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

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Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 19 March 2021

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

- **Higher Education Institution: University of Cyprus**

- **Town: Nicosia**

- **School/Faculty (if applicable): Faculty of Letters**

- **Department/ Sector: Department of History and Archaeology**

- **Programme of study-**

  In Greek:

  Γεωπληροφορική στις Ψηφιακές Ανθρωπιστικές Επιστήμες

  In English:

  Geoinformatics in Digital Humanities, 3-8 semesters, 90 ECTS, Magister Scientiae [MSc]

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

- **Programme's status:** Choose status

A. Introduction

An application on behalf of the Department of History and Archaeology at the University of Cyprus to develop an MSc programme for "Geoinformatics in Digital Humanities" has been filed with the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA). Ongoing concerns over the coronavirus outbreak (COVID19) precluded an onsite visit on the part of the committee to the campus of the University of Cyprus. Therefore, the evaluation was conducted entirely online. A pre-meeting was held with Alexia Pilakouri, CYQAA, on 5 March 2021 in order to establish the basis of the review.

The virtual site visit was performed on 10 March 2021 and included interviews with the vice-rector for Academic Affairs (Prof. Irene-Anna Diakidoy), members of the Department of History and Archaeology, administrative staff of the department and library, and students of the department. Pictures and videos of the campus and facilities were provided by the university, which gave a sense of institutional commitment to infrastructure development and programme operations.

The vice-rector outlined the strategic priorities for the university, to discuss features such as the Graduate School, the importance of interdisciplinarity, and the move toward some programmes using English. This was aimed at recruiting non-Cypriot students to help internationalise the university. It was evident that there is a close relationship between the university and the wider public sector and relevant industries. The University has a very good standing in relation to international research funding, and the university also has a strategic fund to help generate research activity across the university.

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

The following review is constrained within the limitations of an off-site visit, however the external review committee (henceforth, 'the committee') felt it gained an objective sense of the proposed programme's strengths and weaknesses.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Christopher Gaffney	Professor	University of Bradford
Albert Hafner	Professor	University of Bern
Maria Iordanidou	Graduate student	Cyprus University of Technology
David K. Wright	Professor (chair)	University of Oslo
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

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

Sub-areas

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

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

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

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
  - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
  - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
  - *benefits from external expertise*
  - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
  - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
  - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
  - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
  - *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
  - *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*

o *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*
- o *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- o *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*
- o *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

- *Regarding the programme of study, clear, accurate, up-to date and readily accessible information is published about:*
  - 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*

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
  - 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*

- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

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

> - *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
> - *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
> - *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
> - *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*

Findings

In general, the committee concludes that the quality of the proposed programme is high, and facilitates an inclusive and diverse environment that engages with the surrounding community. The application for the programme is timely and relevant for the job market in the Humanities, which is shifting to an increasing focus on technology, yet there are few programmes that tailor to this demand. The programme was designed by a committee of academics and students from the university, who were highly supportive of the effort. The department has indicated that all aspects of the curricula will be publicly available for prospective applicants to see, although because the programme is not yet active, the website is not 'live'. Each course has a clear examination process posted online, which is designed to maintain consistency between expectations and outcomes.

The programme has established good external networks with other European institutes. They are part of the Young Universities for the Future of Europe (YUFE) alliance, in which structural standards are shared between eight universities in Europe. The University of Cyprus is part of the ERASMUS network, although apparently not a signatory to the Bologna accords. The proposed MSc programme will target recruitment and training of international students to work together with students from the Republic of Cyprus and Greece, providing an opportunity for the cross-fertilization of competencies and ideas.

The proposed programme focuses on digital heritage with explicit maritime and Mediterranean archaeology components. These focuses align with the department faculty specialties and will enable students to gain direct field-to-lab experience on some of the better-known archaeological sites of the region. The programme design is ambitious with a desired matriculation to degree within three semesters (90 ECTS). The training is designed to provide moderate- to advanced competencies in digital archaeological techniques with outcomes geared initially toward the production of maps, culminating in spatial statistical analytics. These are adequate goals for an education scheme for such a programme to benchmark. The skill sets targeted by the education programme are relevant to public archaeology employers, as well as private sector employers who seek employees with digital informatics backgrounds. The declining role of the humanities overall as a share of European economies is a broader concern for the quality of the students applying to the programme over the long term, but the department feels that they have identified a target niche to attract a specific market of students.

The programme plan includes end-of-semester feedback from students on the quality of instruction and whether the students are satisfied with the course offerings. The programme also relies on direct and on-going dialogue between students and professors through oral presentations.

