

Doc. 300.1.3

Date: 17/04/20

Feedback Report from EEC Experts

- Higher education institution:
Open University of Cyprus
- Town: Nicosia
- Programme of study (Name, ECTS, duration, cycle)

In Greek: Μεταπτυχιακό πρόγραμμα: Επικοινωνία
και Νέα Δημοσιογραφία (90 μονάδες ECTS, 1.5
ακαδημαϊκά έτη)

In English: MA Communication and New Journalism
(90 ECTS, 1.5 years)
- Language of instruction: Greek
- Programme's status
New programme: No
Currently operating: Yes
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The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws of 2015 to 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

A. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Julian McDougall	Professor	Bournemouth University
Kari Anden-Papadopoulos	Professor	Stockholm University
Bradley Wiggins	Professor	Webster Vienna Private University
Santi Caballe Llobet	Professor	Open University of Catalonia
Stephanie Nicolaou	Student	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

B. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

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

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development (ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.8, 1.9) ***EEC's comments on the external evaluation report***

1.5 & 1.6 (4) The panel have some concerns because the majority of students appear to take electives rather than the optional thesis and it is unclear how the options are presented. It appears that students are choosing electives over the thesis for reasons of time pressures (combining studies with full time employment) in addition to choosing not to pursue the research direction. The course design should allow for part time working students to take a thesis. In relation to ECTS, the time commitment should be identical. The panel also recommend that the team review the advice and guidance to increase the take-up of the thesis, or consider a project alternative so that students have the option of a more developed application of knowledge in a practical context, equally weighted to a thesis (ie a double module).

1.8.2 (4) The panel have some concerns about the title of the award not necessarily reflecting the modules taken – i.e. it is possible to graduate with an MA with New Journalism in the title after only taking one journalism focussed module. However, the reasons for this in the regional context were explained, but it remains the case that internationally, it would be expected that MA qualifications with journalism in the title would contain more substantive course content relating to the profession.

1.8.4 (4) We recommend updating the currency of the courses and literature/bibliography in general, as some of the reading lists are out of date.

1.8.6 (4) See above, the panel suggest the team consider a practical alternative to the thesis, so that students opting not to follow a research direction have the opportunity for a more substantial practical orientation / application of knowledge with parity of demand and scope. It is common on MA programmes for students to have the option of an academic thesis or a project with a professional context. The panel suggest that the team consider this as it is unusual for a Master's programme to be completed only through single modules with no thesis or project.

1.8.7 (3) The panel are concerned that there is a lack of research methods training for students who opt for the thesis. We were informed about an option to take a course of this nature from another programme but the documentation provided does not demonstrate a research skills trajectory within the programme itself. This may be a factor in the low take-up of the thesis.

1.15 (3) The panel agree that the course team should review the relationship between each module and the sequence of the stated learning outcomes. The broader social science modules should come before the study of contemporary journalism and communication and this does not appear to be the case in terms of the phasing of the programme. Furthermore, it is not sufficiently clear how the broader social science modules relate directly to the learning outcomes of this specific programme, given that they are shared with other programmes. The panel advise the team to include a more explicit focus on communication and journalism within the shared modules to balance the generic approach with a more targeted application to the academic and professional context.

1.17 (4) Electives have 15 ECTS but teaching hours are only 2-3 hours compared to compulsory courses which have 10 ECTS and 2 hours. The panel consider this a disproportionate increase of 50% for one more hour. We suggest this is discussed, perhaps at a broader institutional level.

