

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: May 25, 2024

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
The University of Cyprus
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Faculty of Social Sciences and Education
- **Department/ Sector:** Social and Political Sciences
- **Journalism and Creative Industries (1.5 years, 90 ECTS, MA)**

**In Greek:**

Programme Name

**In English:**

Programme Name

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme's status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):**

**In Greek:** Concentrations



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

**In English:** Concentrations

## A. Introduction

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

The committee consisted of three academics and one student representative with a relevant disciplinary background.

The evaluation took place at The University of Cyprus. The committee met with senior management, lecturers, administrative staff, and a group of current and former students. They attended presentations on the history of the College and the structure of the programme before being given a tour of the campus. They had the opportunity to view the library and technical facilities used by journalism students in the College. The EEC would like to thank all parties involved for their cooperation and support during the evaluation, as well as the CYQAA coordinator for their help managing the process.

At the outset, the EEC would like to note that many of the areas in this report cover topics and subjects that cannot be formally “evaluated” as the program does not yet exist. Things such as teaching evaluations, hiring, grading, regular syllabus development, staff development, etc. are all issues that require the EEC to engage in a certain degree of speculation at this point. In the report, therefore, we have deemed these areas to be “Compliant” based upon two factors: (1) existing national or university praxis, and (2) existing praxis (when relevant) within the undergraduate program in Journalism. There are, of course, examples where praxis at the BA level do not apply to the MA level and, in these cases, are not used.



## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
<b>Christian Christensen</b>	Professor	Stockholm University
<b>Anastasia Veneti</b>	Associate Professor	Bournemouth University
<b>Rozane De Cock</b>	Professor	KU Leuven, Belgium
<b>Giannis Christodoulou</b>	Ph.D. Student	Cyprus University of Technology
<b>Name</b>	Position	University
<b>Name</b>	Position	University

## C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*
- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
  - (a) sub-areas*
  - (b) standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
  - (c) some questions that EEC may find useful.*
- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*
- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

### **Findings**

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

### **Strengths**

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

### **Areas of improvement and recommendations**

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

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*
- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*
- **The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.**

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

### **Sub-areas**

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

### **1.1 Policy for quality assurance**

#### **Standards**

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

### **1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**

#### **Standards**

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

- *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

### 1.3 Public information

#### Standards

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

### 1.4 Information management

#### Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
  - *key performance indicators*
  - *profile of the student population*
  - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
  - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
  - *learning resources and student support available*
  - *career paths of graduates*
- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*
- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*
- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*
- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*



## Findings

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

This is a new programme and as such some of the areas referred to in this section cannot be assessed (such as students' progression information, drop-outs, students' satisfaction etc). Similarly, there is no information related to this program of study to be publicly available as yet. Nonetheless, based on what we observed at the UG programme in Journalism and the university's overall approach and philosophy, we strongly believe that the robust processes to ensure quality assurance will be applied here as well. Such processes and policies underpin the on-going review and development of the programme. Teaching and administrative staff are aware of these policies and procedures.

Admissions criteria are clear and appropriate for this level of study.

The Programme team told the EEC that they had consulted with external stakeholders for the development of this program but there was no specific mention to whom these stakeholders were.

Moreover, the EEC strongly supports the need for the addition of a PG programme that draws on the teaching staff expertise and addresses the needs of the market. Thereupon, while the suggested MA programme has these merits in principle, the EEC still feels uncertain about its design and structure.

(a) The EEC feels that there is need for a stronger explanation on how the two fields are coming together (Journalism and Creative Industries). This should be better reflected in the programme's purpose and objectives (p. 7 as per the MA application) and ILOs (p.7). As they currently stand, they are heavily focusing on journalism.

(b) In its current form (through the electives from sequences A, B, and C), with the exception of the two initial compulsory modules (Journalism in the Digital Age, and Culture and Creative Industries), one can go through the entire programme without taking a single class on creative industries focused modules, or similarly on journalism focused modules. This creates a great imbalance that cannot support the title of MA Journalism and Creative Industries.

