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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Doc. 300.1.1/2

Date: 23.04.24

External Evaluation Report
(E-learning programme of study)

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

- **Town: Nicosia**

- **School/Faculty (if applicable): School of Law**

- **Department/ Sector: Department of Law**

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

  In Greek:

  Ρυθμιστική Τεχνολογία (1-1.5 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 90 ECTS, Μάστερ, Εξ αποστάσεως)

  In English:

  Technology Regulation (1-1.5 academic years, 90 ECTS, Master of Arts, E- Learning)

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

- **Programme's status: New**

- **Concentrations (if any):**

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

A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The evaluation of this new and exciting programme, including the site visit, was very well prepared and transparently monitored by all persons, organisations, and institutions involved. The written documentation of the University of Nicosia was prepared effectively, comprehensibly, and with great care. The form in which it was presented to the panel of experts demonstrates the commitment of a well-positioned programme management and teaching staff, as well as excellent organisational structures, especially in the academic context, but also in the administrative and technical areas. The diverse nature of the tasks, and the great importance of those tasks within the framework of the new programme, performed by the faculty and its members have been managed with great commitment, and respect must be paid to all those involved, above all the programme management and the lecturers. All the discussions during the site visit were organized and carried out in a highly professional manner. The discussions during the site visit were conducted in an open, respectful, and very friendly manner throughout the duration of the on-site evaluation. All participants were very well prepared and able to provide well-founded answers to the questions posed by the members of the panel of experts.

ΔΙΠΑΕ
CYQAA

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B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Prof. Brigitte Tag	Chair	University of Zurich
Prof. Andrew J. Charlesworth	Member	University of Bristol
Prof. Jeanne Pia Mifsud Bonnici	Member	University of Groningen
Prof. Rob Koper	Member	Open University of the Netherlands
Margarita Panteli	Member	Student, University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

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

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

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

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

Findings

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

Strengths

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

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

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

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

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

Sub-areas

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

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
  - *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.

What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?

At the University of Nicosia, the Quality Assurance process consists of multiple layers of controls by different players. The entire Internal Programme Evaluation Process (IPEP) consists of 10 steps.

The IPEP is initiated 18 months post-accreditation by the Cyprus Quality Assurance Accreditation Agency (DIPAE). First the Council of the Department of Education appointed an External and an Internal Team of Reviewers (ETR & ITR). The internal and external teams of reviewers are provided by the relevant forms of the DIPAE, which must be completed by the programme coordinator. The ITR proceeds to solicit feedback for the programme from the faculty, students, alumni, industry experts etc. With this information the ITR evaluates the programme and completes DIPAE's External Programme Evaluation forms. Based on these forms, the programme coordinator writes a report and presents it to the Department Council and the Dean. In consultation with the Dean and Head of Department the programme coordinator then goes on to make the necessary amendments, before submitting the forms to the University Internal Quality Assurance Committee (UIQAC). After a thorough evaluation in accordance with predefined criteria for evaluating new programmes, the UIQAC will provide some further feedback, with which the programme coordinator will then prepare the final forms for submission to DIPAE.

In addition to this Quality Evaluation, each department also has its own Quality Assurance Committee, which is composed of the Head of Department, one faculty member and a student representative. Furthermore, there is a separate process of quality control in the School of Law through a committee, consisting of the Dean, the Head of Department, the coordinators, and senior faculty members. Finally, the Students are able to contribute to a well-rounded quality control process, via anonymous questionnaires (p.33 and 34 of the application).

With regard to its policy for plagiarism the University has a strict zero-tolerance policy and employs Turnitin, a plagiarism detection software, for all course and work submissions. Plagiarism is considered a major offense, and disciplinary actions are taken at the Department and Senate levels in accordance with regulations. The complaint management and dispute resolution procedures, outlined in Chapter 7 of the Students Rules and Regulations, allow for student petitions at various academic levels. Masters theses and papers can be submitted to Turnitin, via the Moodle platform, for plagiarism checks before formal submission. The Plagiarism Check in Moodle compares papers against Turnitin's database and other sources. Students can resubmit through this tool multiple times before the final submission, and similarity reports are generated for the first three submissions immediately, while subsequent reports take at least 24 hours (p.39 of the application). During the onsite visit the external committee was informed that in relation to the use of AI and Chat-GPT in the new programme, while the course would seek to integrate AI-related tools into teaching where appropriate, there will be a policy installed asking students to formally acknowledge the use of such tools in summative and formative work.

What does the design of the programme look like and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?

The design of the programme is shaped around producing professionals and academics who are equipped for the contemporary and upcoming challenges regarding the legal frameworks in the field of new technologies. The programme aims to explore legal, ethical, and governance dimensions related to disruptive technologies. It addresses unprecedented challenges to concepts such as rule of law and examines the impact on fundamental rights. With increasing challenges to traditional legal systems by the new technologies and the internet ecosystem, the programme questions whether these systems remain efficient. It adopts an interdisciplinary and comparative approach, focusing on broader challenges and providing deep theoretical legal understanding, innovative knowledge, and professional skills. The target audience includes those in technology regulation, such as IT professionals, lawyers, regulators, and members of public or private organizations. Specific objectives include deepening knowledge in specialized fields and broadening understanding of technology regulation in a comparative European and international context, emphasizing both theoretical and practical aspects. The programme aims to enhance students' capacity to confront current challenges, especially in the European and international environment, through engagement with academic research and regulatory practices (p.8 and 9 of the application).

How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?