HEI's response

As far as 1.5 & 1.6 goes, since the first operation of the M.A. Programme in the 2011-2012 academic year, 46/210 students have decided to take a Master thesis. We expect this number to increase by highlighting the importance of a more theoretical path as a thesis, but we should also bear in mind that a significant portion of our student population is interested to acquire more technical/practical skills. This is the reason they choose END611 “Creative Strategies in Digital Communication” & END612 “Marketing and Communication: A Content Strategy Approach”, for the Communication direction and END613 “Profession: Journalism” and END614” Digital Storytelling” for the New Journalism direction. Still, the two modules END512 “Understanding Media: The message” and END522 “Understanding the message: The Effects”, which as compulsory Thematic Units (Modules) for both academic directions (a. Communication, b. New Journalism) have been radically redesigned to deliver a wide range of methodological tools, both qualitative and quantitative, which would compensate for weaknesses on the methodological training in the previous incarnations of the two modules and would prepare students efficiently for a thesis. This also relates to the Panel’s concern mentioned in 1.8.7, that there was a lack of research methods for students who opt for the Master Thesis. Finally, the workload for the two 15ECTS elective courses for both directions (i.e. END611 “Creative Strategies in Digital Communication” & END622 “Communication and Marketing in Practice” for the Communication direction and END613 “Profession: Journalism” and END614” Digital Storytelling” for the New Journalism direction) have been significantly increased (both in terms of bibliography but also of a range of assignments).

As far as 1.8.2 goes, we must clarify that students are engaged with issues of the two directions (Journalism and Communication) from the very beginning: the introductory and compulsory to both directions modules (END511 "Contemporary World: The Political Condition", END512 “Understanding Media: The message”, END513 “Contemporary Approaches to Communication and Journalism”, END521 “Contemporary World: The Social Condition“, END522 “Understanding the message: The Effects”) examine issues of Journalism and Communication in the scope of the different social sciences, while we emphatically clarify the different topics of assessments based on the specialization they have chosen. Moreover, END523 “Strategic Communication”, compulsory for students opting for the Communication direction and END524 “The challenges of new Journalism”, compulsory for the New Journalism direction are systematic introductions to their specialization. All these modules introduce students and cultivate their interest on the specialization they have chosen and prepare them for the remaining two advanced courses in their specialization/academic direction or for the advance research of an MA thesis.

As far as 1.8.4 and 2.9 and in compliance with 1.17, we have strengthened and updated literature/bibliography. All changes are indicated with track changes in the descriptions (Annex 2 of the application form) of the various Modules and are attached to this response. Regarding old reading lists, they have been updated with more current sources for all modules, with special attention to substantial additions of English bibliography for the 15ECTS elective modules of the two directions.

Additionally, more substantial activities and assignments have been proposed, which would increase significantly students' workload to justify the 15 ECTS. Please note that additional educational activities are incorporated in the Study Guides prepared in Greek for all modules, given that this is a Greek-taught M.A. Programme.

As far as 1.8.7. goes, the students are introduced to research methods from the first Thematic Unit of the first semester in END511. The learning unit "Introduction to Academic Research" of the said Module focuses on the basic tools for academic research and writing, including bibliography. In addition, the third learning unit of END511 "Critical Thinking" focuses on informal logic and argumentation that enriches further students' research skills. Students are also taught how and where to search for academic references, which sources are academic, and how to distinguish between reliable and unreliable research articles and material. These elements prepare students to conduct a thorough "research and dissertation", a crucial section for any research project.

In the same philosophy, the first learning unit of module END512 focuses on "Research methodology", where students are introduced in processes of operationalization of a theory, which is how a theory can be used to construct research tools, e.g. code sheets and causal relations. This leads to the "interpretation" of the results, where students are asked to interpret the findings based on the literature review, they have already conducted. This approach, the "operationalization" of every theory taught, runs through the next two learning units (6.2 and 6.3) of END512 where students are asked to operationalize the theories taught and to interpret their results. In the next learning unit (6.4) students are introduced to more qualitative research tools (Content Analysis, Thematic Analysis and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis) and to basic quantitative statistical tests (x2) in order to enrich their research capabilities. All the above methodological tools are crucial for both directions (New Journalism and Communication) with the ambition that students that complete END511 and END512 will have a sound knowledge of the crucial parts of a dissertation or any research project: The process of writing a solid literature review, the formulation of research questions or hypotheses, the methodological tools, the results and the interpretation of these results based on the literature review.

