graduate success in the labor market and obtaining feedback on employment 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.

Quality Assurance Policy

The University of Cyprus has a QA policy and has established a new office for the purposes of maintaining quality standards. Although the site contains information about the QA policy, it was somewhat unclear where the actual, updated documentation was to be found.

Programme Overview and Design

The MA Language, Literacy and Education is an established second-cycle postgraduate programme at the University of Cyprus, operating within the Department of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences and Education**, since September 2009. The programme is currently applying for re-accreditation.

The overall objective of the programme is the in-depth, research-based examination of language and language arts teaching, rooted in theoretical premises from **literacy studies and applied linguistics**. It is specifically focused on teachers and language-interested professionals in various epistemological fields.

Curriculum Structure and Flexibility The programme requires **90 ECTS** and offers significant flexibility with a duration ranging from a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 8 semesters. It is also provided with two distinct streams: with or without a Master's thesis. Both paths include:

- 24 ECTS in obligatory core subjects (e.g., EDU 521: Language, Discourse and Communication).
- 6 ECTS seminar. 24 ECTS of specialization and methodology courses.
- 24 ECTS specifically allocated for the Master's Thesis stream (Master Thesis I and II).

The curriculum follows a progressive structure, introducing core concepts in the first semester and allowing for specialization through elective and methodology courses in subsequent semesters. Instruction is offered in Greek and/or English, acknowledging the country's bilingual environment and the international nature of literacy studies. Furthermore, the programme allows for Recognition of Prior Learning of up to 24 ECTS.

The programme shows a relatively high integration of teaching and research. Faculty members are locally and internationally recognized for their research activity, and the programme allocates approximately €10,000 annually for research work and €5,000 on conferences/seminars. Programme coordinators also oversee the accompanying PhD programme, ensuring smooth articulation between Master's and doctoral studies.

Learning Outcomes Programme learning outcomes are clearly stated and mapped to the European Qualifications Framework. Upon completion, students are expected to:

- Critically analyse language, text, discourse, and communication concepts within contemporary theoretical frameworks.
- Bridge the gap between limited and broader social definitions of literacy in society.

- Gain specialized theoretical and practical skills in numerous aspects of language arts, including multiliteracies, digital literacy, and bilingual/multilingual teaching.
- Participate in and generate research in language, literacy, and education.

Strengths

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

1. Academic Identity and Relevance: The programme has a distinct and highly relevant academic identity, successfully addressing contemporary global issues such as multiliteracies, digital literacies, and multilingual education.
2. Programme Maturity and Stability: Operating successfully since 2009 with a consistent track record of graduates, the programme demonstrates institutional commitment and persistent student demand.
3. Research-Informed Teaching and Staff: The programme is delivered by experienced, research-active staff with local and international recognition. The dedicated annual funding for research purposes further supports a research-based teaching environment.
4. Flexible and Student-Centred Design: The programme's adaptive streams (with/without thesis) and variable duration (3-8 semesters) meet the diverse needs of its student population, particularly working professionals. Pedagogical strategies and multi-modal evaluation practices align with student-centred learning philosophies.
5. Departmental Reputation: The Department of Education itself maintains a strong international standing, notably in the Shanghai Ranking (401-500 for 2023-2024) and the Times Higher Education Subject Rankings (501-600 for 2023-2024), lending significant weight to the 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.

General recommendation: Ensure the QA policy documents are available and easily locatable on the website.

While the programme is robust, compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) and overall programme quality can be enhanced through strengthening quality assurance processes.

1. Programme Monitoring and Review

Insufficient evidence exists for a regular and systematic internal programme review process that operates independently of the institutional quality assurance framework and the external accreditation cycle.

Recommendation: Implement a formal, annual programme review process that systematically tracks KPIs such as student progress, completion rates, and time-to-degree statistics, and incorporates structured faculty reflection on curriculum currency and student feedback.