1. Students, or at least representatives of the students, are involved in the evaluation process for new programmes (p.33 and 34 of the application).
2. The programmes are reviewed annually through a report prepared by the Head of Department with the support of the programme coordinator. Among other information, this report considers the student evaluations of the programme, and faculty as well as student enrolment, performance, withdrawal, attrition rates and employment. This report aims to constantly improve the programme and by doing so mitigate potential risks for the programmes. The students thereby have an impact on the result of the report and thus on the future of the programme (p.38 of the application).
3. During the programme students can interact with the teaching material via chat and blogs which provide ongoing content and new materials for discussion within the immediate course and inform the teaching staff as to new developments in technology and the direction of student interests.
4. The structure of the programme consists of a combination of compulsory courses, plus either elective courses or a written research thesis. This automatically gives the student some freedom to influence the content of their academic work to an adequate amount (p.68 of the application).

What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?)

Of the 90 ECTS Credits that are required to complete this Masters programme, 60 come from compulsory courses. These courses aim to provide a foundational base for students. The courses are important in this programme. Students are encouraged to combine theoretical and empirical knowledge to address professional issues, analyze problems in technology regulation, and evaluate relevant procedures. The goals include the identification of priority issues at different levels (national, European, or international), the development of independent research skills, and the ability to generate theoretical and empirical analyses within the global regulatory framework for digital technologies (p.69 f. of the application).

As the programme has not yet been launched, no numbers regarding the pass rates are available.

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?

Students can decide to complete the programme in 2 or 3 semesters, depending on their personal availability. According to the application document on p.62, this is in line with the decision from the DIPAE. We expect the average student to graduate in 3 semesters. As the programme has not yet been launched, average numbers are not yet available.

What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?

The programme is internationally oriented, conducted in English, and designed by the Department of Law in adherence to CYQAA directives. It will attract students from diverse jurisdictions worldwide, offering a curriculum with global relevance. The recruitment of international students is facilitated through distance learning (DL) methods and the University of Nicosia's global impact, attracting students from over 70 countries. The School of Law and the Department of Law leverage an extensive international network, fostering collaborations through various initiatives, including Erasmus+ agreements, joint programmes, and research activities. The international character promotes synergies among faculty members from different universities through activities such as guest speeches, visiting professors, conferences, online seminars, thesis supervision, and various research collaborations (p.43 of the application).

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?

1. The programme's relevance stems from its alignment with the ever-evolving technological landscape, its focus on emerging challenges, and its commitment to providing professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to address complex issues in technology regulation. As technologies continue to evolve, the programme must evolve as well.

   This can partly be secured by implementing ongoing research outputs in the lessons and making this an integral part of the learning experience. According to the application on p.40 lecturers will use their findings and latest research results to enhance the content of the lessons. Furthermore, the programme stands out as one of the few EU-wide programmes specifically focused on the regulation of new/digital technologies and multi-level governance issues on the Internet. Graduates are expected to have a unique qualification, providing them with a competitive advantage in the emerging professional and academic landscape. The interdisciplinary nature of the programme enhances skills and competences, improving employability prospects in various sectors, including the private sector, civil society organizations, public sector, and regional and international organizations. The rarity of similar programmes at both national and international levels further underscores the distinctive nature and value of this programme (p.41 f. of the application).

2. The compulsory courses cover a range of legal aspects that may be affected by upcoming technologies in the future. The courses also aim to provide a basic understanding of the subject matter and critical thinking skills needed for all types of future challenges. It can therefore be said that the objectives and the content of the programme are in accordance with one another (p.68 f. of the application).

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?

The Course Leader, an expert faculty member, initiates the course design and coordination process. Collaborating with the programme coordinator and other faculty, they determine textbooks, materials, assessments, and communication strategies. The team establishes measurable learning objectives for each course, ensuring alignment with the programme of study. Weekly reflections on materials are considered. The initial course design will be shared with the e-Learning Pedagogical Support Unit for feedback on pedagogical and technological aspects, leading to the production of final course organization documents (p.9 f. of the distance learning outline).

Additionally, faculty members from the Department meet regularly to discuss course content for both conventional and distance learning programmes. The goal is to prevent unnecessary duplication of teaching material and ensure alignment with academic objectives and departmental strategy (p.10 of the distance learning outline).

Emphasis is also placed on interactivity during the lecture. This is to ensure that the lecturers have a feel for the needs and learning progress of their students (p.10 of the distance learning outline).

Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?

The described programme aligns with the European Qualifications Framework, particularly in its comprehensive support for distance learning students. The Distance Learning Unit offers administrative

assistance, including admission processes, academic advice, technical support, financial inquiries, and examination and graduation procedures. Students receive personalized administrative and IT support through various channels, promoting accessibility and individualized assistance.

Moreover, the programme emphasizes academic support with dedicated advisors monitoring students' progress and providing personalized guidance. The use of Distance Learning Analytics further enhances the programme, allowing proactive identification of at-risk learners, assessment of engagement in discussion forums, and improvement of course design based on participation data. The focus on instructor engagement and training contributes to the overall effectiveness and quality of distance learning courses, hopefully leading to high retention rates (p.47 of the application).

The course delivery strategy prioritizes interactivity among students, faculty, and course materials to encourage active participation, demonstrating alignment with the principles of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) (p.11 of the distance learning outline).

In asynchronous communication and teaching, the provision of dedicated websites in the Learning Management System (LMS) for DL courses adheres to the EQF's emphasis on technology and digital skills. Limiting access to registered students and lecturers ensures a secure and personalized learning environment. The centralization of asynchronous communication through the LMS, covering course information, material repositories, and interactive elements, aligns with the EQF's focus on learner-centered approaches (p.11 of the distance learning outline).

