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 / HUMANITIES / LETTERS / BUSINESS AND PUBLIC ADMINISRATION

- **Department/ Sector:** Departments of Education, English Studies, French and European Studies, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, History and Archaeology, Social and Political Sciences, Law, Business and Public Administration

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

  In Greek:

  Σπουδές Φύλου [6-16 ακαδημαϊκά εξάμηνα, 240 ECTS, Διδακτορικό (PhD), Διατμηματικό]

  In English:

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

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].

Gender Studies [6-16 academic semesters, 240 ECTS, Doctorate (PhD), Interdepartmental]

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

- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction
This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

An application for evaluation and accreditation for the Self-Financed (Student Fee Paying) Inter-Departmental Interdisciplinary Graduate Program "Master in Gender Studies" coordinated by the Department of Education at the University of Cyprus has been filed with the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA). The committee, chaired by Andrea Peto (CEU, Vienna), Ania Plomien (LSE, London), Annika Olsson (Malmö University), and Anna Panayiotou (student), was appointed.

A pre-meeting was held with Droso Lavithi from CYQAA on September 5th, 2025, to establish the basis of the review. Reports of the 2021 External Evaluation visit, together with the present self-evaluation and the presentations ' PPTs, were provided. Requests for additional documentation (Handbook, admissions data, and list of student publications) were fulfilled.

The on-site visit on the part of the evaluation committee to the new campus Aglatzia of the University of Cyprus happened on 26 September 2025. It included interviews with the vice-rector for Academic Affairs (Prof. Tatiana Eleni Synodinou),the dean of the School of Social Sciences and Education (Prof. Antonis A. Ellinas), the head of department of the Department of Education, Zacharias Zacharia, the Director of the Gender Studies Program, (Associate Prof. Miranda Christou), and several teachers in the programme, as well as administrative staff, library representatives, and current and former students of the department. The participants of the meetings responded to the questions raised by the committee in a constructive manner.

The UNESCO chair in gender equity, given to the Department of Education, was the starting point of the program, which brings together a wide range of scholars and courses across the social sciences and humanities. Now, Miranda Christou and Alexia Panayiotou share the chair.

The evaluation committee was well supported by the CAQUAA during its site visit.

Click or tap here to enter text.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Andrea Peto	Professor	Central European University
Annika Olsson	Professor	Malmö University
Ania Plomien	Professor	LSE
Anna Panayiotou	Student	Open University of Cyprus
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.*

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*
  - *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.

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

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

1.4 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:*
    - o *key performance indicators*
    - o *profile of the student population*
    - o *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
    - o *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
    - o *learning resources and student support available*
    - o *career paths of graduates*
    - o *industry trend analysis.*
    - o *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*

ΔΙΠΑΕ
CYQAA
ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

eqar/// enqa.

> - *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.

The EEC concludes that the PhD programme in gender studies is of high quality and facilitates an inclusive environment that engages with the surrounding community. It is the result of successful interdisciplinary and interdepartmental collaboration, and its operation has been approved by all relevant decision-making bodies at the university, especially by the host department, the Department of Education.

Policy for Quality Assurance

The PhD Gender Studies programme demonstrates coherence by offering limited courses for the PhD training but facilitating the thesis writing process.

However, this external evaluation reveals that programme coherence relies heavily on informal collegial relationships rather than formal systematic coordination structures of internal evaluation. The current coordination mechanisms between departments operate primarily through individual faculty relationships and shared programme commitment rather than institutional structures, suggesting that enhanced formal coordination could significantly benefit strategic planning, resource allocation, and long-term programme sustainability.

Faculty awareness of colleagues' work occurs through a team-teaching arrangement of the Mandatory Courses (GRS629 and GRS776), but the absence of regular faculty meetings, systematic content review sessions, and strategic discussions of the program's future represents a missed opportunity for more comprehensive and strategic coordination. The lack of quantitative methods courses and a wide variety of qualitative methods courses should be reconsidered.

While this reliance on informal coordination is currently effective due to faculty commitment and the program's small scale, it could benefit from more systematic approaches to ensure continued quality and consistency, as the programme, and avoid overlaps in the readings.

One of the programme's most distinctive features is its commitment to meeting students' expectations. Students actively design the content and pace of their self-financed degree in close collaboration with supervisors and examination committees; therefore, their satisfaction with the program is high. This personalized approach operates within clearly established programme expectations and maintains rigorous academic standards while accommodating diverse student backgrounds and career objectives. The small cohort size of 1-4 students per admission cycle facilitates intensive individual attention and creates opportunities for customized academic experiences that would be impossible in larger programs. However, the small number of students, since the last evaluation of 2021, four students applied, and two were admitted.

Design, Approval, On-going Monitoring and Review

The programme's design reflects ambitious interdisciplinary goals that successfully prepare students across multiple competency areas while maintaining rigorous academic standards. Communication skills development occurs through intensive seminar discussions, presentation requirements, and thesis writing, enabling students to engage in sophisticated academic discourse across disciplinary boundaries. The collaborative learning environment fostered by small cohort sizes enhances teamwork competencies through group projects and interdisciplinary seminars, while the primarily English-language instruction provides substantial foreign language development for non-native speakers.

