

Doc. 300.1.1/2

Date: 22 May 2024

External Evaluation Report (E-learning programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Nicosia
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Law
- **Department/ Sector:** Law
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

**Joint Degree with the Hellenic Open University,
Distance Learning (2 Years, 120 ECTS, LLM)**

In Greek:

Δίκαιο της Οικονομίας και των Επιχειρήσεων

In English:

Law of the Economy and of the Enterprises

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme's status:** Currently in operation
- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: Concentrations



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 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

In English: Concentrations



A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The committee visited the premises of the University of Nicosia (UNIC) and held meetings with the key stakeholders from both co-operating institutions (UNIC and the Hellenic Open University); current students and graduates of the programme; and members of the teaching and administrative staff. The visit took place on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 between 9am–5pm. During the meeting, the committee attended and received copies of presentations in addition to the pre-circulated material. There were several Q&A sessions which addressed questions raised by the members of the committee and additional information. The committee would like to comment favourably on the hospitality, warm co-operation and openness of all the participants.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
Prof. Roger Leng	Chair	Warwick University
Prof. Emmanuel Voyiakis	Member	LSE
Prof. Saskia Hufnagel	Member	Queen Mary University of London
Prof. Aikaterini Pantazatou	Member	University of Luxembourg
Prof. Iordanis Kavathatzopoulos	Member (E-Learning Expert)	Uppsala University
Mr. Andreas Kyprianides	Member (Student)	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 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*
 - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
 - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
 - *learning resources and student support available*
 - *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 committee was provided with extensive documentation on the quality assurance mechanisms at both co-operating institutions. On the day of our visit, we attended detailed presentations by the Vice-Rector, and the Convenor of the Joint Degree programme.

The programme's learning outcomes are clear, but they are not specific enough to the purpose and content of the Joint Degree programme. The convenor acknowledged the point in discussion and was very amenable to revising them.

The programme does not have elective modules/courses, but the committee does not regard that as a weakness, given the specialised focus of the Joint Degree. The final-year thesis component allows students to develop useful research skills.

Overall, the committee found the quality assurance mechanisms to be robust and effective. Such mechanisms, typically in the form of a monitoring committee, are present at programme-, School-, and university-level. We did not identify any issues with regard to the inclusiveness of the process of programme design and quality assurance. Prospective students are provided with sufficient information about the programme. The documentation did not include specific information on graduation and drop-out rates, but the committee received answers to its questions in that regard during the visit. The general drop-out rate for postgraduate programmes appears to be in the region of 5%. The committee considers that rate perfectly normal, especially considering the 'open' character of the Joint Degree. The documentation did not make clear whether the programme is available on a part-time basis, but discussion on the day made clearer that this is an option, and that students are informed about this at multiple points, both before and after they register on the programme.

The programme duration is two years, and the programme is currently weighted at 120 ECTS. Both the duration and the weighting are reasonable, but they are also rather atypical in the modern marketplace for postgraduate programmes. This may partly explain why the number of applicants for the programme is on the low side (around 35-40 students per year, or 75-80 for the programme as a whole, against a target yearly intake of 100 students).

Strengths

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

- Robust quality assurance mechanisms
- Adequate information provided to prospective students and students registered on the programme
- Flexible arrangements of study, which are of particular benefit to students with work and family commitments.
- The programme appears to provide students with useful knowledge and research skills, and to have a sufficient connection with market conditions.

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.

- It would be helpful for prospective students if it was made clearer in the documentation and other material available online that the programme can be taken on a part-time basis. This could help make the programme even more attractive to prospective students.
- The committee recommends that the co-operating institutions keep under review the ECTS weighting of the programme. During our Q&A, both institutions recognised that the current weighting is a legacy of an older Greek regulatory framework, and that a 90 ECTS weighting would be perfectly adequate to the aims of the programme and its individual courses. This would also allow the programme to be offered over three terms (or 1.5 years). A change along those lines would align the programme with similar MA programmes and therefore help make it more competitive.
- The learning outcomes of the programme need to be tailored more specifically to its purpose and content.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
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