2. Graduate Tracking and Labour Market Alignment

Area for Improvement: The submission lacks concrete evidence of a systematic graduate tracking system or quantitative measurement of employment and labour market outcomes for alumni.

3. Internationalisation Strategy: Improving Internationalisation is a major aim of the Department. However there seems to be no well developed strategy to achieve it.

Recommendation: Develop a comprehensive internationalization plan with formal inter-institutional partnerships, support for student mobility programmes, and systematic engagement with international visiting lecturers, beyond existing individual faculty contacts.

The recommendations put forward are both feasible and proportionate to the size and circumstances of the programme. So long as there is commitment from programme management and proper institutional support, these enhancements can be implemented stage by stage to lead to a programme not only that has been accredited but a model of best practice in language and literacy teaching in Cyprus and the broader region as well.

The programme team's recognition of areas for development (as shown through their SWOT analysis) and experience of successfully delivering over the long term suggest they possess the ability and motivation to put in place the areas of development highlighted in this report.

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

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

Sub-areas

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

3.2 Practical training

3.3 Student assessment

3.0 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.*
- *Detailed schedules in course materials are included, explicitly stating the expected hours for lectures, self-study, and group projects, ensuring transparency in time allocation.*
- *A system is integrated where each learning activity is assigned a weight proportional to its importance and time requirement, aiding in balanced curriculum design.*

Findings

Teaching and Assessment Approaches

The programme employs student-centered pedagogical approaches emphasizing experiential, inquiry-based procedures. Assessment includes development of mini research studies, educational intervention design, and presentations in and outside the classroom. Instructors use diverse methods: midterm/final examinations, case studies, teamwork, quizzes, oral examinations, student presentations, and simulations. Critically, instructors must adopt at least two evaluation methods, with final examinations capped at 60% of the grade, ensuring varied assessment.

Grading operates on a 0-10 numeric scale (passing grade: 5). Students receive transparent assessment criteria before courses begin. Grade improvement is permitted once per course, with the most recent grade counting. Appeal mechanisms exist through instructors and Department Chair. Master's theses are evaluated by three-member committees including the advisor.

Student Support Mechanisms

Comprehensive support exists at departmental and university levels. Each student receives an Academic Advisor (faculty member) monitoring progress and addressing challenges. Faculty maintain weekly office hours. The Academic Affairs and Student Welfare Service provides administrative support. The Social Support Office assists students with disabilities, health issues, or financial difficulties. The University Mental Health Center offers free psychological counseling. Additional services include Career Center (skills development, employer networking, job placement), Center of Entrepreneurship, student clubs, and housing assistance.

Practical training

Training is offered in a variety of research methods, with a focus on qualitative methods, which students can take as one of their core course. Many examples of state-of-the-art and innovative methods are included in the research training course (e.g. multi-modal research methods, participatory methods etc.). Given that many students are teachers, the focus on practitioner-led / teacher-as-researcher in many of the courses and dissertations is to be welcomed. The core status of the research methods course reflects the importance of this training to the module. Stakeholders and students spoke highly of the impact of the research training. For example, stakeholders commented on the commendable way in which graduates of the programme can 'bridge policy and practice' and that they bring a 'refreshing view of literacy' to the classroom and other areas of life and work, and that their research training gives them an innate curiosity which they bring to their work. Students praised the constant linking of theory and practice in their modules and training and were appreciative of opportunities to learn outside of the lecture hall setting in real life situations. Course descriptions clearly describe components and expected hours which equate to relevant ECTS for the particular course.

Student assessment

Course outlines make clear the nature (e.g. time, length) and weighting of assessments. Examples of a range of assessments showcased how students can demonstrate their achievement of learning outcomes and also how they can tailor the assessment to their particular strengths, interests and context. Courses have a range of assessments which test both acquisition and understanding of core concepts and the ability to apply these to real world language

situations. All necessary procedures for marking, moderation, etc. appear to be in order for the process to be fair and transparent are in place.