Regarding synchronous communication and teaching, incorporating a minimum of nine hours of synchronous video conferencing throughout the semester reflects a commitment to real time interaction, addressing the EQF's emphasis on active engagement. The utilization of webinars, involving video, audio, and screen sharing, embraces diverse communication modes, supporting the EQF's recognition of varied learning styles. Recording and making sessions available on the Moodle course page align with the EQF's encouragement of flexible learning, accommodating students who may not attend synchronous sessions (p.14 of the distance learning outline).

In summary, the course delivery approach described, through its emphasis on technology, learner-centeredness, and flexibility, demonstrates alignment with the principles of the European Qualifications Framework.

Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?

There is currently no information about this programme on the homepage of the University of Nicosia. However, all information is made accessible by contacting the University through various channels. Upon launching of the programme, the University website will be expected to include all necessary information, or how to access it, on its website, as the Distance Learning Guide refers to the student access via the website (e.g., p.3, 13 f., 19, 23, 32, 249).

How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?

The programme was designed by the Department of Law in compliance with CYQAA directives on the structure, the ECTS credits, the objectives, and the expected learning outcomes of DL Master programmes (p.43 of the application). As far as can be seen from the application and the discussions during the onsite visit, the ECTS points are distributed fairly and comprehensibly.

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?

The institution polls the graduates on the career paths followed after graduation. However, as the programme has not yet been launched, there is no feedback from graduates of this study programme. It can nevertheless be stated, as mentioned before, that there are valid reasons to believe that this programme will provide its graduates with improved opportunities on the labour market.

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)?

There is no feedback available, as the programme hasn't been launched thus far. There is, however, an established feedback process in place across existing programmes of this type where students are periodically asked to provide feedback.

The programme foresees different ways in which the students can take part in developing the content of their study programme. For further information, see comments above.

What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?

Reasons for dropping out cannot currently be evaluated, as the programme has not yet been launched.

However, many processes and safety nets are already in place to prevent, as far as possible, voluntary withdrawal from the programme (p.44 of the application).

In terms of student performance monitoring mechanisms, lecturers communicate with academic advisors about students who are not progressing as expected, whether due to their performance in coursework or other indicators in the corresponding learning week. Subsequently, academic advisors directly contact these students to identify the reasons for their poor performance or lack of participation. Following this, academic advisors inform lecturers, and depending on the identified reasons, a collective supportive approach is decided upon. This process is formally referred to as the 'Monitoring of Students' and aims to detect challenges early in the semester, typically during the 3rd to 4th week, enabling timely support and improvement throughout the remaining learning weeks.

Student progress is consistently assessed throughout the semester, employing various methods such as face-to-face exams, quizzes (both assessed and non-assessed), tests, projects, case studies, and forum discussions. These assessments are designed based on the learning outcomes and aims of the course. Students receive continuous feedback on their performance, providing them with opportunities to address concerns with their lecturers or academic advisors. Both formative and summative assessment methods are utilized in this process.

The university fosters a student-centered learning environment that encourages active self-learning and imparts lifelong learning skills and competencies. In addition to support from faculty and academic departments, students also benefit from individual support services offered by various departments, including the Centre for Research and Counselling Services (KESY), Student Affairs Department, and Academic Advising and Support Departments.

The Centre for Research and Counselling Services (KESY) provides counseling services to all students, addressing a range of personal challenges, including academic or learning disabilities, time management issues, interpersonal relationship challenges, adjustment problems, family issues, stress and anxiety, emotional control, eating habits, loss or bereavement, mood problems, low esteem, and experiences of abuse. Counseling services are offered in individual or group sessions, maintaining strict confidentiality.

The academic department and faculty members may be informed with the student's consent, guiding them on the appropriate way to handle each case.

Academic counseling plays a crucial role in a student's registration and academic performance at the University of Nicosia. Each student receives planning and academic counseling from academic counsellors, the Head of Department, and the Programme Coordinator. The main goal is to support students in pre-registration, registration, and understanding their academic schedule and degree requirements. Academic counseling aims to help students take responsibility for their education, providing guidance on university expectations.

The Student Success Centre (SSC) is dedicated to assisting students in achieving their academic goals through tutorial services and workshops, primarily focusing on first-year students. Workshops cover essential skills for academic excellence, and tutoring services, such as the Math Lab and Writing Lab, provide personal attention to ensure student success. The Writing Lab, specifically, offers free, individualized help for developing written assignments across disciplines.

Career counseling services are available to assist students and alumni in exploring professional choices, preparing for interviews, and finding employment or internship opportunities. Services include advice on CV and cover letter preparation, mock interviews, and assistance in finding employment and internship opportunities.

Based on the review of the application and the findings from the onsite visit, the evaluating committee can reasonably conclude that in the first area the ESG/EQF-Standards are met by the University of Nicosia, Faculty of Law.

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

1. *The University of Nicosia's Quality Assurance process is robust and multifaceted, involving internal and external teams, feedback from various stakeholders, etc. The commitment to continuous improvement is evident, and the inclusion of student perspectives further enhances the overall quality control process. This approach ensures a comprehensive and well-rounded evaluation of programmes at different levels within the university.*

2. *The programme is designed to prepare individuals from a range of backgrounds, such as professional and academic, for legal challenges in emerging technologies like IoT, AI, and Blockchain. It addresses ethical and governance aspects, questioning traditional legal systems' efficiency in addressing new technologies and the Internet ecosystem. The programme's strengths lie in its cross- and interdisciplinary approach, providing theoretical legal understanding and practical skills. Targeting technology regulation stakeholders, it aims to deepen knowledge and broaden understanding in a comparative European and international context.*

3. *The programme's delivery approach offers several advantages. The comprehensive support provided by the Distance Learning Unit, including administrative assistance and personalized IT support, enhances the student experience and accessibility. Academic support combined with the effective use of Distance Learning Analytics, will contribute to student success and the programme's overall effectiveness. The interactive course delivery strategy, focusing on interactivity and flexibility, not only engages students but also aligns with the EQF's principles. Overall, the evaluation committee were highly impressed with the programme's commitment to recognized standards, comprehensive support, and innovative delivery methods positioning it as a robust and learner-centric educational offering.*

4. *The University of Nicosia closely monitors student performance through a 'Monitoring of Students' process, identifying challenges early in the semester for timely support. Various assessment methods are employed throughout the semester, providing continuous feedback to students. The University prioritizes a student-centred learning environment, emphasizing inclusivity and lifelong learning skills. Additional support services, such as counselling from the Centre for Research and Counselling Services (KESY) and academic advising, contribute to students' well-being and academic success.*

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.

