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: 28 February 2025

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**

  University of Cyprus

- **Town: Nicosia**

  - **School/Faculty (if applicable): Faculty of Social Sciences and Education**

- **Department/ Sector: Department of Law**

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

  In Greek:

  Μάστερ στη Βιωσιμότητα και Ανθρώπινα Δικαιώματα

  In English:

   Magister Legum – LLM – Master of Laws in Sustainability and Human Rights

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

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

- **Programme's status:** New

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) spent one day (26 February 2025, 9am to 6pm) at University of Cyprus, meeting the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, Professor Tatiana Eleni Synodinou (also Chairwoman of the Internal QA Committee of the University), the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Education, Professor Antonis Ellinas, the Chair of the Law Department, Associate Professor Costas Paraskeva, relevant academic and administrative staff of the Department of Law involved in the delivery of the proposed LLM programme, students, graduates of the current LLM programme and external stakeholders. The visit also included a tour of the campus and, in particular, of the library.

The EEC understands that the UCY is the main provider of legal education with the mission to provide quality legal education, contributing to the development of Cypriot law and to study the international and European legal systems and European integration and their impact on Cypriot law.

The Law Department is part of the School of Social Sciences and Education.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Belen Olmos Giupponi	Professor of Law	Middlesex University London
Jacob Öberg	Professor of European Law	University of Southern Denmark
Chara Pagkalou	Student	Open University Cyprus
Anne Thies (Chair)	Professor of International and European Law	University of Glasgow
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*

- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
  (a) *sub-areas*
  (b) *standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
  (c) *some questions that EEC may find useful.*

- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*

- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

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

Strengths

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*

- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*

- ***The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.***

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

Sub-areas

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

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

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

    - *is developed with input from industry leaders and other stakeholders (i.e. industry leaders, professional bodies/associations, social partners, NGO's, governmental agencies) to align with professional standards.*

    - *integrates employer surveys to adapt to evolving workplace demands.*

    - *regularly utilizes alumni feedback for long-term effectiveness assessment.*

    - *is published and implemented by all stakeholders.*

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

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
  - o *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
  - o *Aligns course learning outcomes with student assessments using rubrics to ensure objectives are met.*
  - o *Connects each course's aims and objectives with the programme's overall aims and objectives through mapping, aligning with the institutional strategy.*
  - o *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
  - o *benefits from external expertise*
  - o *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)*
  - o *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
  - o *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
  - o *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
  - o *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
  - o *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*
    - ▪ collaborates with industry experts for curriculum development.
    - ▪ conducts joint reviews with external academic specialists to maintain academic rigor.
    - ▪ performs periodic assessments with external stakeholders to ensure continuous alignment with market needs.
    - ▪ establishes collaboration with international educational institutions or/& other relevant international bodies for a global perspective.

▪ conducts regular feedback sessions with local community leaders for societal relevance.

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed using specific indicators and data i.e:*
    - o *key performance indicators*
    - o *profile of the student population*
    - o *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
    - o *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
    - o *learning resources and student support available*
    - o *career paths of graduates*
    - o *industry trend analysis.*
    - o *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*

- ○ *data exchanges with professional networks*
- ○ *employer insights concerning career readiness*

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

You may also consider the following questions:

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*

- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*

- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*

- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*

- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*

- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*

- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*

- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*

- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*

- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***

- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*

- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*

- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*

- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*

- *How and to what extent are external stakeholders involved in the quality assurance process of the program?*

- *How is external stakeholder feedback gathered, analyzed and implemented,?*

- *In what ways do external stakeholders assist in making program information publicly available?*

- *How do external stakeholders contribute to evaluating graduate success in the labor market and obtaining feedback on employment outcomes?*

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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.

From the information provided during the onsite visit by the University of Cyprus (UCY) colleagues on 26/02/2025, the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) members could gain a good knowledge about quality assurance (QA) structures, regulations and processes followed by the Department of Law (see also point 11 of the Application for Evaluation - Accreditation Programme of Study, LLM Sustainability and Human Rights, p17). The different presentations and the respective Q&A sessions with the Law Department members and other relevant UCY colleagues were very informative and provided the panel members with sufficient information about the QA processes and Quality Assurance System (QAS) at the UCY.