As far as 1.15 goes and in response to the comments, regarding possible overlaps between modules, which we accept and we thank you for:

In response to "it is not sufficiently clear how the broader social science modules relate directly to the learning outcomes of this specific programme, given that they are shared with other programmes" that the panel commented, we clarify that the social sciences thematic units/ modules are not just social sciences modules but modules connected directly to the Journalism and Communication fields. In other words, how the social sciences affect the function of Journalism and Communication. We also emphatically clarify the different topics of assessments based on the specialization they have chosen.

In response to the comments regarding possible overlaps between modules END513 and END512, all content related to Rhetoric and Persuasion has been removed from END513, and will only be

covered in END512. Accordingly, learning unit 6.2. of END513 has been renamed as “The function of frames in Communication and Journalism”, focusing exclusively on framing theory and going into more depth into this vast topic of research. Necessary adjustments have been made in all the components of the module’s description (learning outcomes, description, bibliographical sources, etc) as you can see from the annexes.

In response to the comments regarding possible overlaps between modules END513 and learning unit 6.2 of END511 with regards to the unit about journalistic Ethics, there was a modification of learning units in END513. More specifically, learning unit 6.5. was removed and replaced by a new learning unit titled “New Media Effects: theoretical conceptualizations and empirical findings”, the content of which is directly related to the entire course and its learning outcomes, and further enhances them. This module has been fully developed along all of its components, including annotated bibliography and exercises.

In response to the comments regarding possible overlaps between modules END522 and END513: In END522, Learning Unit 6.4, more emphasis has been given to processes of influence rather than the effects. Therefore, this Learning Unit has been renamed to "Power and Influence of the Media" highlighting the perceived power of the Media and how this changes over time as well as the sociopsychological processes of influence. This emphasis raises awareness to the question "can the media influence people?" as seen in the book of Marchant (2004) in the compulsory bibliography. In addition, this emphasis provides more "space" to END513 to concentrate more on the theories, their origins and theoretical evolution regarding the effects of the Media. Therefore, students that take END513 in the first semester will be familiar with the theories regarding the effects of the Media and in the second semester they will deepen their knowledge regarding the influence of the Media and how the perceived power of the Media is constructed. At the same time, it remains a crucial factor for facilitating the processes of influence.

In response to the comments regarding possible overlaps between modules END523 (Strategic Communication), END611, and END612 we decided to re-organize the Thematic Units / Modules as such:

END523 remains the main introductory course on Communication Strategy incorporating basic theories and steps on the planning and implementation of a communications strategy, having removed all content related to Press Office Management. All content related to the operation of a Press Office and the writing of press releases has been removed from learning unit 6.4, since it will be covered in the END612 with its more hands-on, skill-based focus.

END611 and END612 will focus on a more applied skills based approach, training the students on specific tools. Specifically, END611 remains the same, having reshaped learning unit 4 (Social Media Communication) to Social Media Management.

At last, we propose to rename END612 from “Communication and Marketing in Practice” to “Marketing and Communication: A Content Strategy Approach”, reconstructing the individual learning units as such:

1. Introduction to marketing communication
2. Introduction to Branding
3. Value Proposition and Marketing Strategies
4. Copywriting for traditional and digital media
5. Online advertising
6. Online Press Office: production and dissemination of offline/online/multimedia press releases
7. Implementation of a content strategy marketing campaign

Both required and optional readings have been adjusted to the new thematic directions, with a clear focus on the applied aspects of content strategy, content production and copyrighting, as well as assignments and activities.

Concerning END524, END 613 & END614 (Journalism) we have examined very carefully the relationship between each module/Thematic Unit and it is our conviction that our programme offers a smooth passage from the theories taught in previous modules to contemporary journalism and at the end to the targeted application.

More specifically in END524 we insist in critical thinking as well as getting the notions of how to express oneself. The first three units give the student ample space to “think” about journalism: what is journalism today in Europe, how do we navigate through the post-truth era, how do we obtain information, how do we evaluate it. The module is completed by the study of writing which is the base for every journalist.