The program employs several evaluation and monitoring systems that incorporate feedback from various stakeholders to ensure quality and accountability. Students' evaluations are sent to the heads of the programs and departments. Only GRS629 and GRS776 are reviewed by the same colleagues who are offering them.

When a guest professor is hired to teach GRS 776, a committee is responsible for hiring qualified personnel to teach specific courses, defining the profile, announcing the position, and ensuring that staffing decisions are made through collaborative review rather than unilateral appointment. Faculty members retain decision-making authority over seminar offerings and special courses, allowing for academic autonomy in curriculum development while maintaining institutional standards. Throughout this process, student feedback is treated as a critical component of the evaluation framework, recognizing that learner perspectives provide essential insights into teaching effectiveness and program quality.

However, the evaluation identifies digital literacy as an area requiring systematic improvement, noting that while students utilize digital platforms for communication and research, formal digital literacy development is not systematically emphasized within the programme structure. The Library offers optional training on how to use digital research tools. Entrepreneurship development receives limited attention, though connections with cultural sectors through artists and galleries provide some creative industry exposure. The programme excels in research skills development through rigorous methodology courses, intensive thesis supervision, and research-intensive coursework that effectively prepares students for doctoral studies and professional research roles, while practical aspects of the training are neglected. However, most of the courses use essays as an assessment, which needs to be reconsidered for the future due to the increasing use of AI.

The Mandatory courses (GRS629 and GRS 776)establish comprehensive interdisciplinary knowledge covering feminist theory, queer studies, critical race theory, and intersectional analysis. They provide theoretical grounding across literature, philosophy, history, law, and social sciences perspectives, aligning with the learning aims. The Mandatory Seminars (GRS 776 and GRS 774) provide an option including new, cutting-edge topics.

The enrolled students have the chance to enroll in a wide variety of cross-listed courses offered by other departments. This successfully prepares students for advanced specialization while maintaining the programme's exceptionally high academic standards.

The Committees overseeing the completion of the program award 120 ECTS for the research stages and 46 ECTS for the writing stages. The thesis means 180 ECTS. There are only 14 for the comprehensive exam and no credit for the Thesis proposal, which might be reconsidered. The two courses (GRS629 and GRS776) make only 24 ECTS. This distribution facilitates the successful completion of the thesis writing.

The programme's monitoring and review processes operate through multiple levels, including departmental approval, faculty review, Graduate School oversight, Senate approval, and University Council ratification. Programme revision procedures are clearly regulated and occur in response to theoretical developments, technological changes, or evolving societal and student recruitment needs. Individual faculty members take responsibility for course revisions within the interdisciplinary framework, with changes proceeding through multiple approval levels to ensure academic quality and programme coherence. Continuous internal monitoring occurs through standardized student questionnaires processed by the Centre for Teaching and Learning, an independent university entity that develops policies on learning, teaching, and evaluation while supporting departments and staff through systematic quality assessment.

Public Information

The programme maintains comprehensive public transparency through multiple information dissemination channels that meet international standards for programme accessibility and accountability. Admission criteria are clearly communicated. The application process includes interviews alongside written applications, ensuring that admitted students possess both academic qualifications and a genuine commitment to the field, together with the expected language proficiency in English.

Programme information encompasses intended learning outcomes that are explicitly stated and regularly communicated, qualification details that specify degree requirements and academic recognition, and comprehensive descriptions of teaching, learning, and assessment procedures detailed in course syllabi. Performance statistics, including the impressive 98% graduation rate and student progression data, are publicly available. The data on graduate employment is missing. The total number of students enrolled in the program is eleven. The informal information indicates typical career paths in government, NGOs, and academia. This transparency extends to learning and research opportunities available to students, though the evaluation notes that methodology options could be broadened and pathways to elective courses could be more formalized to enhance programme structure clarity.

The programme's international character is clearly communicated, and English-language instruction facilitates international participation, which is not fully utilized yet. Students receive

comprehensive guidance for Erasmus programme participation. The programme's connections to the European University Alliance and other programs need to be improved. The programme's unique position as Cyprus's only doctoral programme in gender studies should be more prominently featured in public information, emphasizing its significance and social impact by the university administration.

Information dissemination occurs through digital platforms, university websites, and programme-specific communication channels, including Facebook pages and groups that facilitate ongoing information exchange and community building. The ongoing hate campaign against gender academia, which also harassed some of the faculty, requires more systematic structural support from the administration. The Student Handbook is the main source of information for students, but it should be updated regularly to avoid existing inconsistencies.

The programme maintains transparency regarding the fees paid by the students.

Information Management

The programme's information management systems reveal both strengths in student engagement and significant gaps in the program`s systematic data collection and analysis. Student feedback collection operates through multiple channels, including standardized evaluations processed by the Centre for Teaching and Learning using university-wide questionnaire systems, direct communication facilitated by the small programme size that enables personal-level faculty-student interaction, and ongoing dialogue through Facebook groups and regular informal meetings. Students consistently rate the programme highly and view it as a safe space for exploring diverse and complex gender and sexuality topics, with feedback actively sought and taken seriously by programme leadership.

