



Doc. 300.1.3

Date: 28th May 2024

Feedback Report from EEC Experts

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

In Greek:

Δημιουργική Μάθηση και Τέχνες στην Παιδική Ηλικία (3-8 εξάμηνα, 90 ECTS, Μεταπτυχιακό, Εξ αποστάσεως)

In English:

Creative Learning and the Arts in Childhood (3-8 semesters, 90 ECTS, Master of Arts, E- Learning)

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

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: 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].

A. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Pamela Burnard	Professor (Chair)	University of Cambridge
Valerie Sollars	Professor (Member)	University of Malta
Arniika Kuusisto	Professor (Member)	University of Helsinki
Christothea Herodotou	Professor (Member)	The Open University UK
Maria Kramvi	Student (Member)	Open University of Cyprus



B. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

The EEC based on the external evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) and the Higher Education Institution's response (Doc.300.1.2), must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.

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

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
<p>There is evidence that conceptually the programme has taken into consideration planning for smooth student progression. However, we recommend that UCY carefully considers students who will be joining the course at different times, especially if there will be students from subsequent cohorts following the same courses and considering that they will be admitted from very different professional and academic backgrounds.</p>	<p>It is great that the committee sees the fact that the <i>"The programme and course design are in line with institution strategy with explicit learning outcomes"</i> and that it takes into account student progression. According to the graduate school procedures for admission into the postgraduate programmes the procedure is clear and students are aware of this beforehand. Students submit their application to the programs which are available according to the expected requirements and each department's own rules (See the Guidelines for postgraduate studies https://www.ucy.ac.cy/graduateschool/postgraduate-programmes-places/?lang=en https://www.ucy.ac.cy/graduateschool/admission-requirements-2/?lang=en Postgraduate Studies Rules</p> <p>It is important to note that students of this program will have the opportunity to submit their application once a year, sometime in April to start their studies in September. The publication of the programme and the process of submission follow the Guidelines for postgraduate studies. Then as the Department of Education does for all its postgraduate programmes, a committee is set to interview all the interested applicants.</p> <p>As discussed with the evaluation committee, the fact that the participants will be from different professional and academic backgrounds is considered a plus for the diversity and interaction of each cohort. This is further highlighted in the activities they are expected to complete. In the different interactive activities, it is ensured that each professional will have the opportunity to reflect on their practices and share this experience with the rest (See Appendix 1: Detailed Guidelines for Interactive Activities and other assignments)</p>	<p>Partially Compliant</p> <p>(A) A clear time-frame for each study unit is required. In Appendix 3 we can only see that the Research Methods study unit is being offered in the first semester of the first year. There is no time-frame proposed/indicated for any of the other study units.</p> <p>In Appendix 3 and 6 – where the description and list of study units are provided, please insert the Year and Semester.</p> <p>(B) By indicating clearly the timing for each study unit, you will ensure that students who enrol for the 2nd implementation of the programme, will not be forced to join the first cohort of students. If this were to happen, the progression of the 2nd cohort will be compromised.</p> <p>(C) Despite the range of hours permitted for a study unit (375 to 450 hours), there is</p>

		<p>unnecessary variation across study units in the total workload expected. For example: 379 hours for the Research Methods study unit vs 415 hours for the Visual Arts & Creativity. It is expected that for study units with an identical number of ECTS, there is minimal or no variation in the expected workload. Parity of workload will avoid potential student complaints.</p>
<p>We would like more transparency and more specific detailed information on how assessment and assignments correspond to the level of ECTS (see course descriptions - in the Study Guide and include a table that maps ECTS per module to the student workload, activity, on a weekly basis).</p>	<p>In reference to transparency and more specific detailed information on how assessment and assignments correspond to the level of ECTS please refer to: Appendix 1: Detailed Guidelines for Interactive Activities and other assignments Appendix 2: Students Workload per Week Appendix 3: Updated Courses' Description</p>	<p>See above for the recommendation re ECTS and the workload and the corresponding assessment expected for each study unit.</p>

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

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
Diverse modes of learning delivery need to be systematically added across all courses such as the use of online forums for student interactions, online making games such as Minecraft, virtual museum tours, online simulations and a diverse use of applications.	We have addressed this issue during the development of interactive activities and assignments (see Appendix 1). Moreover the Technological Unit has run a market research in VR/AR solution for educational purposes and provided the coordinator of the program a detailed report (see Appendix 4: Report for VR/AR solutions). The coordinator and the instructors of the program in collaboration with the Pedagogical and the Technological Unit are discussing the different options and a final decision will be made before the beginning of the Academic Year 2024/25.	Partially Compliant The updated version of Appendix 1, does not provide sufficient information about the online delivery of the activities with reference to the specific online tools and tool-use. Could these be added to each activity description?
Detailed and clear guidance for completing interactive activities and exercises needs to be stated in study guides and online.	Clear guidance for completing interactive activities and other assignments has been addressed. Please refer to Appendix 1	Compliant
An induction week (or a few days) should be organised to provide students with thorough training and confidence with library use, online tools and the e-learning platform, as well as networking with other students.	The Academic Development and Quality Sector in collaboration with Departments will run an E-induction Week for every distance learning program during the last week of August (see Appendix 5: E-Induction Week Program)	Compliant
There needs to be a larger assessment weighting for interactive weekly activities – at least 20%.	We have addressed this issue please refer to Appendix 3	Compliant
The assessment plans need to be mapped clearly so that students can	A weekly table for each course providing all the necessary information – workload, hours,	Compliant