In END613 we insist on two skills that are indispensable to every journalist: how to report correctly and how to conduct an interview. Both of them are examined from a critically point of view before passing on to actual training. As an example of the skills taught up to here and in order for the students to familiarize themselves with different specialties in journalism we chose travel journalism as an example coupling it with nation branding so as to show a clear case of how journalism and communication overlap (or fight each other). The student will then acquire skills about presenting the content he/she has produced using modern off and online tools that make the first step to the digitalization of content which will follow in END614. Finally the students familiarize themselves with the notion and the essentials of entrepreneurship which is a major development in how journalists are working today and is closely linked to the study of journalism in Europe made in END524.

Finally, we felt that END614, which is an optional module should go deeper in what was learnt earlier but also offer new paths of knowledge. This is why it is the most technical of all, offering more ways of training, especially in digital tools. The student will acquire skills in dealing with sound, still images and video and will study all the steps of content digitalization. He/she will also acquire the basics of

data journalism and finally will be asked to follow and create a full journalist project applied on the creation of a webpage as well as the online tools and social media tools that accompany it.

It goes without saying that the remarks made to us were extremely useful in clarifying the above as well as adjusting the literature proposed not only for update reasons and for adjusting the content to 15 ECTS but also to ensure a smooth passage from one end to another and from one individual Thematic Unit / Module to another. Thus, assignments and activities are even more complexed in the Modules of 15 ECTS, while there is also more literature in general and more literature in English.

As far as 1.17 goes, we have discussed and increased teaching and studying hours for both Communication and Journalism elective modules. So now, we have equilibrated 15 ECTS for all four modules (check modules' description in the revised application in English).

EEC's final recommendations and comments

The panel are satisfied with this detailed and rigorous consideration of our review and recommendations. Appropriate actions have been taken to address our points which were more conditional for approval (eg study hours, renaming elements of the programme, updating reading lists, clearer mapping of skills and distinction of pathways) and it is clear that where the programme team wish to retain the current situation, they have considered our points carefully (eg END524). Regarding the substantive point about the Masters Thesis, we feel that the adjustments made are a reasonable compromise, but encourage the team to keep this under review.

2. Teaching, learning and student assessment (ESG 1.3)

EEC's comments on the external evaluation report

2.9 (3) The panel recommend a thorough review and revision of reading lists to include more current sources. Whilst we understand the need to prioritise Greek language translation for the cohort, there are still areas where the reading lists are not sufficiently current for such a rapidly changing area of study and professional application.

2.11 & 2.12 (4) As stated in section 1, the panel have some concerns because the majority of students appear to take electives rather than the optional thesis and it is unclear how the options are presented. It appears that students are choosing electives over the thesis for reasons of time pressures (combining studies with full time employment) in addition to choosing not to pursue the research direction. The course design should allow for part time working students to take a thesis. In relation to ECTS, the time commitment should be identical. The panel also recommend that the team review the advice and guidance to increase the take-up of the thesis, or consider a project alternative so that students have the option of a more developed application of knowledge in a practical context, equally weighted to a thesis (ie a double module). The panel are also concerned that there is a lack of research methods training for students who opt for the thesis. We were informed about an option to take a course of this nature from another programme but the documentation provided does not demonstrate a research skills trajectory within the programme itself. This may be a factor in the low take-up of the thesis.

Findings: during the site visit the teaching team and e-learning team gave detailed presentations about the pedagogic, assessment and e-learning elements of programme delivery. As stated above, students were 14 very positive about the collaborative learning environment, assignments and feedback. Whilst some panel members were surprised and to an extent concerned about the use of exams in a physical location for a largely online programme, it was explained during the visit that this is standard and mandatory and the students we met were positive about the experience.

HEI's response

As far as 2.9 and in compliance with 1.17 and 1.8.4, reading lists have been strengthened and updated for all modules (Please refer to the attached revised Module Descriptions, Annex 2 of the revised application form). There is now a preponderance of literature in English. This definitely makes studying more difficult for our students, that are attending a Greek-taught M.A. Programme, but we believe there is still a good proportion of Greek literature.

For example, certain additions of updated sources have been made in both END513 and END523: In END513 (and besides the new learning unit of Media Effects):

- A recent (2020) bibliographical source regarding “narrative effects” was added in learning unit 6.3, and an older one was transferred to the optional reading list.
- All bibliographical sources of the 6.5. learning unit are recent, having been published between 2016-2020.