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:*
 - *among students*
 - *between students and teaching staff*
 - *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:*
 - *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)?*

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 under evaluation is a 2 year joint distance-learning programme. It combines courses on law on the enterprise and finance, this is why it is popular mostly among lawyers and students with a background in economics. Teaching is offered both in a synchronous and asynchronous manner. The modules are organized in small sections with 20-25 students in total, allowing for targeted discussions and teaching. The programme is structured around 4 taught modules (80 ECTS), each one of them built around 3 distinct themes (courses) and a master thesis (40 TU). The courses are structured in a way that they cover the most important aspects of business law. The courses predominantly refer to EU law, although often references are made to national law (Greek and Cypriot). Inevitably, references are made to economic concepts, which lawyers are often unfamiliar with. Thus, the profiles of the students enrolling for the courses fit the content of the courses and allow for synergies to be created between people with legal and economic background.

Assessment is made on the basis of the assignments submitted (30% of the final grade) and the final exam (70% of the final grade). Students need to submit 3 or 4 assignments throughout the programme - they need a minimum total number of 20 points to pass the 'assignments' part. All assignments are corrected by the instructor in charge. All materials are uploaded on moodle, together with relevant videos, exercises and formative assignments. The assignment framework is clear, although the committee has one recommendation on how to improve it (please see below). A core course is offered on how to do research and how to write a master thesis, so the students become familiar both with doing research and legal writing. The format of the programme is appropriate as it addresses mostly students with another primary occupation.

Strengths

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

Students were overall happy with the programme. The 'foundation course' was particularly appreciated by students that did not have a law background as it helped them to get acquainted with basic legal principles.

A lot of possibilities and interactive activities are uploaded on a weekly basis for students to test their knowledge. Moodle (and moodle opportunities) is put in good use by the teachers. In addition, teachers monitor student moodle use and participation on a regular basis. If a student does not regularly visit the moodle page, then the teacher becomes aware and they meet (virtually) the student.

The lecturers discuss with the students the assignments and by and large, they appear approachable to the students during class hours for questions and discussion.

The committee finds it laudable that the materials, especially books (hard copies) are distributed to the students at no charge to them.

Students are offered a core course on how to do research and write a master thesis. The committee applauded the fact that the master thesis is compulsory. Students are encouraged to select a topic for their master thesis and, upon discussing with their teachers on how to refine the topic, the appropriate teacher is assigned as a supervisor. A committee of (other) teachers is established for the oral defence of the thesis.

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 committee recommends the creation of synchronous meetings between the students and the teachers, so called 'office hours', so that the students can discuss any questions they may have one on one with the teacher. These office hours can be offered on a weekly basis by the teacher (virtually) and the students could join the forum to speak directly with the lecturer.

The programme appears to have a very heavy workload for students both in terms of content (materials to read) and workload (4 assignments and final exam). The committee became aware that the programme can effectively be offered as a part time programme, but this should be made clear from the beginning to attract more students and make them aware that they can finish the programme in more than 2 years.

Formative assessments appear to be a very useful tool for the students to test their knowledge. The committee recommends that the assessment criteria include a small degree of credit (e.g. 10%) for participation. The modalities could be left to the programme convenor or individual course convenors. The director and staff appeared open to such a proposition and they said they have considered it themselves.

The committee further recommends creating more asynchronous exercises for the students to come together and discuss the materials. This would take the form of a peer review exercise where the students could, for example, discuss each other's assignments/findings.

Finally, the committee recommends creating possibilities for the staff from both HOU and UNic to share best-practices with regard to teaching (for instance, best uses of e-learning platforms).

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2	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

- 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.*

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 University of Nicosia (UNic) has very competent teaching staff who are charged with teaching on the programme. Their qualifications are impressive and they are involved in research and all of them have international qualifications and/or research profiles.

In relation to the Hellenic Open University (HOU) the teaching staff involved in the programme are only two permanent staff members while the main teaching staff employed are adjunct. This is linked to the way HOU operates with 13,000 students, but only around 50 permanent staff members, 16 of which in the School of Social Sciences, and 2 of which are law faculty members. On the current programme an impressive number of staff from highly reputed universities are teaching, many of them international (Louisiana State University, University of Groningen, etc.).