However, the programme lacks systematic alumni tracking and formal graduate feedback collection mechanisms, representing a significant limitation in assessing long-term programme effectiveness and making data-driven improvements. As the total number of graduates in the past 11 years was 11, the reasons are unclear. While informal contacts with graduates exist and employment outcome monitoring occurs informally, with graduates typically entering government positions, NGO roles, and academic careers, the absence of formal alumni surveys and systematic career progression tracking affects the programme's ability to demonstrate impact and adapt to evolving professional requirements.

The evaluation reveals that specific dropout reasons are not systematically tracked or analyzed, though the exceptionally high graduation rate of 98% suggests minimal dropout concerns. Financial constraints are not identified as primary factors affecting retention, but the programme would benefit from enhanced support for students with care responsibilities and work commitments. The self-financed structure creates unique challenges in student support, and the evaluation suggests that fellowship programmes for students with multiple commitments,

enhanced childcare support, flexible scheduling, and improved evening class security could further strengthen retention and completion rates.

External stakeholder engagement occurs primarily at institutional and individual rather than programme-specific levels. While other departments and programs of the University of Cyprus signed MoUs with different organisations, this program mainly uses informal relationships with NGOs and community organizations. Systematic quality assurance involvement and structured external stakeholder engagement specific to gender studies professional requirements and community needs are not documented.

Current external stakeholder feedback occurs through informal discussions and ad hoc community contacts, without systematic mechanisms for gathering, analyzing, and implementing external stakeholder input. This represents a significant missed opportunity, as areas lacking formal external engagement include industry-specific trend analysis and curriculum adaptation, community leader feedback on societal relevance, external auditor review of programme implementation, and systematic employer feedback on graduate performance. Enhanced external stakeholder engagement could significantly benefit programme visibility and student recruitment, graduate employment support and career development, real-world relevance and curriculum updating, and quality assurance and continuous improvement processes.

The programme's unique position as Cyprus's only doctoral programme in gender studies creates substantial opportunities for stronger external stakeholder partnerships that remain largely unrealized. The programme's demonstrated social impact and the commitment of faculty and students to addressing social inequities provide strong foundations for systematic external engagement that could enhance both programme quality and societal contribution. Despite these limitations in systematic information management, the programme's academic quality, student satisfaction, and social relevance remain high, suggesting that enhanced information systems would build upon existing strengths rather than address fundamental programme deficiencies.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

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

The design of the program facilitates a successful learning experience

Student engagement in the program

Focus is clear, and students are confident about their employability

Dedicated faculty

Supportive staff employed by the Department of Education

Support of the vice rector, dean, and wide institutional support

Library access and professional support of the librarians.

Peer support, cohesion among the student body

The possibility of individual tailoring of the study program because of the wide variety of elective courses available

Individual staff contacts plus international contacts to support the program

Self-finance (student fees) secures the flexibility of designing the program

The seminar on Gender and sexuality offers ways to include current trends in research adapted to 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.

Missing fields of scientific expertise from the curriculum, esp. quantitative methods

Wider methods courses to offer qualitative methods

Systematic and structured collaboration with the stakeholders

Systematic and structured evaluation of the strategic improvement of the curriculum and teaching program

Including ethics as a topic

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

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

1.4	Information management	**Compliant**

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

> ### Sub-areas
> **2.2 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
> **2.3 Practical training**
> **2.4 Student assessment**

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

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*

- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*

- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*

- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*

- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*

- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*

- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*

- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*

- *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.*

ΔΙΠΑΕ
CYQAA
ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

eqar//// enqa.

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.*

- *The expected hours for different components of practical training, such as lab work, fieldwork, and internships are clearly documented in the training manuals*

- *A weighting system is applied to various practical training elements, reflecting their significance in the overall learning outcomes and student workload.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*

- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*

- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*

- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*

- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*

- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*

- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*

- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

  - *The time allocation for each assessment task isexplicitly stated in course outlines, ensuring students are aware of the expected workload.*

- *A balanced assessment weighting strategy is implemented, considering the complexity and learning objectives of each task, to ensure fair evaluation of student performance.*

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 offers high quality academic, interdisciplinary and interdepartmental knowledge in gender and sexuality studies with a focus on feminist theory, queer theory and methodologies beyond the classroom. The program is designed to meet the needs of the students and is built on a student-centred methodology that supports diversity in learning and peer-peer.

Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology
The process of teaching and learning is overall considered, as well as supports, students' individual and social development. The design of the program makes sure that teaching and learning are flexible and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes. It is also clear that the students are encouraged to participate in their own as well as their peers' learning processes. The students also expressed this very clearly during the interview: they are supported, recognised and encouraged, and have a very strong sense of confidence in what they know and what they can achieve both during and after the program. This is very important and positive. Since the program is interdisciplinary and interdepartmental students also meet teachers from different research fields, and they learn using different methodologies, research traditions as well as pedagogical models.