No serious problems were identified. It is recommended that:

- *As with the other programmes on the homepage of the University of Nicosia, where all information regarding the respective programme is presented completely and clearly, this should also be the case for the Master's degree technology regulation.*
- *Including information on pass rates for existing programmes and an average duration for programme completion could provide additional context and benchmarks for prospective students.*

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

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

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

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**
> **2.2 Practical training**
> **2.3 Student assessment**
> **2.4 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:*
    - 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.

Is the nature of the programme compatible with e-learning delivery?

The Programme provides the opportunity for specialization in one of the most dynamic fields, and explores the legal, regulatory, normative, ethical, and governance dimensions relating to the internet and disruptive technologies (such as IoT, AI, blockchain technology, Big Data, autonomous systems, intellectual property rights, human rights, cybercrime, and the "Metaverse" virtual-reality environment).

The Programme confronts the multi-dimensional relationship between law and digital technologies. It is organized around relevant legislation, regulation, normative production and governance. Accordingly, it will focus on regional, national, and global legal framework, institutions, policies, and practices. Its specific emphasis on existing, as well as future, EU legislative, regulatory, and normative paradigms and their global

impact, accompanied by a comparative law approach, make the delivery form extremely useful in teaching, researching, and studying those topics. Finally, the programme aspires to develop students' in-depth understanding, critical analysis, and application of current and future legal doctrines and research methodology to enable them to significantly improve their professional and learning skills (p.8 ff. of the application).

The intended learning outcomes (p.9 ff. of the application) as well as the chosen modes for the assessment of the students (physical face to face exams, assessments, quizzes, test, projects, case studies, forum discussions, p.15 of the application) are well suited to be organized and carried out within an e-learning programme.

Therefore, the chosen form of delivery is fully compatible with the nature of the programme.

How do the programme, the material, the facilities, and the guidelines safeguard the interaction between students, students and teaching staff, students and the material?

The learning process is regarded as an interaction between the teaching personnel and the students, with intent and plan as well as outcome oriented. The number of students within a single section (cohort) will be up to 30, as to ensure constructive interaction (p.35 of the application).

The Department's policy of teaching encompasses a strategy and guidelines on how the teaching staff should communicate (with a communication and functional level) with the students, to the extent that even on the functional dimension, teaching strategies are outlined (p.36 ff. of the application). There are quality control and quality assurance procedures in place on the part of the Department (p.37 of the application).

Moodle is used as the primary LMS for the e-learning program. In Moodle students can access their learning assignments and materials 24/7, so they can choose freely, when and where they study. The students can also contact their lecturers using Moodle and can partake in discussions with them and their peers. Questions and Answers can either be send via personal email or can be posted for all the students (that have access to the course) to see. The teachers additionally provide not only their email but their telephone number. Lastly there is the opportunity for skype calls for personal and efficient interaction. There is also a student portal, where they can get important information (about grades, courses, academic path/forms, personal university-e-mail-account etc.) (p.39, 207 f. of the application).

For synchronous communication the Cisco WebEx teleconference system is used. It provides a way to create a virtual class, but also enables one-to-one communication. Lecturers and students can meet there in real time to discuss or collaborate in the context of their course materials.

The interaction with their materials is ensured through a clear explanation from the faculty regarding the course structure and the interaction with the course materials at the beginning of the semester (p.10 of the Distance Learning Outline). In the Moodle course there is an introductory video.

The platforms are monitored as to how frequently the students and lecturers visit the platforms. In the event that they do not engage to a sufficient degree, they will be asked to be more active (p.38). Moreover, the lectures are encouraged to inform both the coordinators and the Head of the Department on issues that could create risk for the Department or the students (p.38 of the application).

In addition, there is a Students Affairs Department in place to advise and support students and to ensure the necessary prospects in personal growth within student life (cooperation, teamwork, social interaction etc.) (p.46 of the application). There is also an administrative support team for distance learning students, which provide help regarding the administrative needs of the students and there are distant learning academic advisors who closely monitor the academic progress of students and provide personalized guidance and support for the enhancement of their academic performance (p.47 of the application).

Lastly, the interaction between faculty and students, students and students, and between the students and their materials are safeguarded through regulations of the UNIC Distance Learning Faculty Handbook (2018) (p.4 ff., 8 ff. and 16 ff., 19 ff. of the guidelines). There is also a monitoring mechanism in place for reviewing the progress of the students to enable academic advisors to contact students to identify reasons for poor performance or lack of participation, so that the necessary support can be provided (p.44 of the application).

(see also, p.11 ff., 20 ff., 26 ff. of the Distance-Learning-Outline for additional information).

How many students upload their work and discuss it in the platform during the semester?

