Doc. 300.1.1/2

Date: June 3, 2021

External Evaluation Report
(E-learning programme of study)

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

- **Town:** Nicosia

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

- **Department/ Sector:** Not applicable for OUC

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

  In Greek:
  Μεταπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών επιπέδου Μάστερ στις «Θεατρικές Σπουδές»
  In English:

  Magister Artium (MA) Theatre Studies

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

- **Programme's status:** Currently running, registered but not evaluated.

- **Concentrations (if any):**
  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

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A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

In place of an onsite visit, the evaluation was carried out remotely, with contributions from the Rector, Vice-Rector, Dean of the Faculty as well as both permanent and adjunct faculty members, members of the administrative team, current students and alumni. The External Evaluation Committee were shown examples of online learning environments used in the delivery of the programme as well as extensive and well-preapred documentation in advance of the meeting. Because this meeting took place after the end of the teaching period, there was no opportunity to observe live teaching.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Nicholas Ridout	Professor of Theatre	Queen Mary University of London
Panagiota Mini	Associate Professor in Film History	University of Crete
Iordanis Kavathatzopoulos	Professor in Human-Computer Interaction	Uppsala University
Chrystaleni Tryfonos	Masters Student of English Literature	Open University of Cyprus
Mark Robson	Professor of English and Theatre Studies	Dundee University

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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.*

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1. Study programme and study programme's design and development

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

<u>**Sub-areas**</u>

1. **Policy for quality assurance**
2. **Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**
3. **Public information**
4. **Information management**

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

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

1. Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
  - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
  - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
  - *benefits from external expertise*
  - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
  - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
  - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
  - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
  - *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
  - *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
  - *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
  - *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
  - *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
  - *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

2. 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*

3. Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
  - 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*

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

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You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

It is clear that appropriate internal quality assurance procedures are in place, involving students, academic staff, the administration team (including an internal Quality Assurance committee) and both the Dean and the Rector.

Courses are subject to annual review and student feedback on both courses and tutors is used to shape the ongoing development of the course.

The programme of study is consistent with the student body and their educational needs and the content largely meets the objectives set out by the programme. It correponds to the EQF.

There is a logical progression from core modules which give theoretical and methodological foundations, through elective modules that allow for specialisation in a named pathway, to a dissertation that allows for a clear demonstration of independent learning and the tailoring of substantial individual projects. The possibility for those projects to incorporate aspects of professional experience and prior experiential learning is a strength.

The combination of pathways offers a variety of potential routes out of the programme: further academic study, including at doctoral level; work in theatre and in theatre-related areas such as cultural and heritage organisations; teaching and education, including professional development.

The possibility of students completing more than one elective pathway and coming out with more than one named qualification is striking and positive.

There is clear evidence that the programme of study contributes to the development of student communication, teamwork andentrepreneurial skills, particularly in the courses devoted to the practices of Acting and Directing.

Data on graduation rates was not presented in sufficient detail for the panel to make a firm evaluation, but there is evidence of good levels of graduation and relative low drop-out rates.

The Study Guides enable students to direct and manage their own learning and workloads and give clear indications of how this can be done.

Details of the courses offered are available on the programme website.

Most students enrolled are already in professional positions whicb means that graduate outcomnes cannot readily be measured in straightforward terms (such as employemnt obtained, etc.). The programme team are seeking to maintain stronger alumni relations in the future so as to more accurately understand graduate outcomes.

Strengths

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

The principal strengths of the programme as regards its quality assurance processes include:

- coherent course design with excellent logic for progression

- impressive study guides to ensure student-centred learning

- robust administrative processes

- strong institutional understanding of the value of iterative processes, which is shared by all relevant staff

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.

Delivery in the Greek language is both a strength of the course – since it is genuinely distinctive – but also brings with it some limitations. The international ambitions of the institution and programme are inevitably circumscribed by the linguistic demands, but there is also a consequence in terms of the material available in Greek translation for curriculum development. This pragmatic problem is not easily resolved, but will need to be acknowledged in setting realistic goals for expansion of the programme.

Recommendations:

- Some work could be done to make more key data publicly available (e.g. teaching, learning and assessment procedures, pass and drop-out rates, career paths of graduates).