Students feel a strong sense of belonging to the programme, are able to discuss openly with faculty, feel their voices are heard in decision-making and programme design, and feel supported by faculty in all activities and learning processes. The small cohort size facilitates the development of strong relationships with faculty members, ensuring students receive the necessary attention and time. Students perceive the programme as an investment in their personal and political development.

The program builds on a very strong mutual respect between learner and teacher, but also between students. The design and the flexibility of the program also support flexible learning. The use of modern technology depends on what subject and teacher and are in some aspects related to learning outcomes and course design, but in others are directly related to more general challenges and opportunities (AI). The EEC believes that the program would benefit from a more systematic and holistic approach to the use of modern technologies, and that the new facilities, space at the new Campus in 2027 will support this important development.

There are procedures for dealing with student complaints. There is also clear information about schedules, course materials, and hours, which also means that the students can plan and distribute their work accordingly. The design of the curriculum is balanced, and the workload follows regulations and guidelines. Departmental monitoring makes sure that teaching staff follow curriculum and base their methods on objectives and learning outcomes, but also that they. A wide range of teaching as well as assessment methods ensures that different needs and opportunities are catered for. The general infrastructure at the university, provided by the Library (Learning Resource center), the Centre for teaching and learning, the Career Center is good and supports both general competencies and more gender studies-specific competences. Both staff and students underline that the infrastructure and support provided by the library is crucial and excellent.

Practical Training

Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected, especially via the beyond-the-classroom methodology used. Stakeholders are also invited to give lectures in the program and participate in the seminars. However, since the beyond the classroom methodology focuses on certain areas, and the program itself in the application does not identify what they do as practical training (table 1: Structure of the programme), the EEC believes that this is an important opportunity for the program to explore. Stakeholders stress the importance of practical training, and students underlined that they could benefit from having practical training formally in the program in form of internships, field work etc. This could enhance students' learning, help students establish networks and get established on the labour-market, but it could also develop the program and open it up to more students. The SWOT-analysis stresses the importance of making the programme more visible.

Student assessment

We find that student assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedure, but that they also are appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner. The students also have the opportunity to repeat a course, if failed, and to ask for clarification from the instructor of final marks. All criteria for method of assessment as well as marking are published in advance, and according to the Regulations of Postgraduate Attendance course instructors may decide on the evaluation methods of each course and obtain the Department's approval. There is however a minimum of two evaluation methods per course, and clear instructions to follow regarding the master thesis. The interdisciplinarity design of the program also supports the developing of the skills of the teachers, as well as the students. There is also a student complaint policy in place at the university.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

- The design of the program clearly supports student-centered teaching and learning, as well as peer learning and peer support. It encourages student as well as teacher engagement and fosters a culture of mutual respect. The flexibility of the design also supports diversity in learning as well as individual tailoring of the program and helps students to have a very strong sense of confidence in what they know and what they can achieve both during and after the program.
- The new campus offers students a wide range of support in the form of classrooms, places to study, and places to meet. Both staff and students underline that the library's infrastructure and support are crucial and excellent.

lick 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.

- The program would benefit from a more systematic and holistic approach to using modern technologies. We believe that the new facilities and space at the new Campus in 2027 will support this important development.
- Both stakeholders and students stress the importance of practical training, internships, field work, etc. This could enhance students' learning, help them establish networks, and get them established on the labour market. It could also develop the program and open it up to more students. The SWOT analysis included in the application stresses the importance of making the programme more visible and less vulnerable.

ck or tap here to enter text.

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

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

3. **Teaching staff** *(ESG 1.5)*

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

3.1 **Teaching staff recruitment and development**

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*

- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*

- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*

- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*

- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*

- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*

- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*

- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2 Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*

- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*

- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3 Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*

- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*

- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*

- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*

- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

ΔΙΠΑΕ
CYQAA

ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

eqar/// enqa.

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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Teaching staff on the interdepartmental Gender Studies programme deliver teaching on the MA and PhD level courses, supervise students' projects, and provide pastoral care and advice to students. The programme is housed in the Department of Education, but the 15 faculty on the programme are from Education, as well as French and European Studies, English Studies, Business and Public Administration, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Social and Political Sciences, Law and History. This interdepartmental structure facilitates the interdisciplinarity of the teaching offer, provides opportunities for exchanging and embedding best practice at the programme level, but also maintains differences and unevenness among teaching staff, whose experience of institutional support and advancement opportunities depends on their respective departments.

Regarding the **Recruitment and Development of Teaching Staff**, the UCY prioritises excellence in teaching and research with policies and practices to support competence of their teaching staff. The procedures for recruitment and promotions are established and regulated by UCY laws and approved by the State Council of Ministers. These regulations specify when and at what level new staff can be recruited, how the Special Committees for recruitment and promotion are established (with participation of external advisers and drawn from other universities, also internationally) and

the timeline for promotion for existing staff at specific career stages (Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor) towards the rank of Professor is transparent. The UCY has a system in place for activating evaluation towards promotion (self-initiated or triggered by the University), and the requirements such as giving a lecture, submitting a dossier, obtaining evaluations of independent appraisers are established. Developing the clarity of this process, what exactly is involved and exploring the ways in which individual approach to career development could be structurally enhanced (via mentorship, career oriented feedback, consideration of specific support for areas needing development, assessing 'readiness' for the next career stage) would make this more transparent, fair and oriented towards supporting interdisciplinary scholarship that is based across several discipline-specific departments.

