Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report

(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

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

- **Town: Nicosia**

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

- **Department/ Sector: Social and Political Sciences**

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

  In Greek:

  Programme Name

  In English:

   MA in Sociology, social policy and intervention

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

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

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

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

The visit took place on Monday 2nd December 2024 onsite in Nicosia. Prior to the meeting, the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) studied the Application for Accreditation for the Programme of Study.

The EEC met with the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs and Chairperson of the Internal QA Committee of the University, the Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Education, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Department of Social and Political Sciences, the Programme Coordinator of the MA in Sociology, Social Policy and Intervention, Members of the Sociology Programme's Coordination Committee, Administrative Staff of the Department of Social and Political Sciences, Teaching Staff in Sociology, current students and graduates of the BA in Sociology and external stakeholders.

Our overall impression of the visit was very good. The evaluation was conducted in a highly professional manner, including PowerPoint presentations and thorough discussions with all stakeholders involved.

It is particularly worth noting that:

- This will be the first MA in Sociology in Cyprus and is expected to admit 15-25 students per year. It will fill a clear gap in higher education in Cyprus and the Greek-speaking world.
- There is strong demand among students and labour market stakeholders from the NGO, public and private sector for a MA in Sociology that addresses theory, research and social intervention.
- There is a strong sense of collegiality and shared purpose within the Department who are highly motivated to start this programme.
- The MA will provide a much-needed pathway to the PhD programme in Sociology. Currently students have to go abroad in order to gain a relevant MA degree.
- There is a significant capacity issue within the Department. They need additional academic faculty and administrative support staff to ensure the effective delivery of their programmes in the longer term.

The University of Cyprus was founded in 1989 as the first university in Cyprus and currently has about 7,000 students (5,000 UG and 2,000 PG). It is a research-oriented university with currently 28 ERC grants, consisting of 8 Faculties/Schools and 22 Departments across 3 campuses. Its library is the biggest in Cyprus. At present 4% of its UG students take part in mobility (Erasmus).

The following sections highlight the strengths and areas for improvement of the programme under the headings: (1) Study programme and study programme's design and development; (2) Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment; (3) Teaching staff; (4) Student admission, progression, recognition and certification; (5) Learning resources and student support.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Prof Heather Hamill	Chair	Oxford University
Prof Daniel Faas	Member	Trinity College Dublin
Prof Piet Bracke	Member	Ghent University
Anna Panagiotou	Member	Open University Cyprus
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

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

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

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

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

Findings

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

Strengths

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

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

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

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

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

Sub-areas

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

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
  - *is a part of the strategic management of the program.*
  - *focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study program.*
  - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
  - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
  - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
  - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
  - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
  - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*
    - *is developed with input from industry leaders and other stakeholders (i.e. industry leaders, professional bodies/associations, social partners, NGO's, governmental agencies) to align with professional standards.*
    - *integrates employer surveys to adapt to evolving workplace demands.*
    - *regularly utilizes alumni feedback for long-term effectiveness assessment.*
    - *is published and implemented by all stakeholders.*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
  - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
  - *Aligns course learning outcomes with student assessments using rubrics to ensure objectives are met.*

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- 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*
  - o *data exchanges with professional networks*
  - o *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.

The proposed MA in Sociology, Social Policy and Intervention is a one-year full-time programme in the Department of Social and Political Sciences. Its aim is to provide sociological expertise in specialised fields dealing with specific social issues at a global and local level, and offer an interdisciplinary perspective by a diverse staff. There is a growing need in Cypriot society to address and reflect on a number of societal challenges including health, gender, migration and the labour market. The proposed MA builds on a very successful BA programme and responds to stint requests for more advanced sociological training in the Department. It bridges the existing gap between the existing BA and PhD in Sociology.

There are a number of unique features in this new MA. First, it is the only MA in Sociology in Cyprus. Second, it responds to cutting-edge societal challenges in an interdisciplinary fashion. Third, it combines critical, analytical and practical skills to prepare students for PhD entry or entry into the labour market, notably NGOs and other relevant organisations.