Strengths

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

The proposed curricula is ambitious in scope, and if executed perfectly, the students will gain valuable skills that will make them competitive candidates for employment following acquisition of their MSc degrees. It builds on the existing strengths of the Department of History and Archaeology at University of Cyprus. The proposed software packages to be used are industry standards (e.g., ESRI, Agisoft), which employers will seek from prospective employees. The training is rigorous and will give students valuable hands-on experience in both terrestrial and underwater archaeological contexts. The students will learn to troubleshoot and problem solve in real-world circumstances, which are experiences that cannot be taught in a classroom.

The primary mission of the university is research, and there are numerous funding opportunities to promote research and dissemination for faculty. This is a positive thing for the proposed MSc programme as the pedagogy is designed to integrate field research into the teaching curricula. Therefore, the instruction capacity of the programme is elevated because students are able to access high-quality research tools, which are critical for meeting the educational goals set forth in the proposal. It was further noted by the committee that Prof. Apostolis Sarris, who will manage the proposed programme, is an excellent researcher with a significant track record in publishing quality outputs. While this does not necessarily ensure the long-term success of the programme, it can be a positive experience for students to interact with high-quality, dynamic researchers such as Prof. Sarris. Prof. Sarris holds the "Sylvia Ioannou Foundation Chair on Digital Humanties". The investment of the Sylvia Ioannou Foundation to starting and maintaining the proposed programme (and Prof. Sarris's position) is significant to ensure continuity of the programme over the long term. The agreement on this endowed professorship between the Foundation and the University of Cyprus stipulates that the position will be taken over and financed by the University after the promised funding period has expired.

The overall investment into institutional infrastructure (e.g., the new campus library) signals that the university is committed to a quality education for its students. The library has promised to support students and offers writing support and plagiarism checking software (Turnitin). The location of the university on a warm and sunny Mediterranean island with a rich archaeological tradition is favourable to attracting high-quality students to the programme. It is also noteworthy that the main building in which the archaeology section is located is in a beautiful historic building, which is an enriching environment for students. Overall, the programme structure is well-designed to attract international students, which is an explicit goal of the department's and university's strategic vision.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

The committee is worried that the quality of the education is hindered by the relatively quick path to matriculation and reliance of the programme on the donated time of individual professors associated with the programme. By their own admission, the department acknowledges that their students come into the programme with low technical competencies, which is poorly suited for a three-semester (90 ECTS) matriculation.

The course designs are predicated on individual instructors' investments—all compulsory courses are taught by only one professor. We would recommend a team-teaching approach so that the success or failure of a course does not revolve around individuals, but is a group effort. There is a conspicuous absence of teaching support for the programmes in the form of teaching assistants. This will force the responsible professors of the courses to invest a significant amount of personal time in assisting students with technical problems with their computers and/or data

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handling. While this is manageable for a small class (e.g., 5-10 students), as the success of the programme grows, the quality of the instruction could be diminished as the amount of time the professors have to spend with students will decrease, leaving some students unable to access needed technical help.

Some additional investment in equipment might be required, particularly if student numbers are high. Also, this is required for employability as employers like new staff to have been trained in the latest equipment.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

> **2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
> **2.2 Practical training**
> **2.3 Student assessment**

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

Standards

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

2.2 Practical training

Standards

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

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

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

The programme curricula are explicitly designed to integrate field-based research with practical educational outcomes. The requirements to matriculate are rather rigid, which can be both a strength and weakness: the former

because employers like standard outcomes of students, the latter because students are not afforded a lot of personal choice. Within the programme design, students will be taken into the field by their professors and given opportunities to utilise state-of-the-art data collecting equipment such as a remote aerial scanner (drone), ground-penetrating radar, electrical resistivity/earth resistance, global positioning systems, etc. They will further be instructed in how to upload the data to a server and process it for spatial-statistical analyses. These skills are critical for modern public archaeological practitioners as employers demand that new employees have basic competencies in these technologies.

The curricula are designed to begin with simple concepts in reckoning spatial environments and progress through advanced concepts. Although the programme name implies a broad digital humanities and informatics approach, the curricula are definitely catered to archaeology, specifically.

The reading lists are exhaustive and mostly focused on peer-reviewed publications. Each course offering has a list of 20-30 books and papers, which is presumably the core reading list of each class.

The campus Teaching and Learning Centre seems to be a valuable educational support resource for students in order to assist them with writing and finishing their degrees. However, their mission is general across the entire campus, and their expertise is not within the subject area of digital heritage.