The qualifications of the teaching staff are well-suited to the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning. There is evidence of regular engagement in teaching skills training and development, either via recourse to the University based Centre for Teaching and Learning, or in adapting teaching to reflect AI-developments in working with students in the classroom. While formally, promotion of the Teaching Staff considers their teaching quality, there is some variation across Departments of how the promotion process is understood and experienced. Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged, the existence of the flexible Seminar in Gender and Sexuality Studies (GRS 774 and 775) with an evolving curriculum and focus, and the existing facilities on the new campus provide the necessary infrastructure. However, spatially integrating the Department of Education, administrators and teachers across all cross-listed courses on the Gender Studies programme by locating them on the new campus would enhance the scope for innovative teaching and the use of new technologies. The Programme recognises visiting teaching staff who participate in teaching the study programme, in particular the Seminar in Gender and Sexuality Studies.

With respect to **Teaching Staff Number and Status**, there are 15 members of faculty who teach on the MA in Gender Studies programme, consisting of Lecturers (2), Associate Professors (10), Professors (2), and Special Scientist (1). There are also visiting staff, largely teaching the GRS 774 and 774 seminars, who complement the teaching provision and their number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff. Teaching staff (except Special Scientist) deliver teaching in-line with the UCY policies, and where additional courses are being taught on the programme they are remunerated. The range of expertise supports the programme of study and offers students core compulsory, constrained elective, and elective courses in gender studies (GRS) and cross-listed with other departments. This foundation in a wide range of theoretical, methodological and substantive scholarship, its interdisciplinarity and interdepartmental connections, in fact, can facilitate a more systematic and strategic programme development to utilise the expertise available on core teaching.

ΔΙΠΑΕ
CYQAA

ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

eqar//// enqa.

The status of teaching staff regarding rank is heavily skewed towards Associate Professors, whose tenure ensures the teaching needs of the programme. However, other aspects of sustainability require a critical mass of Professors not only to reflect the strength of gender studies as a field, but (given future retirements of existing professors) also to carry the administrative functions that require the rank of Professor (e.g., serving on Special Committees, appraising or promoting gender studies scholars, etc.). Thus, advancement across the career levels is an important consideration serving the needs of the programme, the relevant departments, the University, and the needs of Cypriot society.

There are numerous **Synergies of Teaching and Research** built into the MA in Gender Studies programme. The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the UCY, given the interdepartmental structure of the programme. Different scholarly research activities are supported through mentorship and funds for attending conferences, participating in research networks, and developing research skills through participation in own and faculty-led research projects. There are also occasional engagements with partners outside HE, particularly with civil society organisations, activists, and practitioners in the field (e.g. Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies), as well as other HEIs via summer schools or the Erasmus programme. There is scope to make existing collaborations in the local community more systematic and to develop new links, for example through internship opportunities with governmental agencies, NGOs, and other employers. This has the potential to enhance current student learning and to attract more students motivated by application of gender studies to practice.

The teaching staff publications are internationally excellent, contributing both to disciplinary fields and interdisciplinary gender studies, deploying a range of methodological and analytical perspectives. Research outputs in the form of academic journal articles, books, policy reports, among others, contribute to the programme theoretically, methodologically, and substantively through the range of compulsory and elective courses. Students, given their choice of options, will have a varied exposure to the available range of research expertise and some team-teaching incorporated into core provisions might improve student's exposure and foreground the interdisciplinary and interdepartmental nature of the programme.

The allocation of teaching hours compared to time for research activity follows UCY and Departmental regulations. Teaching above the typical workload is remunerated from the programme's funds.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Based on the documents submitted and the site visit, the EEC is impressed with the practices and achievements of the Gender Studies programme teaching staff.

- · The teaching staff on the MA Gender Studies programme are
  - o internationally recognised and respected scholars, pursuing collaborative research projects and participating in international research networks in interdisciplinary gender studies and related disciplines
  - o enthusiastic about sustaining the Gender Studies programme at the UCY – the only graduate programme in Cyprus, which contributes to the University's reputation and impact
  - o appreciative of the recognition of the importance of Gender Studies
  - o dedicated to supporting students in their learning and development

- · There are robust links between teaching and research
  - o staff are committed to excellence in research and teaching in the field of gender studies, pursuing a rigorous programme of research that reflects societal trends and incorporating this in their teaching
  - o interdisciplinary and interdepartmental features of the programme offer a generative context for exchange and innovation

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.

The EEC thinks that some structural changes may support the Gender Studies Programme in the years to come. On the one hand, the interdepartmental structure facilitates interdisciplinarity, offers flexibility in the provision of a wide range of courses, and cross-listing of elective courses ensures availability of provision and the ability for courses to run if student registrations are low. On the other hand, given that teaching staff are based across 8 departments and have research, teaching and administrative obligations to these departments, there appears to be little space or platform for establishing regular programme reviews and developing a shared programme level strategy involving all staff. Relatedly, staff have varied experiences of support towards career advancement. Finally, the spatial arrangements that house the Department of Education and other entities relevant to the Gender Studies programme away from the new campus, hinder the possibilities of closer cooperation.