- The feedback loop could be completed more effectively to give students a stronger sense that their experiences are making a strong contribution to the continuing development of the programme.

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

1. **Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**

2. **Practical training**

3. **Student assessment**

4. **Study guides structure, content and interactive activities**

1. Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

Standards

- *The e-learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.*
- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*

- *A specific plan is developed to safeguard and assess the interaction:*

    o *among students*

    o *between students and teaching staff*

    o *between students and study guides/material of study*

- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the students focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*

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

2. 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.*

3. Student assessment

Standards

- *A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on e-learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.*

- *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 e-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.*

2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

Standards

- *A study guide for each course, fully aligned with e-learning philosophy and methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:*
  - *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*
  - *Presentation of course material, and students' activities on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)*
  - ***Weekly schedule of interactive activities and exercises (i.e. simulations, problem solving, scenarios, argumentation)***
  - *Clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
  - *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
  - *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
  - *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
  - *Synopsis*
- *Study guides, material and activities are appropriate for the level of the programme according to the EQF.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Is the nature of the programme compatible with e-learning delivery?*
- *How do the programme, the material, the facilities, and the guidelines safeguard the interaction between students, students and teaching staff, students and the material?*
- *How many students upload their work and discuss it in the platform during the semester?*

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*
- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

Findings

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

The programme represents a compelling example of an inventive use of distance learning pedagogies and modes of delivery in an academic area that conventionally presents particular difficulties due to its associations with liveness and the co-presence of performers and audiences.

The emphasis on student-centred pedagogical approaches is valuable and, on the evidence of those students who participated in the virtual site visit, is recognised and appreciated by the students.

Expectations are clearly set for both synchronous and asynchronous learning, and sound plans and processes are in palce to ensure postive interaction among studentsm between students and staff. Clear evidence of the effectiveness of these plans and processes emerged during the evaluation meeting.

Students appear well-informed and supported in their engagement with learning technologies.

A good variety of pedagogical methods are used.

Students are active in shaping their own work, managing their workloads and contributing to dialogue and shared experience. There is a high degree of autonomy for students.

Learning paths are appropriately flexible, with the the diverse needs of students with busy profesional lives and family responsibilities substantially accommodated by the structure of the programme.

There is an appropriate procedure for handling and responding to student complaints.

Practical training is not a primary focus of this programme, but is should be noted that there is impressive evidence of students taking their study into practical and professional environments.

Assessment is well-designed, with clear criteria, transparency, fair application, and clearly contributes in a structured way to the development of student learning and the progressive acquisition of skills and knowledge.

Standards set are high, entirely in keepoing with the EQF, with students asked to enagge with demanding material. This is supported by the excellence of the comprehensive structured study guides, which include clear learning ouctomes and regular opportunities for students to evaluate their own progress and learning.

Strengths

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

Open University of Cyprus has almost 20 years' experience in delivering Distance Learning programmes and courses.

There are clear policies and applicable practices for integrating new technology in Distance Learning and for student-centred pedagogy.

Organisational structures and procedures are in place for training and supporting teachers and students in e-learning.

There is clear evidence of a responsive programme, as evidenced, for example, in the focus on refugee experience and narrative in the acting and directing components.

Flexibility of the programme in terms of timescales for completion is admirable, appropriate and necessary for distance learning of this kind.

The focus on student-centred learning approaches and methodologies provides a valuable underpinning for the programme as a whole, and is flexible enough to allow for distinctive elective pathways to develop out of a shared theoretical core. The combination of formal presentations (synchronous and asynchronous), synchronous seminars and events, highly detailed and clear study guides, self-evaluation exercises, peer critique and discussion boards suggests a programme that is open to a variety of learning styles as well as to a range of competences and experience. The variety of forms of assessment reflects this commitment to student-centred learning, particularly in the possibility for professional and practice-based elements in dissertations..

This is facilitated by a developing use of technologies appropriate to an e-learning environment, and tutors highlighted the possibilities created by the adoption of new platforms such as Blackboard Collaborate.