see what is expected from them on a weekly basis.	assessment etc., has been prepared. Please refer to Appendix 2	
The educational content needs to be organised around individual weeks, clearly stating interactive activities and exercises and offering clear instructions on how these should be completed and assessed.	We have addressed this issue please refer to Appendix 2 and Appendix 1	Partially Compliant Break down the material for each week: for example, what literature/course reading is required? This requires an update to all the course study guides.
The wording of learning outcomes should align with the development of complex thinking skills.	We have revised each course's learning outcomes as suggested by the EEC committee. Please refer to Appendix 3	COMPLIANT However, it would be advisable to label the section incorporating knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy as LEARNING OUTCOMES
The course 'Creative Research Methods in Childhood' should be compulsory for all students irrespective of the route they choose to follow.	We have endorsed the EEC's suggestion as presented in Appendix 6: List of Compulsory and Elective Courses	COMPLIANT But please refer to comments in Section 1 above.
Some course titles should be revised	We have revised the two course titles as suggested by EEC. Please refer to Appendix 3 and Appendix 6.	COMPLIANT
A course guide for the dissertation should be added.	We have endorsed the EEC's suggestion as presented in Appendix 7: Dissertation Guide	COMPLIANT
An explicit component reflecting multiliteracies, including but not restricted to literature, poetry, lyrics, rhymes, digital literacy, movement, dance and drama should be added.	We have addressed the ECC's suggestion as presented at Appendix 1. For example, in the Play and Creativity Course there is reference to pictures, drawings and picture books as literacy tools. They are used to explore and study play, creativity and humor. The Mental Process and Representation course explores elements of picture books as a means to make the connection between creativity and mathematics. In the Creative Research Methods with Children course there is extended reference to the different multiliteracy stimuli employed in creative research methods to appropriately include children in the process of research.	PARTIALLY COMPLIANT Multi-modalities are now well addressed. However, multiliteracies promote a more holistic form of teaching, social change, meta-language awareness, higher-order thinking. Given that multi-literacies emphasise the ability to critically engage with information, adapt to evolving communication technologies and understand the diversity of voices and perspectives in contemporary society, we would expect the feature of inter-culturality, meaning-making in different cultures and communicating meanings through a diversity of literacies.



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



3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
<p>Pedagogical and technological aspects of e-learning training needs to be explicit. They have training in place for pedagogical and technological e-learning which is mandatory. However, UCY should consider ways of enabling the sharing of good practice amongst staff online (webinars of external experts or 'pedagogical café').</p>	<p>It is important to notice the EEC's acknowledgement that <i>"the University of Cyprus (UCY) has a clear quality assurance policy which takes into consideration regular and ongoing monitoring of programmes of study with clear channels of feedback"</i>.</p> <p>As decided on 29/4/24 between the Pedagogical Unit and the Academic Development and Quality Sector, the following tools and procedures will be used to enhance the dissemination of good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During the annual quality assurance workshop organized in December, a special session will include the dissemination of good practices. The University will invite both internal members and external experts to present at the conference and a similar approach will be followed for distance learning. - Creation of content on "distance education" on the Blackboard Ultra LMS where members of the pedagogical unit and instructors can discuss synchronously or asynchronously disseminating good practices. In addition, recent publications, and other educational material such as published articles, webinars etc. will be shared. The application will be launched in August 2024 and before the start of the academic year 2024/25. - The Academic Development and Quality Sector will record the good practices presented during the external evaluation processes by the Departments which are evaluated by the EECs, and will subsequently ensure that the academic community is informed through the University's internal access system MyUCY. The process will be ongoing. - As part of the continuous pedagogical training of the instructors on the issues of distance education, a seminar will be organized annually, which will include among other topics the dissemination of good practices and the training of the instructors. <p>The above procedures have been approved by the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs who supervises the actions of distance education.</p>	<p>COMPLIANT and particularly well-addressed.</p>