## Strengths

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

Robust processes that already exist in the university can ensure that the academic team is focused on the operationalization and delivery of the teaching and on support the students' academic development.

The teaching staff is highly qualified to deliver the programme. The teaching team has extensive working and research experience from which students can strongly benefit.

Excellent infrastructure including university premises, library, cutting edge studios and relevant equipment.

## 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.*

In order to achieve coherence in the structure of the programme, the EEC suggests that the programme team should reconsider aspects of the design of the programme.

Great attention should be paid upon how electives' choices will be made. Possibly more modules on both strands (journalism and creative industries) should be firmly anchored in each or change current ones from electives to compulsory. A restructure seems necessary so as to be impossible to isolate modules in this way. The program will benefit massively if it becomes more condensed but more focused as well.

In Sequence B, from which students can take two options, with the exception of Culture and Algorithms, the available list is consisted primarily from Journalism focused modules and one on social movements (the latter not looking so relevant to this course).

In sequence C, significant modules such as Cultural Management, Cultural Policies and Research Design are put together in a pool from which students can only choose one. This is unusual. Moreover, Research Design seems like a module necessary for the completion of the MA thesis and as such deems appropriate to become compulsory.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Non-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.*

Under the **preconditions** that the staff involved in this **proposed master program** in journalism and creative industries applies the **same quality criteria and intense course preparation and assessment approach** as they have been doing throughout their bachelor in journalism program (same staff), the EEC believes the student-centered learning, teaching and assessment **will comply** with the standards.

### Strengths

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

Master's degree theses are evaluated independently by at least two evaluators.

Experienced staff members with their own field of expertise.

### 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 recommends drafting more detailed course plans/syllabi of each course in the master proposal, paying more attention to a logic pathway of learning and compatible learning goals and means throughout the program, and paying attention to the complementarity of assessment modes. This in order to guarantee a coherent content driven program, to avoid too much overlap and to align feasibility for the students, especially within the first year of the 1,5 year master program.

Also the interconnection between the more theoretical and practical courses as proposed in the master program could be made more explicit. This could help improving students' commitment and motivation for theory-driven subjects and methodological aspects, their implications in the future workplace and the added value of the master thesis in an additional half year of study.

When it comes to the evaluation of the master theses, it could be good to add an oral presentation session including the opportunity to ask questions for clarification during an oral defense moment (limited duration) where the two evaluators (among which the supervisor) and the student can go into discussion (a chair might be added to guide the session). This could clear out differences in grading between both evaluators and be an extra opportunity for student learning and feedback gathering.

The ECC wants to point out that supervision of master theses comes with an impact on workload for the, for now, limited staff number. In order to guarantee quality supervision and guidance, this is an import point of attention. Also clear criteria for grading are needed here in advance, as well as how grades of two evaluators will be added (average score or will more weight be given to the supervisor or not, what is the weight of the process compared to the outcome product of the written report, what are the modalities of the output: only written reports or are documentaries also an option etcetera, are all elements that need to be clarified in advance).

As the precise learning outcomes of the program under construction are a mixture between journalistic skills and gaining more theoretical knowledge about creative industries, and as the future employability of future alumni is still

unknown, it is difficult to estimate whether needs of stakeholders in the working field will be met. It would therefore be insightful to gather information in a systematic way of these potential stakeholders in the related industries about their precise needs, the potential added value of a master in journalism and creative industries and their recommendations regarding the program and employability.

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

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

### 3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

#### **Sub-areas**

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

#### **3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development**

##### Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

#### **3.2 Teaching staff number and status**

##### Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

#### **3.3 Synergies of teaching and research**

##### Standards

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*



- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

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

### Findings

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

The University of Cyprus has in place a clear and comprehensive policy/practice for the hiring of academic staff. Teaching levels for university staff are mandated by a clear policy, and staff promotion (to assistant, associate and full professorship) is also done according to transparent and achievable practices. The staff for the proposed MA in Journalism and Creative Industries are qualified with Ph.D. degrees from excellent universities. As will be noted under "Areas for Improvement and Recommendations," the EEC sees a need for the proposed program to have an expanded number of instructors.