The self-evaluation elements – allowing students to identify and address their own areas to focus on – are not formally monitored by tutors, but this seems appropriate for postgraduate study, in which the responsibility for independent learning is the students' own. This is also good preparation for written work, including dissertations.

The student-centered activities beyond the core curriculum are clearly excellent: the "Monday" series (online lectures by guest lecturers), workshops run by students, and a blog with reviews by students. Students are encouraged to benefit from the Erasmus+ programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Recommendations:

- One of the key changes to the revised curriculum is the move from year-long modules to semester-long modules. This may create complexities in the development of cohorts, particularly for collaborative work, since it will introduce further flexibility in the timescale for completion of the course. This can't be avoided – and this flexibility is one of strengths and attractions of e-learning programmes – but its potential effects will have to be carefully monitored to avoid students becoming isolated through falling out of sync with their initial cohort.

  One possible solution would be to introduce further moments of synchronous contact (some exist already), but specifically designed to be independent of specific modules or pathways in order to bring students together from across the programme and at different stages of completion.

  A variety of strategies to promote cohort development might be used to supplement what is already a carefully-considered programme. It is clear that informal versions of such activities already exist, coming from the students and using social media, but it is inevitably difficult to know how inclusive this is of the whole student body. One possibility would be to formalise a 'buddy' system, in which pairs of students would support each other through structured activities involving collaboration and feedback. Alternatively, a Dissertation proposal workshop in which abstracts of proposed topics would be presented for peer feedback, allowing both for refinement of proposals and offering students at earlier stages a sense of where they are aiming. While it may appear counter-intuitive, offering a non-compulsory short, intensive summer school/symposium open to students at all stages may be advantageous.

- For any e-learning and distance learning programme with inclusive and international ambitions, the issue of digital poverty is pressing, and will only be exacerbated as more sophisticated learning platforms are developed. It would be advisable to include consideration of this issue in institutional and programme-specific annual monitoring, and for it to act as a guiding principle in programme development to ensure accessibility.

- Strengthen interactivity between students by adopting peer-reviewing assignments and making them mandatory. This method means that students will upload their work, give feedback to each other and upload it, while receiving support by their teachers. All this implies communication between students and between students and teachers in a natural way.

- Asynchronous activities are important in Distance Learning. Although recorded lectures and seminars allow students to watch them anytime they are not enough for this need. More learning activities should be designed to be asynchronous, as for example peer-reviewing.

- In responding to questions about the nature of the curriculum, two aspects became apparent: first, that there is more diversity within the programme than currently appears to be the case, and this suggests that a different emphasis could be given in the course materials in order to make this more apparent; second, that there is a sense of student expectation that, while no doubt partially real in the history of the course to date, is perhaps going to come under increasing pressure as student expectations shift. This is likely to prove an increasingly important factor affecting the international ambitions of the programme.

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	Compliant
2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	Compliant

3. **Teaching staff** *(ESG 1.5)*

Sub-areas

1. **Teaching staff recruitment and development**
2. **Teaching staff number and status**
3. **Synergies of teaching and research**

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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.*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the teaching staff focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*

- *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.*

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. 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:

- *Is the teaching staff qualified to teach in the e-learning programme of study?*

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

Findings

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

The teaching staff are well-qualified and recruited in line with the learning outcomes sought. The processes for their recruitment and development are appropriate.

There is evidence that teaching staff are engaged in professional development in both pedagogy and research and that they are highly capable in their use of learning technologies.

There are mandatory introductory courses for teaching staff focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.

There is a good balance of teaching and research, with teaching staff making substantial contributions to research in theatre studies in both Greek and English, in national and international contexts, including numerous collaborative projects and publications.

Their research expertise is clearly visible in curriculum content and methodlogical approaches.

Teaching performance is assessed and evaluated at course level and as part of annual reviews.

Strengths

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

The quality and commitment of the teaching staff is probably the greatest strength of the programme.

The teaching materials are comprehensive, varied and clearly in a process of continuous revision and development, including responsiveness to student experience.

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.

While recognising that the use of adjunct faculty is accepted practice in such distance learning programmes, it would be good to ensure the stability and sustainability of the programme through a move towards a rebalancing of the ratio of established to adjunct faculty.