In relation to QA policies, following the organogram provided on the day and based on the presentations, there are different QA processes in place at the University, Faculty, and Department levels. The Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, Professor Tatiana Eleni Synodinou (also Chairwoman of the Internal QA Committee of the University) gave a clear indication and provided information about the different processes in place to monitor that the quality of the programmes offered is in line with the 2015 European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). At the university level sits an institutional QA Committee, whereas at departmental level different internal processes contribute to reinforce QA. In particular, quality is monitored through the evaluation of courses by students. The Departmental Board also plays a role in quality assurance through the UG and PG dedicated committees which oversee the programmes of study. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are also in place (they were mentioned, but not in greater detail) and student surveys are fed into the process. The Chair of the Department of Law, Associate Professor Costas Paraskeva, mentioned that two successful external evaluations had taken place in 2016 and 2020. The structure of the Department of Law demonstrates that there is an appropriate system in place as it is composed of the Chairperson, a Vice-Chair and four committees (including Studies and Student Affairs; Research; Postgraduate Studies; Internal Quality Assurance) which reinforces internal QA processes. All relevant information about this particular PG programme should be contained in the Student Handbook (NB: as a blueprint the EEC was provided with a copy of the PhD Handbook, which we expect to be similar for the proposed programme).

The current QA system supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance, through the Centre of Teaching and Learning which offers seminars, workshops and training to keep good academic practice. It is worth noting that some law colleagues are Advance HE Fellows (UK).

There are indications that the current QA system ensures academic integrity and freedom and prevents academic fraud (NB: during the onsite visit it was mentioned that training on artificial intelligence (AI) in HE was taking place on that day). Law colleagues indicated that in each module there is built-in guidance on plagiarism for students that is also contained in the Student Handbook.

In terms of the involvement of external stakeholders, the University has signed different memoranda of cooperation/understanding with external governmental and non-governmental organisations as well as business networks, and, within this framework, these different stakeholders have the opportunity to feed in their comments in terms of QA. Specifically, for this programme, the EEC members heard from different stakeholders, including government officials working on the implementation of domestic, EU and international environmental law, NGO staff working on nature conservation as well as corporate social responsibility. It was also mentioned that an Advisory Board with stakeholders' participation had been put in place for the accreditation of all the programmes run by the

Department of Law operating until 2018, which further indicates commitment to comply with QA processes. This guarantees that industry-specific and societal information is regularly updated with expert inputs.

The EEC members met with students representing current and past LLM students, who are now PhD students, legal practitioners and Teaching Assistants (alumni), providing insights about the previous LLM programme. The EEC assumes that the Law Department standards will continue to trigger positive feedback by students/graduates.

Since this is a new programme, the evaluation took place on the basis of the public information provided in the application (Points 5 and 6) in terms of the selection criteria, learning outcomes, qualification awarded, teaching, learning and assessment procedures, which is clear, also concerning pass rates. This is a streamlined programme that draws on existing expertise with the ambition of expanding the scope of the Department of Law, including the appointment of a new staff member in the areas of Business and Human Rights law. In terms of the course design, the programme's approach to sustainability and human rights allows for future flexibility regarding research-led modules to be included (eg labour law as part of the social dimension). The course specification documents, and the module outlines are clear and present all the relevant information that is expected for the proposal of a new programme, in this sense, the programme meets adequate academic standards.

During the onsite visit, the EEC received some information on different learning opportunities available to the students. Moreover, the stakeholders confirmed the need for experts in the field, being positive about students' access to internships, work-based dissertations/projects and employment. While the LLM will not be validated by the professional regulatory body, the ongoing collaboration with the Cyprus Bar Council indicates commitment to abide by appropriate standards of legal education. The Chair of the Department emphasised the social engagement dimension of the law programmes, stressing that all the law programmes resonate with the local and societal context.

The Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Education further provided the School's position on the different QA processes. A report about the performance of the law programmes is issued annually, this will help this programme to be audited in terms of accuracy and consistency, and check, going forward, the actual implementation of the programme.

Overall, the EEC members were satisfied with the QA processes in place with regard to the proposed LLM Programme in Sustainability and Human Rights. There is already good groundwork in this regard that can be taken forward for this particular programme, tailoring it to the specific needs of the target audience (prospective applicants).

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

- Being a relatively new Department of Law (only established in 2006 with law students admitted in 2008), there is an impressive track record of achievement.

- Alignment with expertise, the programme builds on current expertise, expanding on the provision to include other growing areas of academic interest to diversify.

- Innovation around the assessment methods, in particular, the reaction paper which could be used as an opportunity to keep the programme abreast.

- Progressive involvement of external stakeholders in terms of programme design, with possibility to explore alternative ways of increasing student employment after graduation.

- Social outreach and civic engagement are a core part of the QA process.