In END523, the following three bibliographical sources were added (replacing other less recent sources):

- Allagui, I., & Breslow, H. (2016). Social media for public relations: Lessons from four effective cases. *Public Relations Review*, 42(1), 20–30.
- Holtz-Bacha, C. (2017). Content Effects: Political Campaign Communication. *The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects*, 1–9.
- Grunig, J. E. (2009). Paradigms of global public relations in an age of digitalisation. *PRism* 6(2): http://praxis.massey.ac.nz/prism_on-line_journ.html

Reading lists have been strengthened and updated for all modules respectively.

As far as 2.11 & 2.12 goes, concerning the fact that students do not opt for a Master Thesis, please refer to our response in Section 1. “Study Programme and Study Programme’s Design and Development”.

EEC’s final recommendations and comments

As above re reading lists and thesis.

3. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

EEC's comments on the external evaluation report

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In every programme of study, the special teaching staff should not exceed 30% of the permanent teaching staff.

3.1 and 3.6 (3) The panel consider the staffing to be outside of compliance with the above statement with regard to special / permanent teaching staff.

HEI's response

We appreciate all comments made by the EEC, and especially for the fact that the panel was entirely satisfied with the profiles and expertise of the teaching team. Please note that based on the Law governing the operation of Open University of Cyprus, Visiting Professors is not an option. Moreover, Open University of Cyprus only employs 24 Faculty members now, and as mentioned in our application form for accreditation, we work with Adjunct Faculty in all our programs of study. This is the case for the M.A. Programme in "Communication and New Journalism", as the Academic Coordinator, Associate Professor Sofia Iordanidou, is the only faculty member in the relevant fields.

We also appreciate the fact that the EEC considers the procedure for appointing adjunct faculty and the relevant selection criteria to be robust in terms of pedagogic, professional and research experience required.

EEC's final recommendations and comments

No further comments within the scope of this review.

4. Students (ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7)

EEC's comments on the external evaluation report

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Findings: The panel's understanding from the preparatory material was enhanced by the detailed presentations given during the site visit and the meeting with students. However, there was a lack of data available for some aspects (see below).

Areas of improvement and recommendation: whilst this does not relate to the scores given above, the panel were not clear about the performance data available to the course team, for example achievement and retention profiling. We recommend a review of the data available for programme quality monitoring.

HEI's response

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We are happy to see that the students who met with the EEC were very positive about the educational aspects of the programme, as well as their employability prospects and adequate use of the degree they have / they will receive. It is one of the key characteristics of this M.A. in "Communication and New Journalism" the fact that it puts theory into practice and that it provides forum for its students and graduates to advance further, beyond their studies, through internships, involvement in research projects, and participation in local and international conferences in cooperation with the Advanced Media Institute, which is linked to the M.A. Programme.

Moreover, the fact that all students that met the Panel were happy with the academic and administrative support provided by Open University of Cyprus during their studies.

As far as the recommendation made by the EEC on data availability on student achievement and retention profiling, please note that all Tutors have access to the grades of their student cohorts, while the Academic Coordinator has an overall view of students' achievements. As far as retention profiling is concerned, please note that students' progress is closely monitored by all Tutors and if Tutors spot weaknesses or problematic situations, they refer the situation / the student to the Academic Coordinator for additional advice and support. Yet, as any other open and distance university, drop-out rates are not minimal, especially in the first semesters. As students progress, success and retention rates are increasing.

EEC's final recommendations and comments

Our recommendations on data monitoring remain as ongoing, but do not impede approval of the programme.

5. Resources (ESG 1.6)

EEC's comments on the external evaluation report

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5.2 & 5.10 (4) See below, on the assumption that since the reading lists are out of date, the library might need to be updated/expanded.

5.7 & 5.11 (3) As stated in earlier sections, the panel recommend a thorough review and revision of reading lists to include more current sources. Whilst we understand the need to prioritise Greek language translation for the cohort, there are still areas where the reading lists are not sufficiently current for such a rapidly changing area of study and professional application.

Areas for improvement and recommendations: see above, reading lists must be reviewed and updated.