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

The fact that much of the island of Cyprus – including the underwater areas surrounding it – is a premier archaeological hotspot and the demonstrated willingness of the faculty to integrate their research sites into the training programme is a significant strength to this application. There is a growing need for graduate students to gain practical experience with utilising field equipment and then getting the data from the equipment to a computer. Furthermore, the programme objectives include an analytical component, which will provide the graduates with a significant set of tools in which they will emerge into their professional lives with hands-on experience that employers seek.

The reading lists are descriptive and varied and are supported by an excellent library system. There are a small number of proposed students, which will allow for robust discussion of the readings and lots of interaction with researcher-teachers.

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.

Consider renaming the programme to Digital Heritage Management (or similar), which will be more relevant to the developed curricula. In examining the course offerings, there is very little relevant material to digital humanities outside archaeology, specifically. The course descriptions make vague mention of history from time to time, but the readings and applications are geared squarely at heritage studies.

The readings may be a bit much and too advanced for the students, especially those coming in with lower requisite competencies. The choice of the textbook by Conolly and Lake (2006) and Mitchell and Collins (2015) is appropriate for the first semester GIS class, but the other compulsory texts will likely overwhelm the students. This is the case for

almost all of the courses—they are ambitiously structured with a lot of reading provided, but perhaps too difficult a level for the anticipated calibre of students and too many texts for the students to adequately absorb.

There is no course offering for writing the master's thesis. It is the opinion of the committee that with such an accelerated pace of learning to matriculation, many students will not succeed in completing their degrees. These could be undertaken for all MA level students, as they are shared skills. One obvious area where a project description and writing course could be added is in the second semester. There are three courses listed as compulsory that could be condensed into two (ARC671, ARC673 and ARC699). Computation techniques in the social sciences and humanities are nearly identical to geospatial techniques, especially in terms of how the curricula are designed. Similarly, the advanced topics in Humanities offerings share a significant amount of conceptual overlap with the computational techniques courses. We would recommend scaling back the scope of these courses to a more manageable workload and adding instead a course in which the students could systematically develop their thesis topics in collaboration with the professors in the programme. The way the curriculum is designed gives the students numerous potential software applications used in Geoinformatics but there is no general course related in geostatistics, which is believed to be very important in order to interpret the findings. We note that ARC673 and ARC671 include spatial statistics as side components of the modules, but the focus of these courses are broad.

There is an over-emphasis on examinations, which is against the trend elsewhere in Europe, where formal assessments are giving way to more general pass/fail and descriptive evaluations. The faculty could consider mini-feedback session partway through each module to ensure that students are on target to pass the courses.

In the last semester there is a choice of practical course, but the time does not seem sufficient for its completion, especially in light of the fact that the students will be simultaneously writing their MSc theses.

While the present teaching staff are committed to the programme's success, the focus on individuals rather than group competencies troubled the committee. Specifically, the lack of teaching support in the form of teacher's assistants or an explicit committee-based supervision and evaluation panel for students puts the onus of educating and assessing the students too squarely on individual professors. It is not clear from the course descriptions or materials provided whether the student assessments are performed by the professors teaching the course or external examiners. Minimally, there needs to be a provision for assuring the fair application of grades in the form of an external examiner evaluating the highest and lowest (e.g.) 10% of exams from each course. Additionally, there is no mention how master's theses will be marked—is this performed by the supervisor or committee and how is this formulated on balance with internal and external censors?

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

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

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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*

- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*
- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

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

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

The staff are comprised of excellent researchers with impressive CVs who are long-term academics. They are highly experienced and understand the University's system and pedagogical stance. There are, however, many open vacancies in the department, which raise some questions about the long-term sustainability of a new programme.

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

The teaching staff seem quite committed to the success of the programme. There was no doubt about the resolve of the individuals to develop a robust educational programme, which targets recruitment of international students to build a diverse student cohort. There is a sound link between research and teaching with a varied assessment system in place.

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.

We would propose that the university prioritise filling the vacant positions in the department and provide more teaching support for existing staff. While capital projects such as new libraries and buildings are attractive, it is teaching staff that are the critical interface with students, with whom the success or failure of the university ultimately depends.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

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

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

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

4.2 Student progression

Standards

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

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
    - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
    - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

4.4 Student certification

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

Students will be admitted to the programme on the basis of specific regulations of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the University of Cyprus, which are adhered to in a consistent manner and are published for the information of the public and candidate students. To be considered for admission, students must have a bachelor's degree from a recognised institution in a relevant field to the programme with an equivalent of 6.5/10 in the education systems of the Republic of Cyprus and Greece (or equivalence from external applicants), two letter of recommendation, GCE or TOEFL with a grade "B" or higher for GCE- O' level or 600 for TOEFL (native English speakers are excluded from this provision), a 1-page letter of intent and an oral interview in English.