In discussions with teaching staff and students, a number of examples of the linking of teaching and assessment to the objectives and learning outcomes were presented. In relation to responding to student feedback, one example illustrated how the instructor had altered how they gave group feedback (to incorporate an in-person meeting with the group) in response to student requests for more feedback. Many examples of the development of transferrable skills were shown in the documentation and in particular in the presentations and discussions with staff, students, and stakeholders. One stakeholder commented on how graduates of the programme 'bring an analytical and intellectual capacity which helps us to strengthen the education system' in Cyprus. Students and stakeholders commented very positively on the connection between theory and practice, and students expressed a desire for an even stronger focus on practical applications and making connections to real world scenarios from theory. In addition to the research that takes place as part of module assessment and activities, many students are involved in staff-led research projects and benefit from this experience. The grading of the MA dissertation was explained, and this involves second marking and moderation by a panel. The majority of the students do not undertake the MA dissertation and the onerous nature of the process, which requires a number of additional semesters of study seems off-putting according to student feedback. There are no minimum or maximum word counts for the MA thesis and according to staff members, they can vary greatly in length.

Strengths

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

Many innovative assessments which develop transferrable skills

Students experience a range of assessment types and have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning progress

Some assessments involve working directly with stakeholders in community events (e.g. Buffer Fringe Festival)

The programme clearly prepares students for work and for advancing their careers

Graduates are highly-rated and stakeholders commented on the positive contribution they are making to the education system in particular and to wider society also.

Authentic Assessment Practices: Programme-specific emphasis on mini research studies and educational interventions aligns assessment with programme philosophy

Balanced Assessment Requirements: 60% cap on final examinations encourages diverse assessment, preventing over-reliance on traditional testing

Comprehensive Student Support: Multi-tiered support system (academic advising, psychological services, career guidance) addresses holistic student needs

Transparent Assessment Framework: Clear grading criteria, appeal procedures, and grade improvement policies demonstrate commitment to fairness

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. Consider establishing formal mechanisms for reviewing course evaluations and implementing pedagogical improvements.
2. While policies exist, evidence of detailed rubrics and assessment exemplars is limited. Recommendation: Develop and share detailed rubrics, model responses, and exemplars for major assessments, particularly thesis evaluation criteria.
3. Consider developing guidelines for maximum and minimum word counts for the MA thesis.
4. Consider whether a shorter MA thesis that might be manageable over two semesters could make the programme more competitive with other providers.
5. In addition, consider ways to make the dissertation a more attractive option, since it is usual in most countries for MA graduates to have undertaken a dissertation or an internship.
6. While recognising the many commendable examples of bridging theory and practice, consider how this can be incorporated even more into modules, given the teacher-researcher status of many of the students.

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

4. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

<u>Sub-areas</u>
<p>5. Teaching staff recruitment and development</p> <p>6. Teaching staff number and status</p> <p>7. Synergies of teaching and research</p>

<p>8. Teaching staff recruitment and development</p> <p><u>Standards</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.</i>
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- *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.*

9. 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.*

10. Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*

- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

Findings

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

Teaching staff recruitment and development

The Department employs 23 academics of different specialisations; ten of them are at the rank of full Professor, eleven at the rank of Associate Professor, and two at the rank of Lecturer. The core staff of the programme under evaluation are two Associate Professors, with staff of other specialisations providing elective modules in the programme. We were not able to discuss exact recruitment procedures, but it is clear that all staff have completed their PhDs and partly also held post-doc positions at universities outside Cyprus (mainly UK/US). Their familiarity with other academic traditions contributing to the teaching culture of the department and the programme. It was clear from the discussion with staff members and the HoD that teaching holds a high priority in the department. In terms of skills development opportunities some are offered by the University's CTL. In the discussion, staff showed a proactive attitude towards integrating new challenges (AI) into their teaching activities. Additionally, staff are attending conferences and collaborating internationally in research and embed research into their teaching. Staff regularly receive the results of the course evaluations run by CTL. The annual personal research funds of up to € 6,000 (based on merit like publications), are partly spent by staff on inviting international colleagues to complement local expertise; indirectly, this also serves the purpose of staff development.