HEI's response

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As we explained in detail in section 1, we implemented the Committee's feedback with major reconstruction and enrichment of the bibliography on all the modules but in particular the modules that are credited with 15 ECTS.

It has been one of our major tasks during the revision. There is however, a major drawback namely that there is of course new literature coming out continually but as far as skills in journalism are concerned we do not always have an enormous choice if we want to choose the best and most comprehensive of literature. For example, the Data Journalism Handbook, a joint project of the European Journalism Centre and the Open Knowledge Foundation launched in 2011, remains to this day an excellent choice and is freely accessible on the internet, translated in Greek also. There was no way to go around that. In any case, mandatory and supplementary bibliography for all Thematic Units of the M.A. Programme is revised and updated, as deemed necessary, by the end of each academic year, following recommendations from the Tutors and in consultation with the Programme's Academic Coordinator.

This said, we tried to do our best updating everything that could be updated, including 2019 literature and at the same time expanding literature to meet the standards of 15 ECTS Modules. A representative example of this is in END613, Reporting without Frontiers where on one hand we kept the 5 original literature references (even though it dates from 1997, Carol Rich's book is one of the best) but on the other we incorporated no less than 13 new references dating from 2014 to 2020. This has been an excellent exercise for us also in order to finally decide how to frame the knowledge we would like to pass to our students with the most suitable for this task educational resources available.

EEC's final recommendations and comments

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No further comments, see above re reading lists, we are satisfied with the updating and understand the constraints.

6. Additional for distance learning programmes (ALL ESG)

EEC's comments on the external evaluation report

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6.5 (4) The University did not show, even if envisaged, any information system to automatically monitor student performance, and the indications provided during the interviews to supervise the learning process in general were manually based.

6.9 (4) The panel recommend a thorough revision of reading list to include more current sources and seminal works.

6.17 (4) According to the study guides provided and the interviews conducted, it is not foreseen weekly assignments, at least formal assignments, as the level of self-assessment lacks of formal assessment and formative feedback from the tutor.

6.20 (4) See above, as the currency of reading lists impacts upon the currency of the e-learning material.

Findings:

The nature of the programme is compatible with distance learning delivery and the methodology provided is appropriate for the particular programme of study.

The university's e-Class system supports online teaching, learning and administrative processes. The platform specifically provides synchronous and asynchronous tools to support the interaction needs of students with the tutors, the other students and with the materials. The platform also provides e-assessment procedures through quizzes with automatic feedback in order to assess students' knowledge. The provision of more complex forms of e-assessment to assess competences was not shown. In addition, mobile access to the platform, even if provided, was not proved whether specific pedagogical methods were applied that leverage the unique capabilities of mobile devices for teaching and learning. Finally, a learning analytics component was mentioned to be included in e-Class though it was not shown in detail what data is managed and reported to the different stakeholders.

The university has a unit responsible for designing, creating, implementing and evaluating study materials. This unit addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance with state-of-the-art technological advances and own research activities. A proof of concept of advanced materials based on VR and IoT developed by the unit was demonstrated during the on-site visit.

The panel were not clear on how the recommended study time in the study guides was calculated as these are not consistent in the study guides for modules with equal credits.

The panel recommends the University to consider and eventually incorporate state-of-the-art teaching innovations based on artificial intelligence technologies in order to automatically monitor student to detect just-in-time performance and early dropout issues while providing correction measures and automatic guiding (from intelligent tutoring systems) when required.

Areas for improvement and recommendations: The proposed thematic units have a weekly study guide that includes relevant information: synopsis, aims, anticipated results, reviewed literature, and self-evaluation exercises. These weekly self-assessment exercises, though enriched by peers' and tutor's feedback, would be improved through the introduction of tutor assessments and formative feedback.

Formative assessment and the corresponding formative feedback to students are provided by teachers through compulsory assignments (twice per semester) plus in live (generally online) meetings. The panel recommend the formative feedback from assignments is provided more regularly, personalized, and in a timely fashion. The panel recommends the University to consider and eventually incorporate state-of-the-art teaching innovations based on artificial intelligence technologies in order to automatically monitor student to detect just-in-time performance and early dropout issues while providing correction measures and automatic guiding (from intelligent tutoring systems) when required.