- Colleagues are engaged with publication of Cyprus law with a serious contribution to the development of law.

- Potential for curriculum co-design for the future based on the experience of current LLM 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.

- The QA system in place should ensure consistent anonymisation of the assessments (wherever possible), and benefit from having a rubric in place for the assessments to further ensure high quality standards.

- Going forward, internal and external moderation processes should be more visible to ensure transparency.

- In terms of the Admission Criteria, it would be beneficial to specify what the criteria are for EU applicants in line with Recognition of academic diplomas - Your Europe and The Lisbon Recognition Convention - ENIC-NARIC.

- From a resourcing perspective, there is the need that the programme is made sustainable by ensuring appropriate staffing levels, so as to guarantee that QA processes are not impacted upon.

- The EEC learned that there is currently no workload recognition for the supervision and marking of LLM dissertations, which is surprising given the scope of work/responsibility involved, including the need for second marking and the envisaged possibility for students to choose various types of dissertations (including research- and work-based dissertations). This can have an impact on QA as there is no incentive system in place for colleagues involved in the supervision and marking of LLM dissertations.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

   2.2 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology
   2.3 Practical training
   2.4 Student assessment

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

Standards

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- *Detailed schedules in course materials are included, explicitly stating the expected hours for lectures, self-study, and group projects, ensuring transparency in time allocation.*

- *A system is integrated where each learning activity is assigned a weight proportional to its importance and time requirement, aiding in balanced curriculum design.*

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2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*

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

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

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

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*
  - *The time allocation for each assessment task is explicitly stated in course outlines, ensuring students are aware of the expected workload.*

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

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*

- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*

- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*

- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*

- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*

- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*

- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*

- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***

- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*

- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***

- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*

- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

Findings

The LLM programme Sustainability and Human Rights seems to have a suitable teaching philosophy where students are expected to actively participate in the seminar with a very strong focus on student-centred learning.

The intended learning outcomes support the need for students to engage actively with the teaching materials highlighting their need to develop analytical critical skills and thinking. There also seems to be a learning environment which respects the diversity of the students and their needs.

The process of teaching and learning of the proposed LLM programme is flexible and varies between presentations by teachers, student presentations and interactive class discussion, clearly facilitating the achievement of planned learning outcomes.

Based on the site visit and interview with students and staff, it appears that the programme supports student-centred learning, teaching and assessment through interactive methods and a variety of assessment types, combined with tutorials with the aim of supporting students methodologically and substantively.

The teaching methods and materials used in teaching at the LLM programme are modern and also support the use of modern technologies.

Drawing from our experience during the site visit and our interview with the students, professors provide the appropriate guidance in terms of studying material (shared from the beginning of the semester allowing the student to have an overview of the module), access to them through email and/or personal communication.

Teachers also organise training seminars and opportunities for hands-on experience (i.e. as teaching assistance, participation in research programs), helping the students to expand their knowledge thus providing for a strong link between practical and theoretical studies. External stakeholders are also exploring possibilities for organizing internships for students further strengthening the link between practice and theory.

Student assessment on the LLM programmes are varied consisting of Midterm written examination, Final written examination; Case notes; Research essays; Reaction paper and Students' presentations on a specific subject assigned to them by the instructor.

The process, forms and criteria for student assessment are determined by the instructor considering the content, nature, particularities and degree of difficulty of the course. The instructor must adopt at least two evaluation methods, one of which is the final examination, which may not exceed 60% of the final grade.

Overall assessment methods seem appropriate, transparent, objective and suitable for the development of the students. The assessment methods seem overall suitable for examining to what extent the students have achieved the intended learning outcomes. The grading criteria for the exams and master thesis are transparent and clearly accessible in advance.

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LLM theses are evaluated independently by at least two examiners (second marking). The assessors are sufficiently familiar with existing testing and examination methods.