As noted at the start of this evaluation, this is a proposed MA program, and so the EEC cannot comment on activities that have yet to take place (such as student evaluations, teacher training, and updating of course curricula and teaching methods). Or "findings" regarding these areas are based solely upon existing university praxis, as well as practices from the current BA program in Journalism.

### Strengths

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

The teaching staff for the proposed MA in Journalism and Creative Industries is made up of individuals with an excellent track record in teaching and a good track record in research. All core staff have Ph.D.s and have been engaged in teaching for many years. Staff have published in high-level international journals and



international books, and have clearly integrated their research into their teaching in the work they have done outside of the proposed MA. (Again, the EEC cannot comment on this integration in relation to a program that does not yet exist).

### 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.*

In order for the proposed MA program to reach its maximum potential, the EEC feels that the following areas are in need of attention. (1) to hire 1-2 more full-time faculty member (at the assistant, associate or full professor level) to ease the burden on existing staff. While this is an evaluation of the proposed MA program, and not the existing BA program in Journalism, this evaluation cannot overlook the fact that the current 5 teaching staff responsible for the BA program will also take responsibility for the MA program. It was noted in interviews that teaching levels are regulated by state and university policy and that staff are not over-worked, but the recommendation to hire 1-2 additional full-time staff is about more than teaching levels. Additional faculty members will allow for an expansion of teaching and research competence (see Point #2 below), and will also insulate the program from serious problems should teaching staff leave the program. (2) At least one of the proposed additional hires should be a Ph.D. with research and teaching specialization/expertise in the area of Creative Industries. This will help to balance the competence in an MA program that has the intention of integrating Journalism studies with Creative Industries, but where the staff specialization leans toward the Journalism side.

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

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

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

##### Sub-areas

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

##### 4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

###### Standards

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

##### 4.2 Student progression

###### Standards

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

##### 4.3 Student recognition

###### Standards

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

#### 4.4 Student certification

##### Standards

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

*You may also consider the following questions:*

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

##### Findings

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

Pre-defined and published regulations are in place. The admissions criteria are suitable for this level of study are in line with the EEC's expectations

Regarding student progression, pre-defined and published regulations are in place, as well as processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression.

Similarly, all mechanisms and procedures are in place for recognition and certification.

##### Strengths

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

Coherent and well-planned procedures for admission, progression, recognition and certification.

##### 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.*

NA



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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION





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

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

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

### **Sub-areas**

#### **5.1 Teaching and Learning resources**

#### **5.2 Physical resources**

#### **5.3 Human support resources**

#### **5.4 Student support**

### **5.1 Teaching and Learning resources**

#### **Standards**

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

### **5.2 Physical resources**

#### **Standards**

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

### **5.3 Human support resources**

#### **Standards**

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

- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

## 5.4 Student support

### Standards

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

*You may also consider the following questions:*

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

### Findings

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





Established in 1989, University of Cyprus is young, public University with around 7,000 students. Within a few years of its establishment has emerged and established itself in the eyes of society and the international scientific community as a higher education institution that offers quality study programs, produces research work of a very high level, and contributes substantially to upgrading of society. The university is supported financially by government, tuition fees and donations. The university supports financially the new researchers, and it has an agreement of co-operation with 185 universities and research centres in Europe, Asia, Australia, Canada and USA. The procedure to hire academic staff takes about 9 months to complete. This procedure was launched from the very beginning to avoid political influence in the university. The M.A. in journalism and Creative Industries will commence the forthcoming academic year to support graduated students both from University of Cyprus and other universities to expand their knowledge. The M.A. in Journalism and Creative industries will address current changes in the field of digital media and journalism, examine journalism as a creative industry, emerging trends in journalism in connection to cultural digital production as well as to assess technological and social changes through the lens of cultural rearrangements. The course is taught in Greek language, and this is the reason that all students are Greek and Cypriots. The university provides an athletic club, radio station, 23 student clubs, 208 rooms student accommodation, shops, banks, restaurants, coffee shops and system of continuous assessments. In addition, the university provides public lecture series, workshops, seminars, cultural festivals, free psychological counselling services. Journalism and Creative Industries has been designed within the framework of the Journalism Program of the Department of Social and Political Sciences, to address emerging trends in journalism as a form of cultural digital production. Primary aim of the program is to provide important information on research questions related to media influences on people's knowledge, perceptions, and behaviours. It also provides critical skills for every new journalist who aspires to have a positive professional impact in an environment of social and cultural shifts and intense technological rearrangements. The program offers courses that improves students' critical and cognitive skills by familiarizing students with media organizations and industries as well as the most important technologies that have marked the history of media developments. The students utilize specific research tools to understand the social environment. The course provides essential technical skills for collecting and analysing information, along with the production of audiovisual content, and the cultivation of storytelling.

### Strengths

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

The university has an excellent reputation giving the opportunity to graduate students to find jobs easier. The university also provides the students with an audio production booth, a TV studio and a special audiovisual production. In 2023, the university introduced the journalism lab. The lab currently conducts research on 5 distinct research areas such as journalism, practice, internet journalism, social media/data analysis and platforms. Each student has an advisor and faculty advises the students about their activities throughout the year. The University provides psychological support to the students, support to students with disabilities and financial problems. Career centre supports students offering a wide range of expertise and services such as professional guidance, information about universities abroad, seminars, events, partial employment. The students get involved in tutor's research by J.Lab. the university has an alliance with the University of Dortmund, they create alliances with other universities to expand their research. The re-searchers come from abroad to assist and develop new articles. This helps students to be familiar with the development of new journals. Professors are well connected with the market. A team of ten partners, all young research-based universities under 50 years of age covering the entire European territory (Maastricht, Antwerp, University of Eastern Finland, Carlos in Madrid, Bremen, Copernicus in Poland, University of Essex). Any studies are useful since the technology runs fast so they will be more educated with the master's degree.

There is a need for senior journalists to go back in university to elaborate with new practical skills. The University offers a number of scholarships, for financially supporting students. The scholarships are either funded from the University's own income or from external sources in the form of sponsorship by organizations or individuals. The Student Welfare Association financially supports students with severe financial hardships regardless of their level of study. Applications for financial support are submitted to the Social Support Office of the Academic Affairs and Student Welfare Service every October, following an open call and sending personal messages to students' mobile phones. Applications will only be accepted in other periods if exceptionally urgent reasons arise. The total amount of the aid is decided annually depending on the financial capacity of the Association's Fund. The amount of money granted to each destitute student is determined by the score s/he gets on the basis of stipulated Financial Assistance Criteria (economic, social, family, health problems, etc.). Every year, at least 4 scholarships are awarded to the students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

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

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

## 6. Additional for 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:*
  - *regular meetings*

- reports per semester and feedback from supervisors
- support for writing research papers
- participation in conferences
- The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.

You may also consider the following questions:

- How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?
- Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?
- Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?

### Findings

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

### Strengths

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

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

## D. Conclusions and final remarks

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

***(The EEC would like to note that although there is only one decision of “non-compliant” (for issue 1.2), this is, to us, the central issue for the application, as is related to the internal structure and logic of the entire program. Thus, it is a sufficiently serious issue to warrant – in the opinion of the EEC – changes to the proposed program in order the program to be viable.)***

In conclusion, the EEC would like to begin by noting that we were impressed with the academic credentials of the staff for the proposed MA program, and well as the organizational and technical infrastructure at The University of Cyprus. Established praxis for things such as promotion, teaching evaluation, student progression is in place, and appears to work well for existing programs. There is no reason to think, therefore, that these established practices and procedures will not work equally well for a future MA program. There is no doubt in the minds of the EEC members that the University of Cyprus is an organization devoted to high quality and excellence in education and research, and encourages staff to continue in the pursuit of such quality and excellence.