The EEC recommends that the programme chairs, the relevant departments, and the university explore the feasibility and benefit of

- Offering team teaching on some of the core courses to showcase the full range of gender studies expertise across the university
- Developing supportive mechanisms for career progression, where mentorship schemes, constructive advice, feedback support colleagues in interdisciplinary Gender Studies across the career structure towards advancement
- Providing a shared facility, physical and or in terms of regular time-tabling, for involvement of all staff associated with the Gender Studies programme in its development

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

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

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

> **Sub-areas**
> 4.1 **Student admission, processes and criteria**
> 4.2 **Student progression**
> 4.3 **Student recognition**
> 4.4 **Student certification**

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

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

4.2 **Student progression**

Standards

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

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

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

ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

eqar//// enqa.

> - *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 EEC is convinced the PhD Programme in Gender Studies presents a well-managed, academically rigorous, and student-centered program that successfully fulfills its educational mission while maintaining high standards and strong student outcomes.

The PhD Programme in Gender Studies demonstrates a well-structured and comprehensive approach to graduate education that effectively serves both domestic and international students. Managed by the Graduate School, the program maintains clear and rigorous entry requirements. The admission process requires comprehensive documentation, including transcripts, letters of recommendation, statements of purpose, evidence of English proficiency, and prior experience in gender and sexuality studies, all clearly communicated to applicants in advance. A committee is interviewing every applicant.

The program's structural design reflects thoughtful curriculum planning with a balanced combination of compulsory core courses, research methodology courses, required seminars, and elective, cross-listed options. This framework and relatively small cohort sizes enable adequate student progress and individualized attention monitoring.

Each student benefits from dedicated academic advisory support, ensuring continuous academic progress monitoring and early intervention when difficulties arise.

The admission process receives positive feedback from students who report receiving adequate guidance and support throughout their application journey.

The program's administrative coordination appears effective, with positive cooperation between administrative units. The comprehensive information systems and clear communication protocols contribute to smooth program operations and student satisfaction.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

The program demonstrates exceptional strength in its s**ystematic approach to student selection and academic support,** reflecting a commitment to both rigorous standards and student success. The selection committee operates with clearly defined criteria that maintain high academic expectations, particularly regarding English language proficiency, ensuring that admitted students possess the linguistic competencies necessary for graduate-level work in an international academic environment. This admission process establishes a strong foundation for program quality while attracting students capable of engaging meaningfully with complex theoretical and methodological content. Out of 16 applicants, 10 were admitted in the past ten years, and four since the last external review.

The formal structures established by the **Graduate School** provide a robust framework that ensures consistent compliance with institutional policies and academic standards. These established procedures create transparency in decision-making processes while maintaining accountability across all aspects of program delivery. The systematic nature of these structures contributes to the program's credibility and reinforces its commitment to academic excellence.

Collectively, these policies and structures create an environment that balances **academic rigor with comprehensive student support,** ensuring that high standards are maintained while providing multiple avenues for students to achieve their educational goals. This strength reflects on the understanding of graduate education that recognizes

both the importance of academic excellence and the value of supporting student persistence and success throughout their academic journey.

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 program would benefit significantly from **enhanced marketing and recruitment strategies** designed to broaden its applicant pool and attract a more diverse international student body with varied research interests. Current recruitment efforts appear to have limited reach, potentially constraining the program's ability to draw from the full spectrum of qualified candidates who might contribute to a richer academic environment. By implementing more comprehensive advertising strategies that cast a wider net across different geographical regions and academic networks, the program could attract international students with diverse disciplinary backgrounds and research focuses, thereby enriching classroom discussions and expanding the range of scholarly perspectives within the cohort. As the language of the program is English and Cyprus is a student-friendly environment, and the interest in gender studies training is increasing, the program has the potential to attract international students in the future.

The university's existing infrastructure provides a solid foundation to support this expansion, with established international office services, student support systems, and administrative frameworks already in place to facilitate the enrollment and integration of international students. However, realizing this potential requires a **more strategic** approach to outreach that leverages digital marketing platforms, strengthens partnerships with international institutions, and develops targeted recruitment materials that highlight the program's unique strengths to prospective students across different regions and academic backgrounds. Such efforts would not only increase enrollment numbers but also enhance the intellectual diversity of the student body, creating a more dynamic learning environment that better reflects the global and interdisciplinary nature of Gender Studies as a field. The university's commitment to supporting this process through its established infrastructure demonstrates institutional capacity for growth, suggesting that improved recruitment strategies could yield significant benefits for program quality and student experience.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
4	udent admission, processes and criteria	*Compliant*
4.2	Student progression	*Compliant*
4.3	udent recognition	*Compliant*
4.4	udent 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

ΔΙΠΑΕ
CYQAA
ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

eqar//// enqa.