HEI's response

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As far as 6.9 and 6.20 goes, that concern bibliography, we did a major enrichment of the bibliographies of the 15 ECTS modules. Please refer to our previous responses.

As far as 6.17 goes, a clear formative feedback process from the tutor has been added to self-assessment activities in all study guides. Instructions are given to the tutors to provide feedback not only to the assignments but also to the self-assessments activities Please note that all Self-Assessment Exercises are mentioned in the Study Guides of all Modules, but only one was provided in English, as the newly proposed M.A. Programme will be offered in Greek. Moreover, all self-assessment exercises will be available for students on the eLearning Platform of Open University of Cyprus. Furthermore, based on OUC Internal Regulations for Studies and Duties & Responsibilities of Adjunct Faculty, all Tutors need to provide students with detailed feedback on their written assignments, providing annotated word files, and not just merely grade students' assignments. As far as 6.5 quality criterion is concerned, and the Panel's recommendation for Learning Analytics to monitor students' progress, please note that academic monitoring of students' performance is the responsibility of all academics, including OUC Faculty and OUC Adjunct Faculty members. The University's eLearning Platform allows tutors to monitor and supervise students' learning process in a timely manner, through their participation in web lectures, the use of the forum, the self-assessment exercises provided, and the graded educational activities and written assignments that are submitted online and are marked and returned to students with detailed feedback from their Tutors. Learning Analytics are to some extent supported by the University's eLearning Platform, which is based on Moodle.

At this moment, Tutors and Academic Coordinators have access to various statistics and tools to support effective monitoring of the students' progress, such as statistics of the use of eClass by students (logins, time spend on the Platform, downloading and views of videos/telelectures), as well as alerts on submission of written assignments, self-assessment exercises, downloading of mandatory and elective bibliography, etc. Academic Coordinators also have access to these statistics, so as to safeguard high quality teaching and high quality support to all students. The University's Educational Material & Educational Methodology Lab, and the University's eClass team will also work to

incorporate additional LA tools, such as to provide feedback to teaching staff on the effectiveness of their teaching practices and teaching plans and design.

Furthermore, literature in all modules has been balanced. In other words, same amount of learning load (literature, videos, interactive material) has been applied in all modules of 10 ECTS and same amount of learning load (literature, videos, interactive material) has been applied in all modules of 15 ECTS (please refer to the study guides).

EEC's final recommendations and comments

The EEC is very grateful for the ample responses and new details provided in this section. In particular, the panel appreciates the details on the current and next learning analytics (LA) indicators available to constantly monitor the learning process and provide just-in-time help to the students. In addition, the panel again considers very positively the provision of key formative feedback on the written assignments as well as reinforces the suggestion to provide tutor feedback more regularly, during the weekly self-assessment activities included in the study guides (e.g. self-assessment tests could be set up so as to show formative feedback for any answer selected whether it is the correct answer or not). Last recommendation is to incorporate where and when possible the latest advances in learning technologies, such as conversational pedagogical agents combined with LA to support teachers whilst engaging and motivating students by automatically triggering peer interactions and guiding and supporting student dialogues in individual and collaborative settings.

7. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

EEC's comments on the external evaluation report

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HEI's response

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EEC's final recommendations and comments

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8. Additional for joint programmes (ALL ESG)

EEC's comments on the external evaluation report

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HEI's response

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EEC's final recommendations and comments

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C. Conclusions and final remarks

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

EEC's conclusions and final remarks as on the external evaluation report

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The panel is grateful for the discussions with the University's and Faculty's leadership during the site visit on 12 December 2019. This is a continuing programme and the main adjustment relates to a reduction in ECTS credits.

The panel have made several recommendations pertaining to the status of the thesis as optional combined with the lack of a practical alternative, currency of literature on the reading lists, phasing of programme content and the direction of generic social science modules towards the academic and professional contexts of communications and new journalism. The panel also question the viability of the programme title being awarded at MA level to students who only take one module with an explicit journalism focus.