The programme's purpose and objectives are clearly stated in the application and were articulated and understood by all members of staff interviewed, as are the intended learning outcomes that fall within the EQF. The course consists of 90 ECTS: Proposed core modules amount to 22.5 ECTS (Sociological Approaches in Contemporary Societies; Research Methods in Sociology; and Social Issues, Social Policy and Social Intervention). The dissertation amounts to 30 ECTS, and the proposed electives amount to 37.5 ECTS. All modules are taught in Greek.

Students are assessed using a range of formative and summative assessment methods. Each course must have at least two assessment modes, one of which is the final examination. Other assessment methods include essays, presentations, participation, research papers. A work placement is optional for students. The main target audience is the Department's own undergraduate students as well as professionals looking to enhance their skills including education and social welfare workers.

The Sociology core teaching team consists of 1 full professor, 1 Associate Professor, 1 Assistant Professor, and 4 Lecturers. In addition, the proposed MA draws on an interdisciplinary teaching team for some of its electives.

The University of Cyprus has Quality Assurance Policy and an internal Quality Assurance System which are applied to all programmes of study. The QA tools include course and instructor evaluation by students at the end of each semester, student satisfaction and exit surveys and key performance indicators such as student/instructor ratio, number of applications, drop-out rate, course success rate. These are all clearly understood by members of staff.

Future graduates from the proposed MA will have opportunities to work in different types of organisations including: academia (PhD), public administration, NGOs, research institutions. There are also opportunities to work in the field of social action including: policy officers, project managers, training educators, social researcher posts or consulting jobs. The anticipated

pathways into the Cypriot labour market are clearly articulated and very strong. This is underpinned by a strong commitment from former BA and PhD graduates who are now working in relevant partner organisations such as The Youth Board of Cyprus, Cyprus National Addictions Authority, Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies or Cyprus Family Planning Association.

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

- There is a strong need and demand from both students and stakeholders for this proposed MA in Sociology, Social policy and Intervention. This will provide a stronger evidence base for understanding social policy and social interventions in general but also within Cypriot/Greek society.
- The proposed MA is the only such programme in Cyprus and indeed across the Greek-speaking world, and it builds on a well-established BA in Sociology.
- The proposed MA bridges theory and practice in a meaningful way opening up pathways into the Cypriot labour market for which it is important especially NGOs and local organisations.
- The proposed MA taps into a clientele of (undergraduate) students who are not able financially (and linguistically) to travel overseas and are enthusiastic about Cypriot society.
- Faculty take seriously their Quality Assurance responsibilities.
- The proposed MA has clear aims and objectives and employs the principle of research-led teaching whereby staff offer modules grounded in their current research.
- The proposed MA is supported by a dedicated and hardworking administrative team.

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 ECTS weighting of the three core modules should be increased from 7.5 to 10 ECTS to ease the pressure on staff workload and to provide a stronger programme identity.
- Students should be asked to take at least 1 but no more than 2 interdisciplinary electives. This is to strengthen the interdisciplinary component that is built into the course design.
- The number of elective offerings, especially interdisciplinary electives, should be reduced to provide a clearer thematic focus.
- There is a lack of a clear strategy regarding student numbers and finances over the first 5 years of the programme. This also extends into intellectual development in terms of staff recruitment and curriculum development.

- The work placement, whilst not being compulsory, should be offered to all students on the proposed MA who wish to avail of it. This in turn means securing sufficient internship

places across the existing and probably new local organisations to ensure equity and coherence.

- The Department may wish to review the balance between instruction and reading in the Greek and English languages in light of the aim to internationalise.

- Programme staff should consider tweaking the title from an MA to MSc which carries a great deal more current internationally both in terms of recruitment and employment.

- The Research Methods in Sociology core module must ensure to cover topics such as how to design and evaluate social intervention - given it is in the programme title.

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

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

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

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

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

Standards

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

2.2 Practical training

Standards

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

- *The expected hours for different components of practical training, such as lab work, fieldwork, and internships are clearly documented in the training manuals*
- *A weighting system is applied to various practical training elements, reflecting their significance in the overall learning outcomes and student workload.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*
  - *The time allocation for each assessment task isexplicitly stated in course outlines, ensuring students are aware of the expected workload.*
  - *A balanced assessment weighting strategy is implemented, considering the complexity and learning objectives of each task, to ensure fair evaluation of student performance.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*

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- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

Findings

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

The proposed MA in Sociology, Social Policy and Intervention is as follows:

- three compulsory modules (22.5 ECTS)
- dissertation (30 ECTS)
- at least 3 Sociology Specialisation electives that can include a workplace placement (22.5 ECTS)
- up to 2 Interdisciplinary electives (15 ECTS)

Students are assessed using a variety of means including individual course work and exams and this varies depending on module and elective content and the provider. The various types of assessment do not receive the same weighting across the programme.