Teaching staff number and status

The masters programme is staffed by 11 academics. The two programme coordinators (Ioannidou, Kontovourki) offer all core obligatory courses, core electives and act as supervisors for students in the "with thesis" strand. Table 1 presents the current staff of the masters programme with their respective specialisations.

Table 1 Master level teaching staff

Staff membe	Rank	Discipline
Elena Ioannidou	Assoc.Prof.	Sociolinguistics and language arts education
Stavroula Kontovourki	Assoc.Prof.	Literacy and language arts education
Eleni Loizou	Professor	Early Childhood Education



Charoula Angeli-Valandides	Professor	Educational Technology
Zelia Gregoriou	Assoc.Prof	Philosophy of Education
Stavroula Philippou	Assoc.Prof	Curriculum and Teaching
Simoni Symeonidou	Assoc.Prof	Inclusive Education & Disability Studies
Miranda Christou	Assoc.Prof	Education, collective memory and history
Charalambos Charalambous	Assoc.Prof.	Educational evaluation and assessment
Panayiotis Antoniou	Assist.Prof.	Research methods
Theoni Neokleus	STS	Language acquisition, bilingualism and literacy

There does not seem to be any regular visiting teaching staff, as all requirements of the programme can be staffed with local faculty members.

Synergies of teaching and research

As key strength of this programme is its integration of research and teaching. Teaching faculty pursues this as a consistent strategy across modules and this was also pointed out emphatically by the students, who highly appreciate the experience of being taught by research-active experts, as well as being engaged in research activities themselves as part of the coursework (and the MA thesis, if applicable).

Research activities of staff in the core areas of the programme are extensive, publishing and presenting in international fora, mainly in English. Research activities also involve extensive reviewing for high-ranking journals, serving on editorial boards and regular conference organization.

We appreciated that staff underscored the importance of also publishing in Greek in order project more directly into the local context, the Literacy and Language Arts Conference being another instance of staff's efforts to link international research expertise with the Cypriot context.

The programme is exemplary in its consistent integration of education and research, both in terms of the course leaders' research feeding into coursework and also in terms of students' research activities reaching out into local educational and non-educational contexts.

Strengths

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

- Staff provide excellent role models for students demonstrating engaged, critical and socially responsible research practice.
- Student actively engage with staff research topics and establish research-based connections to local community concerns. The deep contextual knowledge held by staff is crucial in this.
- Teaching staff are familiar with the Department's BA graduates (who represent a large proportion of the MA's intake) enabling them to tailor course content to different student needs.
- Cross-faculty engagement and exchange across core and elective modules seems to be a regular, if not formalized, happening. Clear sense of team spirit.
- Students have the chance to experience a range of teacher-researcher personalities and role models.

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 course team in conjunction with HoD and faculty leadership might want to think about a strategy to ensure sustainability of the programme in case one of the two coordinators is not available to teach core courses. Planning on having one external academic offering a core elective once in each 2-year cycle



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

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

Sub-areas

- 12. Student admission, processes and criteria
- 13. Student progression
- 14. Student recognition
- 15. Student certification

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria (see section 7.1)

4.2 Student progression

Student progression is regulated by the University of Cyprus and is effectively monitored, with appropriate interventions when needed. During the evaluation process, students expressed strong appreciation and complete satisfaction with the academic support provided, particularly highlighting the dedication of the two programme coordinators and other staff members involved in their studies.

4.3 Student recognition

Students' master's degrees are recognized in accordance with the guidelines and procedures of the Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (KYSATS). The programme also ensures recognition of both formal and informal learning through its tailored admission criteria, which consider varied academic backgrounds in literacy, language, and education.