<p>The use of new technologies is encouraged. However, we recommend that academic staff engage with new practices involving multiple applications that can easily be operationalised in creative teaching for creative learning with arts, play and childhood.</p>	<p>The technological unit has carried out market research to enrich the University's technological tools (see Appendix 4). The available options have been reviewed by Pedagogical Unit, the Program Coordinator, and Instructors for alignment of the tools' features with respect to meeting the learning objectives of the courses. The final decision of purchasing the appropriate tools, will be made before the beginning of the academic year 2024/25.</p>	<p>COMPLIANT – great job.</p>
<p>There are plans to invite visiting staff to participate in teaching the study programme. The EEC strongly encourages invitations to involve scholars and, for instance, digital artists.</p>	<p>The university accommodates visiting professors, something which the program will take advantage of. The structure of the program allows the coordinator to take advantage of this policy. The coordinator of the program puts in a request through the Department of Education a semester earlier. Also, the plan is to have students attend different webinars or other online talks which are related to the content of the program and each course separately. For example, for the course Creative Research Methods with Children the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) has different videos on research methods such as https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpnexrLZBT4 which can be used for students' additional knowledge and enhancement.</p>	<p>COMPLIANT and well addressed.</p>
<p>Generally teaching staff's research and publications are related to the programme's courses. The EEC strongly encourages the teaching staff to engage collaboratively on a research project that focuses on this programme. When the programme is re-evaluated in the coming years, the EEC would expect to see research related to e-learning by the teaching staff.</p>	<p>Teaching Staffs research and publications related to the program's courses are included as mandatory or optional reading in each course (see Appendix 3). Moreover, the plan is to research the e-learning programme considering the following information and details with the aims to review it, make it better and at the same time develop a set of publications.</p> <p><u>Possible Research Questions for such a study could be the following:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the perceptions of students regarding the quality and relevance of the programme? 2. How do faculty members perceive the effectiveness of teaching methods, course materials, and student engagement strategies within the program? 3. What are the elements of the online e-learning program that best support students' creative learning experience? 	<p>PARTIALLY COMPLIANT</p> <p>It is recommended that if the research questions 1 and 2 are taken up, the focus should be on ONLINE experiences and programmes.</p>

	<p>4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program in preparing students for from diverse career paths?</p> <p>To respond to some or all the above research questions the following <u>data collection methods</u> could be employed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online assessment surveys by students • End of each course students will be invited to assess the course creatively (e.g., through a construction, a drawing, or a musical creation) • End of the semester Study Guide changes- each instructor needs to provide a list of the possible changes that could take place. • Exit Surveys (end of the program). • Focus groups with students and co-ordinator as well as instructors and co-ordinator at the end of first and second year, focusing on good practices. • Document selection- assignments submitted. • Outcome measures- Track quantitative data on student performance. • <p>Based on the collection of the above data, <u>analysis could be quantitative and qualitative:</u></p> <p>Both quantitative and qualitative methods will be employed to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data. Patterns, themes, correlations, and discrepancies will be identified to draw meaningful conclusions.</p> <p>After the analysis of the data the results will be noted as a means to <u>review the program and at the same time lead to a publication:</u></p> <p>The study will provide valuable insights into the strengths, weaknesses, and overall effectiveness of the programme. With such evidence we will be able to provide recommendations for the content of the program, the teaching methods, and student support to ensure continuous quality improvement.</p>	
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4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (ESG 1.4)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
<p>To effectively document and support student progress, teachers are encouraged to systematically use and act upon Blackboard Analytics, which should be enriched by other indicators such as number of forum comments, responses to quizzes.</p> <p>There needs to be a procedure in place detailing when teachers should monitor and act upon analytics, especially in order to identify when to take action for students at risk. This is particularly pertinent in a programme where students come from diverse academic and professional backgrounds.</p>	<p>This issue has been addressed and the following section has been included in the "E-Learning Teaching Guidelines – Section 2.3, as described below</p> <p><i>"instructors have the obligation to monitor students' progress in the course and send personal messages to students to develop a guidance plan if they find that their participation and progress is not satisfactory. The tracking process of student progress begins at the beginning of the academic semester with the implementation of periodic bi-weekly monitoring.</i></p> <p><i>In particular, students' progress is monitored using a combination of the following tools and methods:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Blackboard Ultra Analytics: provides statistical data in relation to students' study time and presence in the system, facilitating the instructor to identify students who may have some difficulties or lack of time in relation to learning obligations. Other data also relate to late submission of assignments or other work, lack of cooperation with fellow students, etc.</i> <i>2. Unsatisfactory performance of the student in interactive and other assignments or assessment methods.</i> <i>3. Inadequate student interaction with fellow students, with instructor and with course content (e.g., participation in lectures, group discussions, peer review, synchronous or</i> 	<p>COMPLIANT</p> <p>It would have been useful to see this in an appendix. Where will these e-learning guidelines be optimally positioned?</p>