Since this is a new programme, the Committee met with existing Master's level students in the department. Overall, the students were very positive towards the institution, the Department and individual academics.

Strengths

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

The standards for admission into the programme appear to be rigorous and fair. The admission policy of the programme is well defined. Requirements are transparent and public, and include aspects such as relevant background and the level of English. The provisions in place should draw an internationally minded pool of applicants of diverse socio-economic backgrounds and gender.

Low student numbers will help with monitoring the progress of each student – this is important due to the broad range of prior student experiences.

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.

English language requirements should be checked to meet needed standards for incoming students. What are the thresholds for written / spoken English for acceptance into the programme?

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

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

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5. **Learning resources and student support** *(ESG 1.6)*

Sub-areas

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

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

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

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

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

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

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

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5.4 Student support

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

On balance, the committee was impressed with the campus environment as a good location for learning and student development. The Department of History and Archaeology itself is dispersed among several different buildings, which is an admitted shortcoming for cross-disciplinary integration and education. There is a significant amount of equipment for field-based geophysical prospection and data recording housed in the Annex building of the

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department. However, the Annex itself seems to be little else besides a storage facility and is not a location that is conducive for student training, particularly as it relates to data processing.

The Department makes good use of Blackboard, Turnitin and other digital teaching tools. They seem set to continue their use past the COVID19 outbreak.

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

The campus infrastructure is generally adequate or excellent to support the programme. The library has offered computing facilities needed for desktop GIS applications. Students seem well supported with psychological and medical services provided by the university.

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.

We would advise that there is more computer access and support for students in department-centred laboratory settings. It needs to be acknowledged that the equipment will require a dedicated technician in perpetuity. Currently, there is a post-doctoral researcher on staff for this support, but this position should be made permanent.

For simple spatial GIS applications such as map displays or find distributions generated from databases, customary computers (laptops or desktop) are sufficient. For the calculation of extended spatial data that also uses graphical material (photogrammetry, structure-from-motion), such computers are usually no longer sufficient and workstations with high computing power are needed. It is unclear whether individual workstations are already available at the Institute or whether these will have to be procured in the future.

It would be useful for the students to have free access to an application to check for plagiarism prior to turning in an assignment so as to avoid, if it is desired, any misfortunate incident. The committee also believes that a definition of penalties a student would receive, if he/she tries to cheat, would provide extra transparency and integrity to the department.

It would be valuable for the students to have an academic advisor who will guide them through the whole period of the programme, for instance to help them to write academically, to find the resources needed for the assessments (books, articles), use and get familiar with software or/and hardware, etc. Student success is better ensured if they are well supported under the auspices of a single (or shared) advisor(s).

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

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

C. 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.

In conclusion, the EEC found the scheduled Master programme on Geoinformatics in Digital Humanities in all general areas, compliant with the demanded standards. It has the potential to become an important component in the training of practically oriented archaeologists of all archaeological sub-disciplines. The launch of the programme comes timely. Students and a broad range of employers are expecting skills in spatial analysis using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and other digital applications such as photogrammetry. The program is well integrated into the educational system of the University of Cyprus and the Department of History and Archaeology and has ambitious goals. It makes serious demands on the students' willingness to learn and presents a challenge to the teaching staff. The assured funding of a Foundation chair on Digital Humanities by the Sylvia Ioannou Foundation makes the program reliable. Together with the academic support of the whole department this encourages innovative teaching.

The review of the scheduled programme has identified a number of aspects that could improve the programme in future. These have to be understood as recommendations to enhance what is already a promising programme:

- Renaming the programme to Digital Heritage Management (or similar) would do more justice to the content of the programme and avoid false expectations.

- Rethinking if a three-semester (90 ECTS) matriculation is really the best way for a successful training or if a semester more (as obligatory in Bologna structures) would not be more adequate.

- Priority should be given on filling the vacant positions in the department, on establishing the position of a skilled technician and on providing more teaching support for the existing staff.

- For the future, attention should be paid to the acquisition and maintenance of technical resources; these are often expensive devices that are costly to maintain and require repairs or need to be replaced by new devices due to technical progress.

All members of the EEC would like to express their thanks to the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, to the management of the University of Cyprus and to the academic and administrative staff of the Department of History and Archaeology as well as to the students.

D. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Christopher Gaffney	
Albert Hafner	
Maria Iordanidou	
David K. Wright	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 19 March 2021