As the programme has not yet been launched, this information cannot be provided. However, each student will be required to participate in the courses and to upload written (e.g. case study, tests, projects) work as well as answers to questions (both within the online-tools and within a discussion) during all courses (p.15 of the application and p.8 of the guidelines). For example, the course «Human Rights and Technological Corporations» requires several case studies from India and South Africa (p.98 of the application). So, the performance of the students is continuously assessed throughout the semester, utilizing various methods and techniques such as physical face to face exams, assessments, quizzes (assessed or not assessed), tests, projects, case studies and forum discussions, all designed based on the Learning Outcomes and aims of the course. Finally, there is the above-mentioned monitoring mechanism for student performance in place (p.44 of the application).

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).

There is a pedagogical support structure and network for distance learning in place with the E-Learning Pedagogical Support Unit (ePSU) led by director Dr. Christos Anagiotos, which directly reports to the Rector. Advice and feedback from experts outside the University is also sought out by the ePSU (p.1 ff. of the Distance-Learning-Outline).

The ePSU can provide tailored e-learning support services where the expected learning outcomes form each DL course or programme, and relevant course design is determined (p.2 of the Distance-Learning-Outline).

Furthermore, there is the Technology Enhanced Learning Centre, led by Dr. Chris Alexander. The Centre is responsible for the assessment of courses and programmes using advanced assessment tools, such as learning analytics (p.3 f. of the Distance-Learning-Outline).

Additionally, the measurement of learning outcomes via the use of assessments, assignments, quizzes, tests, and rubrics in online and face-to-face courses is also a topic of the E-Learning Teaching Certificate form the PSU and ePSU Teaching Certificate Programme for Faculty (p.3 f. of the Distance-Learning-Outline).

There are formative assessments which usually occur during the learning process, and summative assessments which occur at the end of the course or a unit (i.e., final exam) (p.16 of the Distance-Learning-Outline).

The objectives and learning outcomes of each course are precisely defined as are the teaching methods and the exam methods (final exam, assignments, participation within a forum, case study analysis) (p.69 ff. of the application). This is outlined for every course within the curriculum, specific exam topics flow from the course objectives (p.69 ff. of the application). The course «Strategic Marketing», for example, requires the successful completion of an assignment for 20% of the final mark (summative assessment), where the students need to create a marketing plan, and apply relevant theories to practical issues (p.36 ff. of the application). In the same course the students also need to complete a variety of quizzes (formative assessments), which are administered via Moodle throughout the semester (p.62 f. of the Distance-Learning-Outline).

(For more information on the specific topics and what they contain see the Study Guide.)

How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?

First, there is Academic Counselling, where each student receives planning and academic counselling from the academic counsellors, the Head of Department, and the Programme Coordinator. The academic counsellor assists students in pre-registration and registration, counsels them regarding the student's schedule and degree requirements, in case they cannot utilize the online services. The Head of Department and the Programme Coordinator are the senior faculty members for each programme and counsel students in their major area of specialization (p.45. of the application).

The main purpose of academic counselling is to offer support to students as they begin to embrace their own education. Students are encouraged to seek advice from their advisor and their lecturers (p.45. of the application).

Second, there is the Student Success Centre, which assists students in achieving their academic goals through tutorial services and workshops (p.45 of the application). Of course, there is also the aforementioned Student Advice & Support (see also p.46 of the application).

Within the specific courses, and as part of the pedagogical model for e-learning (p.5 ff. of the Distance-Learning-Outline,) the following concepts are utilised: Multimodality such as a combination of paper text-based material, digital text-based material, online presentations, collaborative environments (e.g. discussion forums), Videos, Webinar style, video conferencing, interactive presentations, interactive videos and interactive quizzes. This illustrates that the concept of interactivity is focused within the programme. Moreover, the concept of metacognition is taken into account so as to teach students that their ability to learn is mutable, to teach planning and goal setting and to give students opportunities to practice monitoring their learning and adapting as necessary. The applied pedagogical model for e-learning guides the academic and teaching staff to create learning environments that enhance the relevance of the learning experiences (the term refers to such to learning experiences that are either directly applicable to the personal aspirations, interests, or cultural experiences of students (personal relevance) or that are connected in some way to real-world issues, problems, and contexts (life relevance). As mentioned before, projects such as reports, journals, speeches, videos, and interviews with students are used to assess the individual understanding of the subject material (p.6 ff. of the Distance-Learning-Outline).

Third, the Distance Learning Analytics provides an important safeguard. The Learning Analytics Tool enables lecturers to identify at-risk and under-performing learners: learners that are struggling are contacted with a view to help them complete their studies successfully. They review student engagement in discussion forums and provide a perspective on the quality of learner contributions and level of activity. Students that are not active are encouraged to be more active. Lastly, they support course evaluation. The learning analytics team looks at participation within a course, or across courses with the aim of improving the learning design of courses (p.47 f. of the application).

Finally, there is the Centre for Research and Counselling Services (KESY), which is available to all students. The main purpose is to provide psychological support to students that face a series of personal challenges, such as academic or learning disabilities, time management issues, problems or challenges in their interpersonal relationships, stress, and anxiety and so forth (p.44 f. of the application).

How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?

The pedagogical model for e-learning, as outlined above (and within the Distance-Learning outline) provides for various teaching and learning styles to further all the relevant competences within the framework of the programme. This is especially true for the various forms of interactive learning activities as well as the various

forms of learning assessment, where writing and researching skills, as well as presenting, discussion and argumentation skills are equally promoted (p.6 ff. of the Distance-Learning-Outline).

How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?

The pedagogical model for e-learning provides for a highly differentiated teaching and learning style and environment. Furthermore, the ePSU offers two methods of direct support to faculty, firstly professional development workshops for all faculty on e-learning and adult education; and, secondly, tailored e-learning support for Faculty Members and DL programmes. Finally, there is the Pedagogical Support Unit, led by its director Dr. Andri Vironi, which provides support in educational and pedagogical aspects of teaching (p.6 ff., 22 ff. of the Distance-Learning-Outline).

Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?

The pedagogical model for e-learning provides for a highly differentiated teaching and learning style and environment. There are professional development workshops on pedagogy for faculty members and a tailored e-Learning support for distance learning courses (p.22 ff. of the Distance-Learning-Outline). PSU delivers educational conferences, produce, and disseminates research activities that provide additional educational resources for faculty members teaching DL courses (p.23 f. of the Distance-Learning-Outline).

Finally, within the Cisco WebEx teleconference system and the other used systems (especially Moodle) there are a variety of different and innovative technics (video recording, presentation with video recording, interactive video, interactive materials, video conference session, face-to-face tutorials etc.) applied to make the teaching process more effective. (p.11 ff. of the Distance-Learning-Outline).

How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?

Within every course of the programme the interconnection of theory and practice is especially focused, as all courses illustrate their theoretical framework on current problems and issues of an international nature. This can be seen when their content and its mode of delivery is examined (see Study Guides). Furthermore, the newest technologies and the corresponding issues will be examined within the different courses (such as blockchain, smart contracts, cryptocurrencies).

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?

Practical training is part of the learning outcomes of all courses, where the learned theoretical and practical knowledge needs to be applied to practical problems and issues (p.71, 76, 80, 94 of the application).

Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?

Within the programme, as with the Faculty of Law as a whole, research activity is linked to teaching: most of the research outputs are used during teaching. Lecturers use their research activities/findings in their classes. Research is used to enhance the content of the lessons. Students are involved in research, so there is direct interaction between students, teachers, and research findings (p.40 of the application).

Furthermore, ongoing research activities of the faculty supporting the programmes are an integral part of the learning process, where the faculty incorporates their research outputs into the specialized course(s) being taught. In particular, the following efforts are undertaken, where bullet point number 10 (bold) in the list below is especially important.

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1. *Heightening research awareness amongst students in early years through exposure to research processes.*
2. *Encouraging multidisciplinary learning experiences.*
3. *Emphasizing problem-based learning through group assignments and term projects.*
4. *Training students for research.*
5. *Promoting teaching strategies and curriculum development approaches that diffuse and develop research training.*
6. *Promoting active learning.*
7. *Developing opportunities for applied research through university-community linkages.*
8. *Involving students in applied research/industry projects where possible.*
9. *Valuing and disseminating student research through research colloquia.*
10. ***Involving students in research, practice, consultancy, community service and as research assistants****.*
11. *Introducing students to the processes of refereed publication and peer review.*
12. *Encouraging postgraduate students to write publishable essays that invoke new research.*

Within the School of Law, this is further reflected on research-led teaching by using research outputs to inform student learning and by emphasizing the value of the research process as a means for student learning.

How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?

The lecturer of the course provides information and guidelines through the study guide to the respective course as well as through personal support and supervision. The study guide contains instructions for writing a thesis. Through the international dimension of the programme, it is possible for students to get international supervision for their Masters' thesis (p.35, 40, 43 of the application, see also Study Guides).

Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?

The student assessments are encompassed by a complete assessment framework, which focuses on the required e-learning methodology, and includes clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination (see also list of elements that demonstrate the quality of the system and assessment criteria for students, p.16 of the application). There is an assessment guide for each course as well as a study guides and of course the online platforms (student portal, Moodle, WebEx) for the courses, which provide for specific outlines to the content of the assessments (assignments, quizzes, case studies, final exam, see Study Guides and p.209 ff. Distance-Learning-Outline). Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the e-learning process. The grade scale corresponds with a standard grading system (number and letter grades). There is a formal procedure of appeal in place for a student who wants to dispute their semester grades, and assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field. Finally, the regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances, students with special needs (facing either physical and/or learning difficulties) can have special arrangements made during their studies as well as during the final exams. The lecturers that have students with special needs enrolled in their sections are being provided by the University with relevant guidance and support to be properly informed and proceed with relevant adjustments. Therefore, it can be stated that the EQF-Criteria for assessments are met to our satisfaction (p.12 ff. of the application and 16 ff. Distance-Learning-Outline).

How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?

There are several elements demonstrating the quality of the system and assessment criteria for students. Firstly, the orientation on learning outcomes, secondly the flow of valid information to students through analysing course syllabuses and course study guides. Thirdly, the teaching within a context of «metacognitive

awareness», so that the process of teaching takes place under the functions of assessment (preliminary, formative, evidential, diagnostic, prognostic and metacognitive. Fourthly, the continuous, formative function of assessment, so that students perform self-assessment activities, prepare and present projects, are subject to a mid-term evaluation, participate in tutorials and workshops, etc. during courses. Fifthly, the final written examination as evidential assessment, where there is a problem-centered and implementing approach taken, that aims towards the quality control of the outcome, using the learning outcome levels as criteria indicators. Lastly, there are student evaluations, where they can express their metacognitive experience, which in turn are utilised through the «quality assurance mechanism» towards quality improvement (p.16 f. of the application)

The progress of students will be continuously assessed throughout the semester, utilizing various methods and techniques. Through the ongoing feedback, lecturers have the opportunity to identify students who may require support. Both formative and summative assessment methods are used. Students will receive information regarding the timeframe required by the lecturer to provide them with feedback on their course tasks, activities and coursework. (p.15 of the application).

How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?

Several elements demonstrate the quality of the assessments and the encompassing system. For example, to manage student diversity, there is scope for curriculum adaptation and classroom management, as well as prevention and intervention measures. In addition, there are quality assurance mechanisms ensuring the objectivity and relevance of the assessments. (p.16 of the application).