4.4 Student certification

Student certification is regulated by the University of Cyprus and applies uniformly across all faculties, departments, and academic programmes. Graduates receive official documentation detailing the qualification awarded, including the learning outcomes

achieved, the academic context, and comprehensive information about the level, content, and status of their completed studies.

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

The Programme complies with the standards set by the Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications. Student progress is regularly monitored, and all students expressed unanimous satisfaction with the course, the support they receive, and the dedication of their instructors.

Student admission, processes and criteria

The Programme implements admission procedures in a consistent and transparent manner, in line with the regulations of the University of Cyprus and the standards of the European University System. Prospective students are provided with comprehensive information about the study programme and the structure of the host Department upon their arrival at the University. This information is available in printed materials, on the website, or through specially organized events. Admission criteria are established according to international standards and include a recognized undergraduate degree in a relevant field, strong proficiency in English, academic reference letters, and successful participation in a personal interview conducted by the admissions committee. At the moment a maximum of twelve (12) students are accepted into each cycle of the master's programme

Student progress is governed by the regulations of the University of Cyprus and is carefully monitored, with appropriate measures taken when necessary. During the evaluation process, students expressed highly positive views and conveyed their complete satisfaction with the academic support they receive, particularly highlighting the valuable guidance provided by the two programme coordinators and other staff members.

Student recognition

The recognition of students' undergraduate degrees follows the official procedures and regulations set by the Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (KYSATS). Additionally, both formal and informal learning experiences are acknowledged through the programme's specific admission criteria, which take into account diverse academic backgrounds in the fields of literacy, language, and education.

Student certification

Student certification is regulated by the University of Cyprus and applies uniformly across all faculties, departments, and academic programmes. Upon completion of their studies, students receive official documentation detailing the qualification awarded, including the learning outcomes achieved, the academic context, and the level, scope, and nature of their studies. The certification framework is based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), which is consistently applied throughout the curriculum. Core and elective modules carry 12 ECTS credits each, seminars are worth 6 ECTS, and the Master's Thesis is assigned 24 ECTS credits.

Strengths

1. The programme implements well-structured and appropriate admission procedures.
2. Prospective students are provided with clear and comprehensive information regarding admission requirements and processes.
3. Students express a high level of satisfaction with the support they receive from the programme's academic and administrative staff.
4. Candidates' academic qualifications are properly recognized by the Cyprus NARIC (KYSATS) authority.
5. The certification of studies is effectively organized and carried out in accordance with institutional standards.

6. Tuition fees are reasonably priced and not considered excessive, with flexible installment options available to ensure that students are not financially overburdened.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

1. English language proficiency does not appear to be formally aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). It is recommended that a minimum level of B2 be officially required.
2. It is important to ensure that a sufficient number of students are admitted in each academic cycle to maintain the programme's viability.
3. A more effective promotional strategy should be developed to attract a larger pool of applicants, such as enhancing the content and presentation of the departmental website or organizing targeted recruitment events.
4. The integration of more technology and distance learning options is encouraged to make the programme more appealing, especially to prospective students with limited time availability or who live in remote areas.
5. As some students reported difficulty keeping up with deadlines, it is recommended to incorporate AI-powered tools, particularly for summarizing lengthy academic texts, to support time management and improve study efficiency.



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

16. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

- 17. Teaching and Learning resources**
- 18. Physical resources**
- 19. Human support resources**
- 20. 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.*

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.

5.1 Teaching and learning resources

The staff as well as the leadership of the faculty and University considers the **geographical situation** of the Department of Education a challenge to the smooth provision of teaching and learning resources and student access. Travel between teaching locations and staff offices is time-consuming. It was therefore encouraging to hear that the department is going to move to the main university campus in the foreseeable future.

Course readings and **materials** are provided via the **learning platform** Blackboard and are **easily accessible** to students online.