The teachers employed to teach on the programme all seem very capable and enthusiastic to achieve the learning outcomes and work on improving their (online) teaching skills as well as to respond to student feedback to improve their courses.

The opportunities to improve online teaching skills are provided through UNic in particular with biannual opportunities to follow a structured course on online teaching skills, a 24-hour support team for urgent issues and one-on-one support for the designing of new and redesigning of existing courses.

Innovation for teaching in the online environment is here encouraged and supported through the E-Learning Pedagogical Support (Director, Dr Christos Anagiotos).

The conditions of staff employed depend on the institutions and in the case of HOU it depends on each institution where the adjunct staff is employed. However, training and support is available for all through both UNic and HOU and especially UNic has opportunities for training and professional development in place accessible to all staff on the programme.

With a view to research and research and teaching synergies UNic has very good strategies in place to encourage research and dissemination. The successful grant applicant at UNic can keep the grant money with a very limited 20% overhead which effectively means they can double their salary over the time of the grant while not having to do teaching. The research dissemination is supported with 1,500 Euros for conference travel per year and encouraged.

At HOU the research is not similarly supported but depends for most staff on the home institution, not HOU.

In relation to feedback, students are sent evaluation forms to fill in and submit. The closing of the feedback loop does not have a prescribed format but there is informal response to feedback. Students also reported that they felt comfortable directing complaints to teachers directly but responses depended on the individual teacher.

Strengths

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

The University of Nicosia (UNic) has very competent teaching staff who are charged with teaching on the programme. Their qualifications are impressive and they are involved in research and all of them have international qualifications and/or research profiles.

HOU also employs an impressive number of staff on the programme from highly reputed universities, many of them international (Louisiana State University, University of Groningen, etc.).

The teachers employed to teach on the programme all seem very capable and enthusiastic to achieve the learning outcomes and work on improving their (online) teaching skills as well as to respond to student feedback to improve their courses.

The opportunities to improve online teaching skills at UNic are excellent. There are biannual opportunities to follow a structured course on online teaching skills, a 24-hour support team for urgent issues and one-on-one support for the designing of new and redesigning of existing courses.

With a view to research and research-teaching synergies UNic has very good strategies in place to encourage research and dissemination. The successful grant applicant at UNic can keep the grant money and with a very limited 20% overhead which effectively means they can double their salary over the time of the grant while not having to do teaching. The research dissemination is supported with 1,500 Euros for conference travel per year and encouraged.

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.

In relation to the Hellenic Open University (HOU) the teaching staff involved in the programme are only two permanent staff members while the main teaching staff employed are adjunct. It follows that the quality of the programme rests on the possibility of HOU to attract and employ continuously high level researchers and teaching academics for the programme.

Innovation for teaching in the online environment is encouraged and supported through the E-Learning Pedagogical Support (Director, Dr Christos Anagiotos). However, we would encourage course convenors to share best practices and other aspects of innovation, and to take greater advantage of the UNic support services in building and enhancing the online environment for their respective courses.

At HOU the research is not supported to a large extent which could be improved also for internal staff.

In relation to feedback, students are sent evaluation forms to fill in and submit. The closing of the feedback loop does not have a prescribed format but there is informal response to feedback. Students reported that they felt comfortable directing complaints to teachers directly but responses depended on the individual teacher. The closing of the feedback loop should be more formalised. UNIC might consider publication of a summary of major points arising in student feedback and a statement of what actions are to be taken in response.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

- 4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria
- 4.2 Student progression
- 4.3 Student recognition
- 4.4 Student certification

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

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

4.2 Student progression

Standards

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

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

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

4.4 Student certification

Standards

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

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Findings

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

Admissions are the responsibility of UNIC, with the processes undertaken by a specialised office dealing with joint programmes. The admissions requirements are appropriate and available in information published by the two universities. An important element in the recruitment process is a programme of visits to major cities undertaken by a course administrator which gives potential students the opportunity to raise questions about the course.

