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Doc. 300.1.1/2

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report
(E-learning programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**

University of Nicosia

- **Town: Nicosia, Cyprus**

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

- **Department/ Sector: Department of Theology**

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

  In Greek:

  Θεολογία

  In English:

  Master of Arts in Theology

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

- **Programme's status:** Currently operation Program of Study

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: N/A
  In English: N/A

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A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The visit took place on the 1st of December 2021 and was conducted online via Zoom. There was no onsite visit due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We were made very welcome and had an extremely productive day, despite some technical problems.

The Evaluation team met the Rector, Prof. Philippos Pouyioutas, the Dean of the School of Humanities & Social Sciences, Prof. Klimis Mastoridis, and the Chair of the Department of Theology and Program Coordinator, Prof. Christos Economou. In addition, we met other faculty members, several students, and staff from the administration of the School of Humanities and the Distance Learning Unit. The material provided in advance of the visit was valuable. The interviews and prepared video presentations added invaluable additional information.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Lauri Thurén	Professor	University of Eastern Finland
Daniel Alberto Ayuch	Professor	University of Balamand, Lebanon
Athanasios Despotis	Professor	Universität Bonn, Germany
Giorgos Christodoulou	Student	Open University of Cyprus

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:*
  - *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*

1.2 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*
  - *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*

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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*

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

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

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.

The university and the School of Humanities has a clear system for internal quality assurance. However, we are not fully aware of how it works at the Department. During the visit, the EEC could not verify that the students have a formal way of giving feedback to the teachers, or knowing whether the teachers react to their feedback.

Formally the quality assurance follows proper standards, but in practice, it is not implemented in the Department.

Most importantly, the students are not at all involved in the quality assurance program, and the department does not collect their complaints or disagreements.

The Department has a mission statement, but it is not easily accessible. It is not clearly indicated how the strategy is developed and monitored. Especially, the role of students is unclear and minimized. Greater transparency and student participation are needed.

The department of theology needs a better inclusion within the School of Humanities. Its practices are not completely coherent with the rest of the School.

The EEC did not have access to the printed material. The department has a web page for news, but it mostly deals with graduations and it is not updated. The alumni activities are university-wide only.

The EEC has doubts about the academic freedom of the Department due to its close economic and spiritual connections with some local religious institutions. For example, the only research publication presented to us as an academic achievement contains lots of images of church leaders unknown of their academic contributions.

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

The average graduation rate seems to follow European standards.

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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 ought to be involved in the quality assurance program, and their feedback, complaints and disagreements should be systematically collected.

The students ought to be better involved in the development of the content of their studies.

The workload of the different ECTS units should be systematically monitored and changed, if necessary.

The academic output of the Department remains unknown, as little evidence of the peer-reviewed international scholarly publications of the staff was accessible.

The Department's web page should be updated and give more information about the Department's principles, practices, activities, and research.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

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

2.3 Practical training

2.4 Student assessment

2.5 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

2.1 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.*

2.2 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.*

2.3 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:*

- o *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*
- o *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)*
- o ***Weekly schedule of interactive activities and exercises (i.e. simulations, problem solving, scenarios, argumentation)***
- o *Clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
- o *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
- o *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
- o *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
- o *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.

Findings for 2.1

There is a permanent informal interaction between teachers and students. Students trust without any critical attitude in the knowledge and experience of their educators.

Most of the courses are compulsory and there is no clear policy for the offering of the elective ones, particularly in Annex 1 on page 37.

Courses are given with the support of Moodle, an open source Learning Platform. The module topics are learnt in an asynchronous way and videos of the face-to-face courses are uploaded to the platform weekly.

Findings for 2.2
The course offering includes courses with practical and pastoral approaches such as the course on Pedagogy and Education or the course on Pastoral Theology and Ethics.

Findings for 2.3
The assessment policy in every course syllabus is quite simple and stereotyped. There is no detailed information about the evaluation process for skills such as, style, analysis, critical thinking, and knowledge.

No metrics between the LO and the evaluation stages is developed in the provided material.

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

Strengths for 2.1
The teaching staff can offer a personalized follow-up, particularly because there is a reduced number of students in each classroom.

The School of Humanities has a department for academic advising and support, a distance learning unit, and a centre for research and counseling services that accompany students throughout the learning process.

Strengths for 2.2.
Students are involved in the practical and pastoral expression of theology in church institutions and communities.

Strengths for 2.3.
There are evaluation centers spread on the island and in Greece for students to write their exams face to face. A remote proctoring service is also available (PROCTORIO).

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for 2.1.
The use of Video Conferences with students, particularly because most of them are in similar time zones, would be more effective for interaction and improvement of the learning process.

The EEC sees a need for a better involvement of students in the process of programme and course design and improvement.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for 2.2.
The Programme Learning Outcomes can express in a more detailed way the practical and applied aspects of the programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for 2.3.
The EEC recommends the utilization of different assessment methods. Accomplished theses should be available digitally in the library catalog.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for 2.4.
The EEC recommends the implementation of interactive activities that facilitate the distance learning process.

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

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

2.4	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	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.*
- *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.*

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.*

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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.

Findings for 3.1

The process of recruitment has not been transparent, as so many of the teachers have been recruited by invitation only. No clear peer review process has been utilized. A great number of the teaching personnel are retired teachers, whose ability to apply modern pedagogical methods is – based on the material provided to the EEC – limited. There is no evidence that the teaching is based on current research. The teachers receive no feedback from their teaching performance.

Findings for 3.2.

The number of the teaching staff is excellent compared to the number of students.