Resources truly reflect the twice dual aim of covering classic and novel approaches as well as the global and the local. Courses combine an **emphasis on academic reading** with an **engagement with real life and often local empirical data** which resonate with students' lived realities and which appear to be adjusted to the needs of individual student cohorts. Course materials show responsiveness to changes in the social context, e.g. migration to Cyprus and the impact of AI.

5.2 Physical resources

1. Department Location The panel observed that the Department of Education is situated at a considerable distance from the vibrant and expanding main campus. This separation was perceived by academic staff as a disadvantage. Although there are future plans to relocate the department to the central university area, the panel believes that the current location poses challenges for both faculty and students.

2. Library and Group Study Facilities On a positive note, the university offers a fully staffed library that operates 24/7, providing continuous access to resources. Additionally, there are designated rooms available for group study, each accommodating up to four students, which encourages collaborative learning.

3. Technical Support The panel also noted the presence of active technical support services, which play a valuable role in assisting both academic and operational needs across the university.

Human Support

The programme is supported by three departmental administrators with the course director also carrying quite a lot of the programme management responsibilities. At present, there is one administrator position unfilled, which has been filled on a temporary basis for some time. The departmental administrators carry out a very wide range of functions across all undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD programmes as well as looking after staff, research projects, scheduling etc. and also liaising with other units across the institution. The Faculty of Social Sciences and Education has introduced a new post to support the marketing of and recruitment for programmes such as this. A few cycles of recruitment will be needed to see if this is improving the process and supporting the academic staff.

The Graduate School plays a role in supporting the programme and research students in general, by providing the regulatory framework for higher degrees.

Student Support

Academic staff are clearly the first port of call and a key resource for supporting students. In addition, students have a range of institutional supports of which they can avail. Students also gave examples of how they provide support to each other through social media groups etc. The students also have the opportunity to participate in international conferences and research projects. At present, remote options are not offered on the module and the University has a policy of in-person attendance. Attendance is good and there does not seem to be a demand from students or staff for hybrid and remote options. However, recorded lectures are provided where students have missed out on content due to mitigating circumstance.

Strengths

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

Full exploitation of learning platform for provision of learning materials.

Materials which reflect intellectual history of the course topics but are also responsive to recent developments.
 Provision of data and small research tasks for experiential learning.

A very dedicated team of academic and administrative staff within the Department ensures that students are supported.

A range of institutional services exist for students in need of support.

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.

Prioritize the move of the Department of Education to the main campus in order to improve accessibility for students.

Ensure that the departmental administrative vacancy is filled on a permanent basis in order to maintain the high-quality support to academic staff and students.

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

Sub-area	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i></p>
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5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

21. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Sub-areas

- 22. Selection criteria and requirements**
- 23. Proposal and dissertation**
- 24. Supervision and committees**

25. 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*

26. 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.*

27. 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?
- Are the criteria reflected in dissertation samples?

Findings

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Choose answer
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Not applicable
6.3	Supervision and committees	Not applicable

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.

This is clearly a rigorous and high-quality program, distinguished by its unique, multidisciplinary focus on literacy and language arts. The program benefits significantly from highly dedicated staff who possess strong international reputations and professional linkages, and it garners consistently positive and warm feedback from both current students and external stakeholders.

While there is evident potential to grow and attract international students—particularly given the possibility of submitting theses in English—current constraints on resources and the program's intensive delivery model, suggest that immediate large-scale expansion may not be feasible.

The program's current success relies, in part, on a foundation of implicit knowledge, which stems from the close, strong relationships among a small cohort of staff and students. Should the program pursue growth, it would be essential to formalize and make this implicit knowledge explicit (e.g., clearly defined language requirements) to maintain consistency and quality.

Ultimately, the program's core strength—its unique selling point—is validated by numerous excellent examples of student work, dissertations, and activities, as well as compelling testimonials from graduates and stakeholders. This rich body of evidence provides the necessary basis for positioning the program more competitively in the market.



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Christiane Dalton-Puffer	
Helen Kelly-Holmes	
Athena Theodotou	
George Tsoulas	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: October 28, 2025