Strengths

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

- A general strength of the LLM programme is that the intended learning outcomes support the need for students to engage actively with the teaching materials highlighting their need to develop analytical critical skills and thinking.
- Our general assessment of the programme is that it appears to support student-centred learning, teaching and assessment through interactive methods and a variety of assessment types, combined with tutorials with the aim to support students methodologically and substantively.
- Another positive aspect of the programme, is that there also seems to exist a well-functioning learning and teaching relationship where students also easily can get access to teachers for support in their learning.
- A strength of the programme is also the close link between teaching and practice where teachers organise training seminars and opportunities helping the students to expand their knowledge thus providing for a strong link between practical and theoretical studies. The existing formalised links and ongoing collaboration with external stakeholders makes it likely that students will benefit from stakeholder input in the development of their professional skills (eg through guest talks, collaborative projects, internships, work-based dissertations, extracurricular activities).
- There is also a strong linkage for students between teaching and research where students are often asked to be engaged in different research activities.
- In addition to the delivery of practice-oriented module content, students have been able to hone their critical research and writing skills, enabling graduates to continue with PhD studies following their LLM studies. In light of the expertise and international standing and networks of staff involved in the teaching of modules on the LLM Sustainability and Human Rights, the EEC is confident that research-led teaching will be delivered and equip students with relevant skills. Students' exposure to research and academic life is further increased by their involvement in research events.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- While students interviewed during the site visit gave positive feedback on the well-functioning learning and teaching relationship with members of staff, the LLM team should ensure availability for support in all students' learning to provide a level-playing field. This seems of particular relevance for the targeted cohort that might be more diverse than previous ones regarding disciplinary and educational background, research/writing experience, language skills and familiarity with assessment methods.
- Although the secretaries of the Law Department confirmed their availability for dealing with student concerns, there does not seem to be a clear and transparent procedure for handling student complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning. We recommend that relevant rules and policies are adopted.

- The EEC could not confirm the existence of a formal procedure for appealing decisions on grades. The EEC recommends adopting clear rules and policies on this issue.
- While the grading system was provided (p 10 of the application), the EEC missed access to general criteria for assessment of the different examinations on the modules. The EEC recommends that such criteria are published prior to assessment and made available to the students.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
2	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	COMPLIANT
2.2	Practical training	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 Department is a comparatively young and small HEI with limited administrative resources available during evening hours when the LLM teaching will be delivered. All law programmes were accredited in 2018 and the Department currently has 10 members of academic staff (and according to information the recruitment of 3+1 additional staff members is pending), 1 emeritus professor, 4-5 special teaching staff and two secretaries catering for the needs of currently about 270 students and 45 PhD students. There are approximately 45-50 undergraduate students per year and 25-45 LLM students admitted each year.

The listed teaching staff is very qualified for research-led teaching on the proposed LLM Sustainability and Human Rights programme with the suggested modules. They are well-placed to ensure that students achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, thereby guaranteeing the high quality and success of the programme. The staff publications listed are within the scope of the specific modules and overall purpose of the suggested LLM Programme. All module convenors are in full-time employment which is expected to ensure the continuity and quality of the programme.

Dr Ioanna Hadjiyianni, Assistant Professor and the responsible programme coordinator, is an internationally recognised scholar in environmental law and human rights. Given her academic credentials and excellent reputation, Dr Hadjiyianni is regularly asked by government officials, NGOs and other legal actors to give opinions on distinctive issues. Dr Aristotelis Constantinides, Associate Professor and Vice Chair of the Department, is also a well-reputed scholar in international law and human rights with a significant international network and a strong linkage to ministries. Dr Constantinides is often consulted by the relevant government agencies on his areas of expertise. Dr Alina Tryfonidou, Assistant Professor, is a very well-established scholar in EU law, LGBTQ+R rights and family law with wide international experience. The envisaged recruitment round in March is hoped to lead to the employment of a further colleague, who will act as module convenor for "Business and Human Rights".

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The teaching staff is involved in significant collaborations and networks in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with external stakeholders (international organisation, ministries, NGOs, law firms in Cyprus and also other HEIs abroad).

The University has recruitment and promotion policies in place that consider teaching excellence as a core aspect of staff success. The EEC is confident that teaching staff involved in the proposed LLM programme delivers high quality teaching. As mentioned above, two colleagues (Dr Hadjiyianni and Dr Tryfonidou) are Advance HE Fellows (UK), a position that recognises their expertise in HE teaching. Dr Constantinides was awarded the teaching excellence award of the University of Cyprus, which confirms the University commitment to creating incentives for high quality teaching.

In order to maintain and support the continuous improvement of teaching and the development of the academic staff, in 2004 the UCY established the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL).

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

- The teaching team of the proposed LLM Programme Sustainability and Human Rights is expected to deliver high quality research-led teaching, with colleagues complementing each other very well in terms of subject expertise.
- The extensive teaching experience of staff gained in the UK and Cyprus promises high quality teaching and adequate support for students to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme of Sustainability and Human Rights.
- All teaching staff suggested for teaching on the LLM programme has full-time employment which is adequate for ensuring the continuity and quality of the programme.
- Due to their significant collaborations and networks within the HEI, ministries, international organisations and with external stakeholders in Cyprus and abroad, all teaching staff is likely to deliver teaching on the LLM Sustainability and Human Rights in a way that meets current societal and job market needs in the field.
- Another visible strength is the fact that there is sufficient gender parity with more female teaching staff in the programme.