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.*

- *Students receive support in research-led teaching through engagement in research projects, mentorship from research-active faculty, and access to resources that enhance their research skills and critical engagement with current studies.*

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?*

	ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA	CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

eqar/// enqa.

- *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.

The Program benefits from learning resources and student support provided by the University of Cyprus, in particular: the amazing library "Stelios Ioannou" Learning Resource Centre, the Student Welfare Service, International Relations Service, Centre for Teaching and Learning. The program also builds on the learning resources and student support related to answering everyday questions as well as providing crucial administrative support provided by the Faculty of Social Sciences and Education as well as the Department of Education, English Studies, French and European Studies, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, History and Archaeology, Social and Political Sciences and Law.

Teaching and learning resources:
The program offers adequate and accessible teaching and learning resources fit for the purpose. This will also be elevated when the Gender Studies program and the Department of Education are located at the new campus in 2027. Since student numbers are low, there is a risk that the adequacy of resources is not ensured.

Physical resources
The new campus offers excellent physical resources. The EEC wants to underline that both students and teachers pointed out the amazing library "Stelios Ioannou" Learning Resource Centre and its staff. There are also plenty of study facilities and room for students to meet, do sports, eat, etc. Since student numbers are low, there is a risk that the adequacy of resources is not ensured.

Human support resources

The program has excellent support from the administration at the department, but they emphasize the benefits of being in the same facility as the Gender Studies program and being located at the new campus. The university also provides different kinds of counselling and support via the Students' Affairs and Welfare Center and free psychological support through the University Mental Health Center. The students are also informed and know of the support. However, it was stressed by the students that the demand for psychological support and counseling is much bigger than what is offered. The resources are not adequate.

Student support

The support infrastructure at the university, the design of the program, and the dedication of both the academic and the administrative staff ensure that student support covers most of the needs of a diverse student population. Students are informed about the services and they also know about the flexibility of the program, the learning, the teaching and the assessment (they can, for instance, choose what language to use in some of the examinations, English or Greek). The program also encourages student mobility interdepartmentally and internationally via Erasmus. The EEC finds that there are mobility opportunities that can be explored related to the University Alliance Young Universities for the Future of Europe (YUFE) Alliance as well as to UNICA (Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe).
Click or tap here to enter text.

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

- The new campus offers excellent physical resources. The EEC wants to stress that both students and teachers pointed out the amazing library "Stelios Ioannou" Learning Resource Centre and their staff as a major strength.
- The university's support infrastructure, the design of the program, and the dedication of both the academic and administrative staff ensure that student support covers most of the needs of a diverse student population. The students feel supported and recognised.

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.

- The program needs to be located at the new campus in 2027 to benefit from the teaching and learning resources and facilities the new Campus provides and to provide the administrative support of a high-quality international program.
- The demands for psychological support and counselling is much bigger than what is offered. The resources are not adequate.
- Opportunities related to the University Alliance Young Universities for the Future of Europe (YUFE) Alliance and UNICA (Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe) can be explored. These involve student and staff mobility.

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

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

ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA
ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

eqar/// enqa.

6. Additional for doctoral programmes *(ALL ESG)*

> ### Sub-areas
> 6.1 **Selection criteria and requirements**
> 6.2 **Proposal and dissertation**
> 6.3 **Supervision and committees**

6.1 **Selection criteria and requirements**

Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*

- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
  - *the stages of completion*
  - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
  - *the examinations*
  - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
  - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

6.2 **Proposal and dissertation**

Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
  - *the chapters that are contained*
  - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
  - *the minimum word limit*
  - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*

- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*

- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

6.3 **Supervision and committees**

Standards

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

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*

- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
  o *regular meetings*
  o *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
  o *support for writing research papers*
  o *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.

The PhD in Gender Studies at the University of Cyprus supports doctoral students in the development of original interdisciplinary gender studies research through interdepartmental training in gender studies theory, methodology, and substantive knowledge. This is done by offering compulsory and elective post-graduate level courses, conducting a comprehensive exam and a defense of a thesis proposal, before students embark on their research, analysis and writing. Since the programme's inception in 2012, four students have graduated.

The **selection criteria and requirements are clear**, specifying the standards and the selection procedures. The specific requirements of the doctoral degree programme are clear. Applications are reviewed by 5 faculty members. The stages of completion consist of completing coursework in Semesters 1 and 2, passing the comprehensive exam in Semester 3, moving then to defence of

the Thesis Proposal, and then to research and thesis writing. There are thus two stages of examination, the comprehensive and the proposal defence (in front of a 3-member committee), incorporated into the programme. The minimum enrolment duration is 3 years and the maximum is 8 years, and students are required to complete 240 ECTs. The criteria for obtaining the PhD degree are clearly set out in the regulations.

Based on the documentation reviewed, the EEC found that the **Proposal and Dissertation** standards are in line with international practice. The guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set in the relevant handbooks and include information regarding the chapters that are contained, information for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography, word limits, and how the dissertation should be bound, as well as content of the cover page and acknowledgments and dedications. There is also a requirement to a statement on the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation. The guidelines highlight the importance of academic integrity and provide regulations on plagiarism and other academic misconduct. The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.