Findings for 3.3

The academic level of the teaching personnels recent publications remains unclear, as they are hard to find in international academic publications. Typically, the ISBN-numbers of their publications cannot be found at all, or the monographs are published by non-academic publishers. Based on the evidence provided, the teaching is not based on academic research.

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

Strengths for 3.2.

There is a sufficient number of teachers at the 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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for 3.1
The Department ought to recruit younger scholars based on their academic and pedagogical skills. A transparent process should be used in the process. Moreover, more female teachers and research personnel ought to be recruited.

The existing teaching faculty should have training sessions in new DL tools to improve their interaction with students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for 3.2
The Department must ensure that the teachers are actually available for the students in Cyprus.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for 3.3
The quantity and the academic quality of the research done in the Department and by the teachers ought to be systematically monitored and peer-reviewed. It must also be ensured that the teaching is actually based on research. The students ought to be systematically involved in giving feedback from the teaching.

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

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

- o *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
- o *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.

Findings for 4.1
Regulations regarding admission are clearly described on the homepage of the University of Nicosia. The EEC has not detected any intransparency in the enrollment of students.

Findings for 4.2
The University of Nicosia has a promising plan for monitoring student progression, yet the EEC was not able to prove if this is applied in the programme under evaluation. However, the interviewed students confirmed that they had direct access to their instructors and could discuss their progress.

Findings for 4.3
The application refers to the student recognition standards of the University of Nicosia. The EEC has interviewed an alumnus whose prior postgraduate studies had been partially recognized.

Findings for 4.4.
No special information regarding certification has been provided.

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

Strengths for 4.1
The enrollment in this programme is not complex.

Strengths for 4.2
The rate of teaching staff/students is ideal and allows a good monitoring of the students' progress.

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for 4.1
The EEC recommends the application of more differentiated rules regarding admission. Specialization in theology presupposes a Bachelor in a relevant discipline. The admission regulations should include bridging courses for students depending on their academic backgrounds. Students holding e.g. a Bachelor of Science degree need more preparatory modules, 40-60 ECTS points.

Similarly, it must be formally ensured that international students who are not native speakers have excellent knowledge of modern Greek. Otherwise, they cannot be enrolled on a Master programme taught entirely in Greek.

Last but not least, students intending to write a thesis in Biblical studies must have knowledge of at least one relevant ancient language (ancient Greek or Hebrew) and the programme shall offer additional courses for these ancient languages.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for 4.2
Instructors may prove the progress of students by applying more differentiated criteria according to the Bloom taxonomy.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for 4.3
The publication of the recognition criteria on the homepage of the department is strongly recommended.

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	Partially Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Non-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

- *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:*
  - o *Simulations in virtual environments*
  - o *Problem solving scenarios*
  - o *Interactive learning and formative assessment games*
  - o *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.

Findings for 5.1
The University of Nicosia has a distance learning unit to provide students and faculty members with the required technology and support according to the European Standards. However, the course evidence does not show a wide use of learning and assessment tools for DL modules.

The University of Nicosia provides the Master programme with the appropriate facilities. However, the EEC could not prove if students have access to source material and bibliography that is essential for scientific research. In the recorded lecture, no media is applied.

Findings for 5.2

The equipment of the University is perfect and its library also has theological literature. The teaching staff and the students have not complained about problems in the physical resources. However, there is no evidence of a rich digital library with enough databases for the DL students to consult and use for an updated research production.

Findings for 5.3
The administration staff is numerous. However there are no tutors specialized for this programme of studies.

Findings for 5.4

The workload of the Master students as presented to the EEC is heavy and does not comply with the standard workload of the ECTS points. However, there is also a flexibility for individual students who are able to follow only a part-time programme of study.

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

Strengths for 5.2

New buildings with good technical equipment.

Strengths for 5.3

The administration staff of the University is very supportive of the students, especially the disabled ones.

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.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for 5.1
The University should provide teaching staff and students with access to specialized international scientific journals and a properly equipped academic library.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for 5.4
The Master programme could be enriched by collaborations with renowned universities of Western Europe and America. This would support the mobility of the teaching staff and the Master students.

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	Partially 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 programme under evaluation is a recently developed scholarly institution, small in size, but with high ambitions. It grows in a very competitive scientific environment, the University of Nicosia, and has already a good number of students and alumni. The technical equipment and the environment of the university are excellent, and the EEC has observed the friendly atmosphere at the Department.

However, the EEC has been astonished by the great number of retired professors, which is not acceptable according to international academic standards. As a result, many administrative and teaching practices are or run the risk of being outdated. For example, the only journal that is mentioned in the application does not fulfil any scholarly quality standards, such as peer review - practices or the international impact factor. We did not have access to the printed research material. The department has a web page for news, but it mostly deals with graduations and is not updated.

Final recommendations:

1) The evaluation committee recommends the practice of a transparent faculty recruitment policy that includes young and female scholars from diverse international backgrounds, with an updated knowledge and experience in e-learning.
2) The role of students ought to be enhanced on all levels. Their active participation in the quality assurance program, especially regarding their feedback, and the development of the study program must be secured.
3) The programme development ought to strive for a higher academic quality. The teaching staff should be encouraged to publish their articles in international peer reviewed journals in international languages.
4) The admission regulations should include bridging courses for students depending on their academic backgrounds.
5) In general, the programme ought to be better integrated into the University of Nicosia, which to a much higher degree complies with general, transparent academic standards.

E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Lauri Thurén	
Daniel Alberto Ayuch	
Athanasios Despotis	
Giorgos Christodoulou	

Date: December 3, 2021