	<p><i>asynchronous personal communication with the instructor). Where applicable the instructor will contact students directly to investigate any problems, they may be experiencing to provide support and guidance. The student support plan is individualized according to the student's needs and progress during the semester. Communication between the instructor and the student is on a systematic basis through the arrangement of face-to-face tele-meetings, electronic memos, individualized written and verbal feedback and messaging app".</i></p>	
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5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
<p>Upon request, the EEC has received a copy of the useful document called 'Procedures Supporting E-learning 2024' (in Greek) which presents the online course. This includes staff training, initial planning for programme, technical training and design of courses on Blackboard. However, there should be in place a process for reviewing (a) the final courses designed on the platform and (b) the structure and content study guide. This will ensure consistency across online courses and ensure the requirements such as interactivity and collaboration, are met.</p>	<p>The EEC's suggestion has been endorsed and the following section has been added in the document named "Procedures Supporting E-learning 2024" as Step 7 "Upon completion of the course planning and the study guide, the instructors provide the educational material to the pedagogical unit. The pedagogical unit evaluates and gives feedback. Subsequently, the instructor proceeds to design the course in the Blackboard Ultra system, which is then evaluated by the pedagogical unit to ensure that the pedagogical methodology of the course is aligned with the technological tools and resources.</p>	<p>COMPLIANT</p>
<p>Regarding the evaluation criteria of whether the resources are fit for purpose, the EEC would also like to see some more up-to-date research literature in the course literature. For instance, the 'Research Methods in Education' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison) in the research methods course has more recently had two further editions, where the 2018 edition is revised and significantly updated when it comes to for example Mixed Methods Research. While the more recent updates may not be available in Greek, it would be advisable to use at least chapters or sections of more updated references. The research methods and methodologies have seen a significant development during the recent years. Some of the recent</p>	<p>We have endorsed the EEC's suggestion for more update research literature in all courses. Please refer to Appendix 3. Please also note that course literature is divided into compulsory and optional in each course study guide.</p>	<p>COMPLIANT</p>



<p>publications which may be of interest and relate strongly across several courses include: Palmer, T., Burnard, P. and Burke, D. (2024) Inviting a (Re-)Orientation to 'Musicking-as-Play'. <i>Action, Criticism and Theory for Music Education</i> (in press)."</p>		
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6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	N/A
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	N/A
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	N/A
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Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	N/A

7. Eligibility (Joint programmes)
 (ALL ESG)

EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response

Areas of improvement and recommendations by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	N/A
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	N/A
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	N/A
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	N/A
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	N/A

C. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC must provide final conclusions and remarks, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.

EEC's final conclusions and remarks

Conclusions and final remarks by EEC	Actions Taken by the Institution	EEC's final recommendations and comments on the HEI's response
There should be greater transparency and details of how ECTS correspond to studying and student workload (1.2).	It's been addressed please refer to Appendix 2	PARTIALLY COMPLIANT
Reordering the set of courses to ensure the two research methods courses are compulsory for all students irrespective of their preferred, chosen route (2.1).	It's been addressed please refer to Appendix 6	PARTIALLY COMPLIANT
The e-learning implementation of courses needs to be improved by including diverse online tools and applications that would enable social interactions and communication (2.1).	It's been addressed please refer to Appendixes 4 & 5 In addition, Blackboard Ultra provides multiple tools for synchronous and asynchronous interaction and communication. For example, discussion forums, messaging app, announcements, groups, peer review, feedback, teleconferencing, chatting, etc.	PARTIALLY COMPLIANT
Study guides need to be refined to include details and weighting about interactive activity, exercises etc (2.4).	It's been addressed in each course description which is part of the course study guide. Please refer to Appendix 2	COMPLIANT
All courses (study guides and online implementation) need to be reviewed to ensure compliance with elearning methodology and principles (5.1).	Its been addressed see reply (5.1) below: The EEC's suggestion has been endorsed and the following section has been added in the document named "Procedures Supporting E-learning 2024" as Step 7 "Upon completion of the course planning and the study guide, the instructors provide the educational material to the pedagogical unit. The pedagogical unit evaluates and gives feedback. Subsequently, the instructor proceeds to design the course in the	PARTIALLY COMPLIANT

	<p>Blackboard Ultra system, which is then evaluated by the pedagogical unit to ensure that the pedagogical methodology of the course is aligned with the technological tools and resources.</p>	
<p>Course literature needs to be reviewed as regards both Compulsory reading and Recommended further literature, and updated with more current sources (5.1).</p>	<p>It's been addressed. Please refer to Appendix 3.</p>	<p>PARTIALLY COMPLIANT</p>



D. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Pamela Burnard	
Valerie Sollars	
Arniika Kuusisto	
Christothea Herodotou	
Maria Kramvi	

Date: May 28th 2024