The programme has a maximum recruitment of 300 with notional quotas are set for admission of three categories of student: (i) law graduates; (ii) graduates with non-law degrees; (iii) candidates offering experiential learning. It is not clear why such quotas should apply. However, since recruitment is at a much lower level (c.70 per year) the quotas have never presented an issue.

Admissions policy is to admit any student who satisfies the formal admission criteria. It was explained to the committee that this reflects the philosophy of "open" higher education in which a student should not be denied an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve a particular level of qualification.

The committee was informed that potential students who attended recruitment events or sought advice from the course administration team, would be counseled about the weight of the course and options to take the course over a period longer than two years.

The Universities are aware of the challenges faced by students with non-law backgrounds undertaking legal studies at masters level. This is addressed by offering a substantial optional foundation course in legal methodology and

terminology for which no charge is made. This is valued by students and may be taken also by law graduates as a refresher course.

Course documentation which is publicly available makes clear what is required for progression within the programme.

Strengths

- The availability of a law foundation course to support students from a non-law background.
- Counselling of potential students prior to admission.
- The monitoring of student engagement through data collected by the electronic learning platform.
- The programme sets out clear and appropriate criteria for assessing prior learning and work experience to qualify a student for admission.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The committee does not have any particular recommendations for improvement.

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

Sub-area	<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4 Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2 Student progression	Compliant
4.3 Student recognition	Compliant
4.4 Student certification	Compliant

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

Sub-areas

- 5.1 **Teaching and Learning resources**
- 5.2 **Physical resources**
- 5.3 **Human support resources**
- 5.4 **Student support**

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *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.

All necessary pedagogical and technical infrastructure is there supporting staff's teaching skills and students' learning. Real life cases are adopted to train students' ability to apply theoretical learning and skills into practice. E-learning Technology is used for student-teacher and student-student communication.

Strengths

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

UNIC has long experience in supporting teachers and students in E-learning. Especially the one-to-one training consultation to teachers is valuable since it facilitates the creative implementation of pedagogical ideas in the environment of E-learning education programmes.

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.

Communication and mutual support among students appears spontaneously from time to time when they feel the need to ask for or to give support to each other. Since this has a great value for learning in distance and online education it could be integrated formally into the programme. For example, the introduction of individual or group projects progressing in several steps would allow for the work at each step to be uploaded and therefore be accessible for reviewing by other students or groups. The reviews can also be uploaded. Everything would be accessible any time by all students and teachers. The students value highly the support from their peers and in this way the need for communication and cooperation between students emerges in a natural way. The teacher can follow this process and can intervene in the communication whenever necessary, and also grade the performance of the students. Another way to support student interactivity and communication in a natural way could be the introduction of a student opponent in the presentation/examination of the thesis.

If students are to be allowed to use AI in their work, it is important that the programme contains clear information on how that resource is to be used and referenced, and that this information is clearly linked to existing policies regarding plagiarism.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
5	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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

The committee is grateful to the Law Department and the University of Nicosia as a whole for their gracious hospitality, the thoroughness of the documentation they put before us, and their openness in discussing every aspect of their application. We are also grateful to the representatives of the Hellenic Open University, who were with us online during the day of the visit, and were ready to respond to our questions.

We have found the proposed Joint Degree programme to be well designed, with good quality assurance mechanisms and, above all, delivered by qualified, committed and enthusiastic academic colleagues. We are also satisfied that the new programme is well integrated in the University's and the Law School's strategic development plans, and increases the two co-operating institutions' academic profile.

On the whole, the committee gladly recommends that the programme be accredited. The few points that we have raised in the 'areas of improvement' sections are meant solely as recommendations, which we believe will help strengthen the programme and make it even more attractive to its target market.



E. Signatures of the EEC

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Prof. Roger Leng	
Prof. Emmanuel Voyiakis	
Prof. Saskia Hufnagel	
Prof. Aikaterini Pantazatou	
Prof. Iordanis Kavathatzopoulos	
Mr. Andreas Kyprianides	

Date: 22 May 2024