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.

- A general issue which is relevant for this programme is the quite limited number of staff available for teaching the modules. It is recommended that the Department has a clear contingency and recruitment plan to ensure that there is a sufficiently large pool of teachers that can teach on the programme. The EEC was pleased to learn that a contingency plan is in place if the recruitment of a colleague teaching "Business and Human Rights" were not to be successful. In general, the EEC recommends making use of the flexibility the overall theme of LLM Programme provides, in that it can accommodate various specialised courses related to sustainability and human rights (eg labour and the social dimension of sustainability).
- In terms of quality and development of the teaching staff, it is strongly recommended that supervision of LLM theses is properly recognised and credited to the supervising staff member in their workload allocation.

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

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

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

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

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*

- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 **Student progression**

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*

- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*

- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*

- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*

> - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
> - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

4.4 Student certification

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

The Department has established rules and policies governing student admissions and the admission process. It is expected that up to 18 students will be admitted on the LLM Programme Sustainability and Human Rights. Up to 5 of these students can be students holding a non-legal, but relevant, university degree, thereby enabling interactions that reflect the impact of law on policies concerning different sectors of society. The Department of Law intends to grant scholarships to cover the full tuition fees (5.125 EUR) for three out of 18 students admitted to the programme to be

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covered by the department's own income. Candidates for the LLM programme must hold either a Law degree or other relevant degree (indicatively relating to European Studies, Political Sciences, International Relations, Business, MBA) from a recognised University. Graduates of the University of Cyprus must have a GPA of at least 7.0/10; graduates of Greek Universities must have a GPA of at least 6.5/10; graduates of UK Universities at least second-class honors (at least 2.2 classification). Since the LLM Programme is taught in English certified, very good knowledge of the English language is a precondition of admittance (i.e, IELTS overall grade of 7.0 or other recognised equivalent English Proficiency certificate).

Based on the site visit and interviews with staff and students, it appears that the student admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.

The Department makes active use of Course Evaluations to track the progress and satisfaction of the students. The Department has several mechanisms to support student progression.

Students at postgraduate level are assessed in various ways to ensure continuous engagement and development, including: I) Midterm written examination, II) Final written examination, III) Case notes, IV) Research essay, IV) Reaction paper, V) Students' presentations on a specific subject assigned to them by the instructor.

Several former LLM students have taken up PhD studies suggesting real progression in practice.

At the Department level, the University of Cyprus has adopted the role of Academic Advisor. An Academic Advisor is a member of the Department's faculty and is appointed for each student. The advisor follows the students' academic progress and guides them, particularly in connection with any problems faced in their academic performance.

The University's General Postgraduate Studies Rules address the awarding of LLM degree. According to these rules, the awarding of LLM degrees is approved by the Department Board. In addition to the basic postgraduate degrees, the University of Cyprus may grant a Postgraduate Diploma following attendance at a programme of postgraduate education (Section 3).

The University has regulations on the recognition of previous grades.

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

- A very positive innovation is the practice of having an academic advisor for each of the students which can support the student's progress in their studies.
- There exist clear rules on the awarding of degrees.
- All graduates receive a free Diploma Supplement in English language.

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.

Admission criteria lack some clarity and transparency, in particular in respect of how they are applied with regard to non-Cypriot grades and prior qualifications. It is recommended that the rules on recognition of previous grades, studies and qualifications are made more transparent and accessible.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
4	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.*

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

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*

- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*

- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*

- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*

- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*

- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*

- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*

- *How is student mobility being supported?*

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

The Law Department of the University of Cyprus is well-placed to provide adequate learning and teaching, physical and human support resources, as well as student support. The EEC makes some recommendations addressed to the Department, Faculty and University (please see below).

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

- Library: Students benefit from access to the University's excellent Learning Resource Centre Library Stelios Ioannou (awarded 3 star EFQM "Excellence Award"), providing books, electronic resources, workspaces and student training. The library meets various needs through group study rooms, "living-room" style reading areas, silent areas as well as traditional library spaces. Flexible working arrangements are facilitated by fully automated services, 24/7 access to some workspace, and the specifically developed app that indicates the location of requested resources and is available in Greek and English – relevant for this programme's target group of working students.