So, while staff are clearly qualified, and standard practices and administrative structures are in place to ensure the running of the program, promotion of staff, monitoring of student progress, there are a number of issues that concern the EEC that we feel are in need of attention.

1. The title of the program (“MA in Journalism and Creative Industries”) is problematic, in that the program offering does not adequately reflect or address (see comments below) if and how these two (usually) distinct areas of cultural and communication research intersect.
2. As an example of the issue raised in Point #1 above, the MA program begins with two courses (“Journalism in the Digital Era” and “Culture and Creative Industries”). This begs the question: why is there not an introductory course where the two areas addressed in the title of the MA are more clearly and comprehensively merged (intellectually and theoretically)? The link to journalism is mentioned in “JO502: Culture and Creative Industries”, but the readings for the course and the description provided do not address journalism to any significant degree. And, in the first course in the class “JO501: Journalism in the Digital Era” the link does not appear to be there at all. So, the students take two MA-level classes (which make up two of their four required classes) at the start of a graduate program on “Journalism and Creative Industries” where the link between the two areas is not directly addressed. Having two separate courses does not address this issue, and the two need to address the central theme of the MA in a concrete manner.
3. The issue in Point #2 above is compounded by the fact that, based on the MA structure provided to the EEC, it appears students can go through their entire MA in “Journalism and Creative Industries” taking just

one class in each core area (and even both). For example, a student can take the following courses and qualify:

- Journalism in the Digital Era (Required)
- Culture and Creative Industries (Required)
- Research Methods (Required)
- Thesis (Required)
- Image and Society (A)
- Art & Technology (A)
- Informatics/Computer Science (B)
- Design of Multimedia Applications (B)
- Research Design (C)

This hypothetical student will have gone through the entire program having essentially taken one course in Journalism, and only one or two more courses that are only tangentially connected to Creative Industries (Image and Society and Art & Tech...but even these two are not core Creative Industries classes), but will get an MA. Similarly, a student could do the following:

- Journalism in the Digital Era (Required)
- Culture and Creative Industries (Required)
- Research Methods (Required)
- Thesis (Required)
- Creative Writing in Audiovisual Productions (A)
- Documentary Production (A)
- Journalism and AI (B)
- Digital Society (B)
- Research Design (C)

This hypothetical student has gone through the MA with only one course in Creative Industries (the required course), but will get an MA, thus preparing them for doctoral work. If this is possible, then what does the title “Journalism and Creative Industries” actually mean? This is an important issue that we feel must be addressed.

4. It is unclear to the EEC how the MA program can have “Research Design” as an elective course in Sequence C. No matter what form the students decide to present their thesis work, an MA degree is meant to qualify the student for future doctoral work. And, it seems odd that a group of students can go through to thesis work where some have taken research design, and others have not. Our suggestion is to make Research Design a mandatory course and eliminate one of the elective courses from Sequence A or B.

5. The program is in need of 1-2 additional staff members, one of whom should be an expert or well-versed in teaching and research related to the Creative Industries.

6. It was unclear to whom the new MA is targeted. In interviews, staff claimed that they were advising new graduates to go to other universities (suggesting a need), yet students at the BA level said that they wanted more practical courses, and none said that they would consider for applying to the proposed MA program.

7. The EEC are also a little unclear about the rationale for having the proposed MA program in Greek. We would assume a larger possible market if the program were in English, and the staff are clearly qualified to teach in English given their international educational and publishing backgrounds.

8. Given the stated direction of the MA, the EEC would argue that courses such Cultural Policy, Cultural Management and Cultural Reporting should be considered as a required cluster. Or, at the least, that two of these courses be required.

### E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
<b>Christian Christensen</b>	
<b>Anastasia Veneti</b>	
<b>Rozane De Cock</b>	
<b>Giannis Christodoulou</b>	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

**Date:** May 24, 2024