Strengths

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

- The proposed MA offers an intellectually stimulating balance of courses on research methods, substantive sociological topics and social issues and intervention.
- The taught programmes are embedded within the research culture of the department and offer meaningful research-led teaching.
- The workplace placement offers a unique opportunity to students to apply their skills and knowledge, gain an understanding of social issues, and gain experience of an employment setting
- Teaching staff are strongly committed to delivering high quality courses.
- There is a good balance of assessed formative and summative assessments.

- The interdisciplinary electives are an innovating solution to the capacity issues within the wider department.

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.

- There should be consistency and standardisation across the programme in the weighting of assessment types. For example: If an essay weighted at 50% requires 4,000 words, then an essay weighted at 25% should require 2,000 words and so forth.
- Assignment submission dates should be staggered across the programme to not overburden students at any particular time point.

- Avoid assigning any weight to attendance or participation. If attendance is importance, then consider dropping marks for non-attendance. But positively marking attendance with 10% weight will only further accelerate grade inflation and should be avoided in all circumstances.

- The workplace option should be made available to all students on the MA and where possible the department ensure that students are not offered the same placements as on the BA course. The department could consider establishing placements in other research groups within the University.

- Faculty should consider the challenges and opportunities that AI presents in student assessment.

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

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

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> - *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.

Sociology currently has a staff:student ratio of 1:20 which is the highest in the Department even though several new staff have been hired since 2019. The University operates a policy whereby new permanent staff can only be hired following success and growth over the past 4 years (not future growth aspirations). All Sociology staff we met were enthusiastic and committed to their discipline and programme offerings. They endorse the principle of research-led teaching. However, understaffing in Sociology is a serious issue that must be addressed. The proposed MA should, in due course, enable the Department to claim at least 1 additional permanent post if they can demonstrate healthy financial surpluses over the first 4 years of the programme.

Strengths
A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.
- Sociology teaching staff were repeatedly voted by students to be excellent educators which speaks to the teaching excellence in Sociology within the wider Department of Social and Political Sciences. This also indicates a very positive relationship between staff and students.
- Teaching and research duties are well balanced. Approximately 30% for research, teaching and administration each with junior staff reporting less time on administrative duties. Synergies between teaching and research are generally good following research-led teaching.
- There is a good balance between senior and junior staff in Sociology, with several junior staff (Lecturers) being recruited over the past 5 years. The tenure track pathway is clear and adjuncts are also encouraged to research and progress.
- Sociology staff actively participate in CPD courses offered through the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Junior staff are particularly encouraged to avail of these courses.
- Teaching staff employ a wide variety of assessment techniques including formative and summative modes of assessment.

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.

- At least 1 further permanent teaching staff is needed once the proposed MA in Sociology, Social Policy and Intervention has successfully navigated its first 4 years. This would ease current pressure and staff overburdening in Sociology**.**
- Improve the promotion criteria and ensure that teaching staff are being rewarded for supervision at all levels when applying for promotion. The present model is not in line with international best practice. Supervision load should also be factored into general workload models.
- The balance between Greek and English language could be further improved notably through systematically incorporating high profile international speakers (at least virtually) into all modules where feasible in addition to the current local guest speakers.

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

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

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

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

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

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

4.2 Student progression

Standards

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

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

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

4.4 Student certification

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

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

Students will be admitted to the Graduate School at the University of Cyprus. Candidates admitted to the MA in Sociology, Social Policy, and Intervention must have:
- A Bachelor's degree with a grade point average of seven (7/10) from Universities in Cyprus and Greece, or equivalent from other Universities.
- Relevant professional experience is not required but will be considered as an additional qualification
- Very good command of the English language.

The cost of the programme is set at 5.125 euros per student.