- Skills development and employability: The Law Department has to date achieved an excellent employment rate of its LLM graduates. Staff is committed to linking the delivery of substantive specialist knowledge with current developments in the field. For instance, students/graduates of the LLM stream Criminal Justice and Human Rights confirmed the successful inclusion of ongoing legal developments in the teaching. They also highlighted how useful their studies have been for their legal practice. Given the scope of existing collaboration with external stakeholders relevant for the proposed LLM Sustainability and Human Rights, the EEC is confident that there will be a fruitful and active engagement with current developments and existing needs for expertise. This should enable the teaching team to tailor their module content – and have a positive impact on the development and employability of graduates.
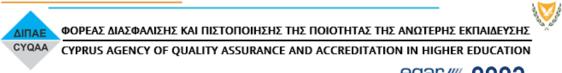
- Student support: Students are allocated advisers. Students highlighted the accessibility of staff for their learning/research needs. The availability of the Department's administrative team enables students to seek support regarding practical matters. Students have access to the University's welfare services.

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.

- Adequate staff recognition and gender-sensitive workload allocation: The currently small number of staff and students allows for effective direct/informal access to support. However, the EEC recommends that the Department, Faculty and University revisit their expectations and allocation of responsibilities to ensure that staff gets adequate credit and recognition for their contribution to student support. Moreover, the EEC recommends that the work allocation is gender-sensitive, enabling all staff to find time for their own professional development while meeting the Departments' teaching and student support needs as a community of colleagues. Both will be necessary to ensure the delivery of a high-quality and sustainable programme with a growing number of LLM students and their potentially varying needs (eg different educational and linguistic backgrounds and prior exposure to research and writing processes or practice-based assignments).
- Adequate resources and institutional support: The EEC understands (based on our on-site visit discussions with staff) that resources have been provided to the LLM stream Criminal Justice and Human Rights, enabling colleagues to set up an institute for the advancing of criminal law studies and structured interaction with legal practice and ongoing law reform endeavours. The EEC recommends that careful consideration is given to how best to support also the staff introducing the LLM Sustainability and Human Rights, providing adequate resources for tailored student support and thereby fostering the success and sustainability of the programme.
- Support of research/writing skills development: The EEC invites the teaching team to reassess systematically the way in which they support the development of research/writing skills of a potentially increasingly diverse student cohort.
- Availability of administrative and practical support: The EEC understands that increased secretarial support has freed academic staff from certain clerical responsibilities (eg social media, website) to allow them to focus on academic student support. The EEC recommends that adequate support is made available also for the needs of the new cohort of students. While there is experience with working students from running the existing LLM streams, additional needs might need to be met, eg if there is an increasing number of international students enrolling for the LLM Sustainability and Human Rights. This could include the needs for practical support regarding housing and transport. There also needs to be consideration and clear communication of what support is accessible for students during the evening, given that classes will be held outside normal office hours, without relying entirely on the good will of academic staff.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
5	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?*

- *Are the criteria reflected in dissertation samples?*

Findings

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
6	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 understands that the programme fills an existing gap in the Higher Education landscape of Cyprus. Existing data confirms the high employability of LLM graduates of the University of Cyprus, and external stakeholders the EEC met during the onsite visit, confirmed the need for legal expertise in the areas covered by the proposed LLM programme. Former LLM students, as well as those currently combining their LLM studies with legal practice, confirmed the value their LLM studies provided for their professional development and practice.

Staff delivering the proposed LLM programme is highly competent. Colleagues' links to external stakeholders places them in an ideal position to deliver a programme of both high academic standard and relevance for the world of legal practice and stakeholders' compliance with relevant domestic, EU and international legal framework. The EEC recommends regular exchange between staff to ensure that the overall purpose of the programme remains at the core of each module.

The evidence gathered by the EEC during the onsite visit and provided beforehand confirms that the proposed LLM programme is likely to align with the EQF academic standards and other relevant benchmarks applicable to comparable postgraduate programmes (as described above, Section 1).

Given the relatively small number of colleagues and the current lack of gender equality in the department, together with the currently unknown number of students enrolled on this and other LLM programmes, the EEC considers it important to regularly revisit overall workload allocation. A gender-sensitive approach seems important to ensure the quality and sustainability of this and other LLM programmes (eg the implications of extensive dissertation supervision and LLM-related administrative responsibilities for staff capacity to cover other tasks within the department).

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Belen Olmos Giupponi	
Jacob Öberg	
Chara Pagkalou	
Anne Thies	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 28 February 2025