Our understanding is that the physical retreat is an important element of this hybrid / blended model and this gives teaching staff an essential opportunity to meet and reflect on the programme. However, the panel are unclear about the overall engagement by students with these events. We therefore recommend the team do whatever is possible to encourage the highest possible attendance by students at the retreats.

With regard to the EQF criteria and parity with external benchmarks for Masters courses, the recommendations made in relation to these points are mainly for reflection on the part of the programme team (those scored as 4). The points made in relation to scores of 3 are more significant and require amendments. The panel does not consider it an obstacle to approval if the coordinator chooses to review the points scored at 4 without amendments, but we do expect actions with regard to scores of 3.

HEI's conclusions and final remarks

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We are grateful for the helpful feedback of the panel and for highlighting issues of improvement on which we worked thoroughly. We decided we wanted to work on both scores (3 and 4) since our responses here highlight how important your feedback was to the further improvement and expansion of our programme and clarify some issues of disagreement. The new incarnation of the programme next year would provide even further to our students due to your suggestions.

To sum up, we strongly believe that the recommendations of the Committee were taken into consideration and we submit the revised Greek-taught existing postgraduate programme

“Communication and New Journalism” to the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education to be approved. We look forward to a positive decision by CYQAA regarding the accreditation of a programme that is offered since the 2011-2012 academic year, which is now updated and revised to meet the needs of students and the relevant labour market, as per the recommendation of the EEC.

EEC’s final conclusions and remarks

The panel thank the programme team for providing such a detailed response and for making the required adjustments as well as explaining the rationale for considerations where actions have not been taken. We are satisfied with the quality of the programme.

D. Names of the EEC

Julian McDougall

**Kari Anden-
Papadopoulos**

Bradley Wiggins

**Santi Caballe
Llobet**

**Stephanie
Nicolaou**

Date: 17.04.20

**NEW Programme's of Studies Structure
M.A. COMMUNICATION AND NEW JOURNALISM**

Thematic Unit	Semester	Mandatory / Elective	Prerequisite T.U.	Co-requisite T.U.	Workload		
					Hours	ECTS	
COMMON TO ALL ACADEMIC DIRECTIONS							
ENΔ511	Contemporary World: The Political Condition	1	Mandatory			250- 300	10
ENΔ512	Understanding Media: The message	1	Mandatory			250- 300	10
ENΔ513	Basic theories of Communication and new Journalism	1	Mandatory			250- 300	10
ENΔ521	Contemporary World: The Social Condition	2	Mandatory	ENΔ511		250- 300	10
ENΔ522	Understanding Media: The effects	2	Mandatory	ENΔ512		250- 300	10
ENΔ701A	Master Thesis I	3	Elective	ENΔ511, ENΔ512, ENΔ513		375- 450	15
ENΔ701B	Master Thesis II	3	Elective	ENΔ511, ENΔ512, ENΔ513	ENΔ701A	375- 450	15
Direction: Communication							
ENΔ523	Strategic Communication	2	Mandatory	ENΔ513		250- 300	10
ENΔ611	Creative Strategies in Digital Communication	3	Elective	ENΔ511, ENΔ512, ENΔ513, ENΔ521, ENΔ522, ENΔ523		375- 450	15
ENΔ612	Marketing and Communication: A Content Strategy Approach (new title, previous one was: "Communication and Marketing in Practice")	3	Elective	ENΔ511, ENΔ512, ENΔ513, ENΔ521, ENΔ522, ENΔ523	ENΔ611	375- 450	15
Direction: New Journalism							
ENΔ524	The challenges of new Journalism	2	Mandatory	ENΔ513		250- 300	10

ENΔ6 13	Profession: Journalism	3	Elective	ENΔ511, ENΔ512, ENΔ513, ENΔ521, ENΔ522, ENΔ524		375- 450	15
ENΔ6 14	Digital Storytelling	3	Elective	ENΔ511, ENΔ512, ENΔ513, ENΔ521, ENΔ522, ENΔ524	ENΔ613	375- 450	15
Total						2250- 2700	90