There is a need for continuous adaptation and revision of the training and support provided to teachers.

Training and support for teachers could more clearly focus on the pedagogical possibilities and problems with new technologies rather than on user skills. In this way teachers can be more innovative and creative.

ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

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

eqar//// enqa.

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	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

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

<u>**Sub-areas**</u>

1. **Student admission, processes and criteria**
2. **Student progression**
3. **Student recognition**
4. **Student certification**

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.*

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.*

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. 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.

Recruitment is healthy, especially in light of the Greek-language delivery which inevitably focuses recruitment on Greece and Cyprus.

The Internal Regulations set out clear processes for recognition of appropriate qualifications and experience, for student progression and certification.

We find no evidence to suggest that these regulations are not properly in force.

Strengths

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

It is clear that students find the programme well-suited to their professional and intellectual requirements, that pathways and progression are, in practice, clear and effective, contributing to strong achievement at assessment and high levels of satisfaction.

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.

While we find no cause for concern regarding any of these processes, and clear evidence that the programme meets all the necessary standards, clearer publication of relevant data would assist stakeholders, potential and present students in making well-informed judgements about the quality of the programme. In other words, the programme is absolutely sound, but more work could be done at an institutional level to make sure that it is easier to reach such a judgement based on publicly available data.

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	Choose answer

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

Sub-areas

1. **Teaching and Learning resources**
2. **Physical resources**
3. **Human support resources**
4. **Student support**

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*
- *The e-learning material and activities take advantage of the capabilities offered by the virtual and audio-visual environment and the following are applied:*
  - *Simulations in virtual environments*
  - *Problem solving scenarios*
  - *Interactive learning and formative assessment games*
  - *Interactive weekly activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities for reality reconstruction and further processing based on hypotheses*
  - *They have the ability to transfer students to real-life situations, make decisions, and study the consequences of their decisions*
  - *They help in building skills both in experiences and attitudes like in real life and also in experiencing - not just memorizing knowledge*
- *A pedagogical planning unit for e-learning, which is responsible for the support of the e-learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*

- *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 e-learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

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

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

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

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

5.4 Student support

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

There are weekly interactive activities, course materials take advantage of the range of technological and media possibilities available, as appropriate to the discipline of Theatre Studies, including design projects and simulations.

Students are able to transfer their learning into real-life professional situations with tangible outcomes and benefits for their learning and professional development.

Learning resources are well-designed with student-centered learned by mature autonomous students in mind.

The programme benefits from up-to-date technical infrastructure.

The LEMM unit provides appropriate and dedicated suppprt to all aspects of the programme's pedagogical delivery.

Human resources - teaching, technical, administrative – contribute positively to the student experience.

The e-library resources are sufficient for researchers, teachers and students.

There is a variation of materials and activities taking advantage of the pedagogical possibilities of new technologies.

There are many examples of staff adopting new technologies in teaching.

Strengths

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

It is clear that the level of support offered by teaching staff to the academic development of students is outstanding.

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.

Without the benefit of a site visit there are limits to the panel's capacity to assess areas of improvement. All the evidence obtained from the documentation, the viewing of presentations and examples, and the conversations with staff and students suggests that appropriate student support processes and resources are in place.

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

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 panel wishes to congratulate the programme team and their colleagues in administration and LEMM on an excellent programme of study.

The main area in which we suggest that some immediate attention should be paid to improvements is not in the quality of the programme *per se*, but rather in the public communication of data that will enable external parties better to make the kind of positive judgements we have been able to make. This could involve the preparation of a simple key data section on the programme website.

Our other recommendations are designed to assist the programme team and the leadership of OUC in the development of a successful programme, assuring its continued relevance, updating its use of distance learning pedagogies and continuing to work on the realignment of its curriculum in keeping the the programme's aspirations to the development of critical scholarship and practice, especially in the discipline-specific articulation of feminist and post-colonial approaches.

We have every confidence in the programme team's capacity to accomplish this ongoing development.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Nicholas Ridout	
Panagiota Mini	
Iordanis Kavathatzopoulos	
Chrystaleni Tryfonos	
Mark Robson	

Date: June 3, 2021