From the review of the application and the findings from the onsite visit, the evaluation committee finds that the second area and its respective subareas not only meet all the ESG/EQF-Standards but, in most subareas, exceed them.

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

The support system for both students but faculty staff regarding the pedagogical model for e-learning, as outlined above, is exemplary. Both students and lecturers can find the required support structure and guidance through the infrastructure provided by the University of Nicosia and the Faculty of Law in an outstanding manner.

Furthermore, the learning outcome orientation with various assessment methods throughout and at the end of the semester, course, or unit, in combination with the extensive feedback structure, allows the staff to identify and support students in need, providing for an optimal learning experience for each student.

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 University of Nicosia provides for a solid interconnection of theoretical and applied knowledge and the application of the latter to the former within this new programme. It is suggested that the organisation of internship opportunities for students could be optimised by way of possible cooperations with companies in the relevant fields. Nevertheless, the support structure for students at the University of Nicosia is highly sophisticated.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Not applicable
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.

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

Aside from the highly sophisticated faculty selection and promotion process outlined in chapter 6 of the internal regulations of the University of Nicosia (p.17 ff. of the application), there are specific e-learning training programmes (e-Learning Teaching Certificate (Level 3) of the PSU/ePSU, three certificates (distance learning essentials, Moodle essentials, creative media essentials) from the Distance Learning Unit) for all faculty and of course the assistance and support of the ePSU, as well as tailored e-learning support for distance learning courses, as mentioned above. There is also a 36-hour professional development seminar in the areas of contemporary teaching methods, new technologies in learning, and online education. All faculty members attend this seminar offered every Fall and Spring semesters. Moreover, the ePSU together with the PSU, offer two series of professional development workshops relevant to education and pedagogy. This enables all faculty members to be more than sufficiently qualified to teach in the e-learning programme (p.17 ff. of the application, p.3 ff. of the Distance-Learning-Outline).

In addition, there is the Pedagogical Advisory Board, which provides strategic advice to the ePSU and the PSU (p.4 of the Distance-Learning-Outline).

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?

There are, in addition to the e-learning-teaching-training programme (e-Learning Teaching Certificate, Level 3), several other teaching-training programmes within the PSU and ePSU Teaching Certificate Programme for the Faculty. All workshop series that lead to relevant certifications are interactive and faculty members are encouraged to work on their course material and teaching methods during relevant workshop activities.

Additionally, the PSU offers a series of 6 workshops (each of 2 hours duration) that introduce faculty members to general educational concepts and theories with an emphasis in evidence-based learning and teaching practices, specifically oriented towards their online teaching responsibilities.

There are student evaluations of the programme and the faculty, as well as a range of quality control measures outlined below (p.38 of the application).

How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?

The Department's teaching policy utilises criteria «quality control» and «quality assurance» procedures. Using criteria indicators of quality control ensures the:

- quality of teaching input (programmes of study, course syllabi, study guides, etc),
- quality of teaching output (quality control guidelines),
- quality of procedures in teaching (projects of teaching action, choice of teaching instruments, function of formative assessment, etc.),
- quality of the teaching content (choice, organisation, structure of teaching units, rebuilding, representation, etc),
- quality and sophistication as well as the esteem of the teaching staff (academic teaching personnel level, research and teaching synergy, improvement of implementing conditions, etc) and
- quality of added value in teaching (students' participation in research, in projects, examination papers, enrichment and update of teaching material, etc)

are on a highly sophisticated level (p.37 of the application).

The monitoring and evaluation of academic programmes, including their risk assessment and sustainability, primarily rests with the faculty members and the programme co-ordinators, in conjunction with Heads of Departments and Deans of the Schools.

Programmes are reviewed via an annual review procedure which results in a report prepared by the Head of Department with the assistance of programme co-ordinators and submitted to the Dean of School.

Is teaching connected with research?

Research and its linkage to teaching are encouraged by the general research policy. The School of Law has specific priorities which are pursued by particular research. Additionally, the general policy of ranking and promotion is based on three pillars, the first of which includes research, publications and scholarly work, the second encompasses teaching and learning and the third focuses on service/contribution to the university/profession/community. (p.19 f. of the application).

Furthermore, the full-time and part-time faculty members involved in the new programme actively pursue funded research projects, the dissemination of results from which is systematically pursued through publication in refereed academic journals, chapters in edited volumes, and conference proceedings. The research activity of the faculty involved in the programme is compatible with the subject matter of the programme and is comprehensively listed in their extended CVs included in Annex 3.

Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?

The Faculty of Law of the University of Nicosia, in general, includes guest lecturers and guest professors from other Universities in Cyprus and abroad.

What is the number, workload, qualifications, and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?

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The new programme consists of nine teaching staff: one lecturer, five assistant professors, one associate professor, one visiting professor and one professor. The teaching staff are excellently qualified. All the teaching staff members are full-time faculty members (p.24 ff., 65 ff. of the application, for the University of Nicosia's qualification criteria for the named ranks please see p.17 ff. of the application). Nevertheless, the workload for the teaching staff is extremely high. There should be a system in place to ensure that teaching can continue for a set time without a specific faculty member, especially in the case of urgent and long term illness etc.

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)?

There will be an extensive student evaluation process in place, which is, as mentioned, taken into account both in reviewing the teaching staff's performance, as well as the programme overall (for more information please see the responses to the questions above).

Regarding the third area, the review of the application and the findings from the onsite visit permit the evaluation committee to state that all the ESG/EQF-Standards are met by the University of Nicosia, Faculty of Law.

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

The programme was designed and is supported by an excellent and enthusiastic teaching staff.

The University's highly sophisticated quality control system as well as their impressive pedagogical support structure regarding both classical teaching and particularly distance learning enhances the effectiveness of the teaching staff.