Strengths
A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.
- There is strong demand for this program from students on the BA in Sociology.
- There is a good balance between compulsory and elective courses; theoretical and methodological courses, and specialized and applied sociological courses
- The course represents extremely good value for money. The cost makes it very accessible to students from a lower social and economic background and those with caring responsibilities who cannot afford to or are unable to do a graduate programme overseas.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- We suggest that significant relevant work experience may also be considered as an admission criterion.

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

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

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

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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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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 proposed MA in Sociology, Social Policy and Intervention is in the Department of Social and Political Sciences located on the Aglantzia Campus. Students have access to the wider Campus facilities including a dining hall/cafeteria, sports facilities, student clubs and University administrative offices.

Students are supplied with a large reading list for all courses. The compulsory courses are taught in Greek, but a significant proportion of the reading list is in English. This is also the case for all the elective courses in the A and B category, where the reading list is predominantly in English.

The learning resource center and the Library Stelios Ioannou is a thoughtfully designed building and provides a very conducive study and reading space for students.

Students are also supported by the department administrative team and through a centrally managed student support team.

Strengths
A list of strengths, e.g. examples of good practices, achievements, innovative solutions etc.
- Students reported that they look forward to courses and classes that are built on the knowledge and experience of the academic staff with whom they got acquainted during the BA program in Sociology. They expressed a high motivation to further their skills as sociologists and were appreciative of the efforts academic staff to design a program for the MA that will make sociological knowledge relevant for their lived experiences and Cypriot civic society.
- The anticipated class sizes are small and will facilitate lively group discussions.
- The library provides a nice place to study.
- The MA will provide the opportunity to acquire a master's degree in sociology, social policy and intervention in Cyprus and by extension in the Greek speaking region of the Mediterranean.
- The former is of special importance to many students that are from a working class and/or shorter educated social background.

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 students expressed their dissatisfaction with the electronic system of the University (Bannerweb), especially during the course registration period. Due to the high number of users, the system does not work properly and often out of use for long periods. This is a source of considerable stress and anxiety for students.
- The students are highly supportive of the internship programme/the work placement program. But they expressed a concern about the availability of internship facilities in addition to the options available for students in the BA in sociology.
- In addition, the MA might consider offering a higher amount of compensation during the work placement to be competitive with other job opportunities. This would allow students to take it as an option to cover part of their expenses (apart from the academic benefits).

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	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*

> o *support for writing research papers*
> o *participation in conferences*
> - *The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.*
>
>
> *You may also consider the following questions:*
>
> - *How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?*
> - *Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?*
> - *Are the criteria reflected in dissertation samples?*

Findings

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Choose answer
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Choose answer
6.3	Supervision and committees	Choose answer

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 proposed MA in Sociology, Social Policy and Intervention will be a unique programme at the University of Cyprus and in the wider Greek-speaking world. It builds on the strengths of the Bachelor in Sociology and will provide a much-needed bridge to the Phd programme. It will also meet demands from the wider Cypriot labour market for highly skilled professionals with a critical understanding of social issues, social policy and intervention. The programme aims to admit 15-25 students per year. This strategic initiative will further raise the standing of Sociology within the University of Cyprus.

The programme is structured to provide analytical, critical and practical skills to students through a combination of core compulsory modules that includes rigorous sociological, theoretical, methods, policy and intervention training, sociology specialization electives and interdisciplinary electives.

The EEC noted several areas for improvement in the design and implementation of the MA. The first critical issue is the capacity of existing academic and administrative staff to accommodate up to 25 extra students per year and deliver the programme. There is a clear need for new permanent positions in Sociology to ensure the sustainability of this programme in the longer term.

We suggest that the programme structure be recalibrated to ease staff workload, emphasize the core identity of the programme and consolidate the interdisciplinary component as set out in Section 1. Alongside this, the work placement should be available to all students. We also note the need for a clearer strategy regarding student numbers, finances and intellectual development over the first 5 years of the programme.

The variety of assessment strategies proposed on the MA is a strength which will benefit students but there needs to be some standardization in the weighting given to the type of assessments.

Overall, we are very enthusiastic about this MA programme and are confident in the Department's ability to deliver a high-quality graduate education to students.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Heather Hamill	
Daniel Faas	
Piet Bracke	
Anna Panagiotou	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 3rd December 2024