Both the site visit and the documentation submitted provided evidence on doctoral student **Supervision and Committees** arrangements. 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 to comprise 3 members, and students have two opportunities to do so. This enables them to address any weaknesses and strengthen the research design with the input of the committee.

The final defense of the Doctoral Dissertation takes place before a 5-member committee appointed by the Board of the Department, 3 members of the faculty including the student's research advisor, a member from another Department at the University, and a member from another university.

The responsibilities of the supervisor and other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include regular meetings, reports on progress and feedback, support for writing research papers and participation in conferences. There is no common seminar for the whole cohort of PhD students (across the levels) to support writing in progress and research development, although this was provided in the past.

The number of doctoral students that each supervisor can be responsible for at the same time is determined at the university level at maximum 10 per faculty.

The scientific quality of the PhD thesis in ensured through exposure to contemporary trends in gender studies through the Seminar in Gender and Sexuality Studies, participation in conferences, benefiting from international research networks established by faculty, and via formal assessment – comprehensive exams, defending the PhD proposal, and defending the PhD thesis before a 5-member committee, including external experts to the University. The criteria are reflected in the dissertation samples.

ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Current PhD students feel that there is a strong connection between their studies, their research projects and society. They have clear engagements with activism and politics, and articulate links to theory and practice.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

The doctoral programme has clear selection criteria and learning outcomes and goals, it presents a clear structure, making it easy for current and potential students to navigate.

The international scope of the programme, both in terms of language of instruction and scholarship presented in different courses and produced by participating scholars, is high, demonstrating excellent standards for postgraduate education.

The relevance of the programme is particularly high for academic research and teaching and for work within a broader society in a range of fields, especially in connection to research and analysis to serve different stakeholders in establishing a knowledge base relevant to their work.

The programme relies on a high level of collaboration between departments and individual faculty and is built on good scholarly practices and experts with a high level of experience in teaching, supervising and assessing postgraduate work.

Student satisfaction with the programme is high.

There is a wide-range of support (faculty involvement, administrative support, financial resources for international collaborations and research dissemination) available to ensure student progression and retention, especially after the presentations of the proposal students tend to complete their projects.

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.

The EEC, studying the application documents and conducting the site visit, suggest that the programme directors consider how their flag-ship programme, unique in Cyprus, and well-established internationally, can utilise the full breadth of existing research expertise by:

- Reflecting on the recommendations of the previous review and the extent to which these were implemented, and how.

- Exploring targeted recruitment of PhD-students, specifying on the website and social media, and other available channels of communications which profiles of PhD interests are sought in particular (based on supervisory capacity, programme's profile and reach, meeting the needs of society, and similar)
- Tap deliberately into the scarcity of post-graduate gender studies programmes offered in English across Europe and thus target more international students
- More fully utilize existing expertise of colleagues across the university
- Exploring scholarship opportunities and in-kind contributions (e.g. mentorship, internship) from entities like governmental agencies or civil society, may diversify the pool of applicants who are currently not reflected in the doctoral programme design

Regarding the programme's quality, the EEC recommends

- The guidelines for writing the PhD thesis besides paying attention to academic integrity such as plagiarism and authorship, should explicitly require students to consider research ethics. While this may be standard practice of gender studies scholars, the explicit requirement would make this clearer.
- More systematic, faculty guided but peer-driven support for students in writing their thesis and developing professional academic skills – like participation at conferences, publishing, reviewing, CV writing, etc. This could be a bi-weekly seminar for students across all cohorts

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
6	Selection criteria and requirements	*Compliant*
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	*Compliant*
6.3	Supervision and committees	*Compliant*

D. Conclusions and final remarks

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

The EEC wishes to congratulate the University of Cyprus and the involved departments and colleagues for supporting such a timely and promising doctoral programme. An interdisciplinary programme, the PhD in

gender studies follows all the procedures of the university in terms of its structures, execution, and assessments. It is a successful collaboration between dedicated departments and administrators, which points to high levels of collaboration and collegiality. The programme, however, is run by a small number of core faculty with the support of colleagues across the university and hired visiting faculty. This dispersion, together with the limited and decreasing appeal as far as the number of applications is concerned, makes the programme vulnerable, as it is built on the fees students pay. Due to a lack of support from different university units (admissions, media, etc) , the programme's unique position as Cyprus's only English speaking doctoral programme in gender studies creates substantial opportunities for stronger external stakeholder partnerships that remain largely unrealized. Regular, systematic and strategic meetings for all students and faculty (that is, of a Town Hall nature) would further the democratic process would help to develop and articulate strategic directions for further development. Office space for students and faculty already promised to the programme by the university in the external review in 2021 to meet and work would also help foster a sense of community and support the students' learning process. The programme could benefit from systematic internship and practical training. The EEC is concerned about the small number of applicants, which can be changed with systematic and strategic efforts supported by the university administration and including faculty already associated with the programme .

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Andrea Peto	
Annika Olsson	
Ania Plomien	
Anna Panayiotou	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 27 September 2025