The research strengths of the teaching staff provide a strong support for the future excellent teaching.

<u>Areas of improvement and recommendations</u>
A list of problem areas to be dealt with, followed by or linked to the recommendations of how to improve the situation.

The programme has an ambitious teaching agenda, given the number of teaching staff deployed, and the degree of assessment on the is also quite demanding on both students and staff (particularly given feedback requirements to students). While staff indicate that they are happy to manage the workload required, it is recommended that the School/program have a more formalised process for addressing the unexpected absence of key teaching staff, than the current ad hoc arrangements.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant

3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

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

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.*

ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

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

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- *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.

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)?

The Programme will admit students in the Fall and Spring semesters. Applications for admission to the programme will only be considered from candidates that fulfill the minimum entrance criteria. Eligible students should hold a Bachelor's degree in law, social sciences, economics, business administration, information technology, or related fields. Applications of students who hold a Bachelor's degree in other scientific fields will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Furthermore, requirements are two recommendation letters and a letter by the prospective student expressing their interest in the programme, sketching out their research profile and mentioning their expectations from the programme, regarding their personal development and professional perspectives. In addition, prospective students need to show satisfactory language English language skills, for example, when their first degree was taught in English. Otherwise, they would need to present an average TOEFL score of 500, GCSE «O» Level with minimum «C» grade or IELTS with a score of an average 5.5-6, or a score placement at the ENGL-100 level of the University English Placement Test. The University offers English courses at various levels to help students reach the required standard for admission to a graduate programme.

The criteria for the evaluation of the student are the following:

- *academic qualifications (grade and reputation of the accrediting institution of the first degree, field of first degree and specialization, and if any, other post-graduate studies),*
- *the recommendation letters and the quality of the personal statement,*
- *the students' knowledge of the English language,*
- *the students' knowledge of additional foreign languages will also be considered,*
- *professional experience (if any) is taken into consideration, and*
- *the research potential of the candidate. (p.11 f. of the application).*

The admission criteria (summarized above) of the University of Nicosia are, in the evaluation committee's opinion, satisfactory for this type of Masters' degree programme.

How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?

There is an established procedure at University of Nicosia for assessing prior learning and work experience.

When receiving an application form, the relevant offices check their shared database as to verify whether previous graduates from the applicant's university have been accepted at the University and whether the relevant university is already included in the accepted universities list. Where the university is not included in the shared database, and in consultation with the university's registrar, relevant checks are conducted and where needed there is liaison with corresponding universities and accrediting bodies. Upon receipt of Registrar's feedback, the application is processed accordingly.

Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?

The adherence to the Bologna Process Declaration also provides for the diploma supplement (free of charge) (p.31 of the application).

Based on the review of the application and the findings from the onsite visit, as the above outlined summary shows, the evaluation committee finds the fourth area and its respective subareas, meet the ESG/EQF-Standards.

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

In so far as it demonstrates clear adherence to the ECTS and the Bologna Process Declaration as well as the selected criteria for student admission, the University of Nicosia provides for a sophisticated student admission and grading structure.

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 programme suggests a high workload for the students. In the case of assessment, the balance between the various components is currently roughly divided 30% coursework, 10% engagement and 60% thesis, the coursework element is 2 x 3000-word essays. This appears to be a significant amount of work for 30% of the assessment total. It was suggested that this is to some degree constrained by external requirements, but the recommendation is that insofar as is possible the programme director should consider if it might be possible to offer a range of options, e.g. 1 CW at 30% + thesis at 60% + engagement at 10%; 2 CW at 60% + thesis at 30% + engagement at 10% and allow the students to choose which mode of evaluation they wish to follow – this might also lighten the workload on faculty in terms of marking and feedback.

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

Sub-area	Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant

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

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

Sub-areas

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

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *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.

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?

As the fourth annex of the application shows, the infrastructure of the University of Nicosia is highly developed and extensive.

The program uses Moodle as the primary LMS for asynchronous teaching and learning. The panel has been given access to an example Moodle course (MLAW-542DL, Section 1, Artificial Intelligence and Metaverse Regulation). It shows that it provides generic information for students about the course, it organizes all assignments on a weekly basis and provides all the relevant resources for the assignments, including the teaching materials. It also includes links to other digital resources like the online library and WebEx system for online synchronous communication. Microsoft Azure is used to provide the students with Office 365 accounts and Amazon Cloud Service to host content. Furthermore, there are services provided such as Planet E-Stream, Online Ticketing System (for help and support regarding all services of the University) and IT training for faculty and students (see Annex 4).

Additionally, the University library also gives access to a huge number of electronic resources. It provides a dedicated Distance Learning section for support via e-mail, phone, or using tools, such as Team Viewer for instantaneous support or live demonstrations. The section also provides digital library modules, in Moodle, on instruction and tutorials on accessing and using library resources and other useful resources.

Furthermore, the students are provided with a study guide for each course they have to, or choose to, complete.

Moreover, all faculty members have access to the extensive support and resources of the ePSU and PSU as well as administrative support, as the students benefit from various support centers (academical, technical, financial, regarding special needs and the use of the library etc.).

What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?

The application documents contain no information on this matter, due to the programme not yet running. The matter can therefore be omitted without any impact on the evaluation.

Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?

All the resources outlined above are up to date and state of the art. All the resources can be, and are reviewed, through the continued review process of the Pedagogical Support Structure and Processes for Distance Learning Courses, as has been discussed above. Additionally, there is student feedback, which can be factored in if the need arises (see also p.2 ff. of the Distance-Learning-Outline).

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?

Since the new programme is well integrated into the whole University structure and a distance learning programme, changing numbers of students should not be a problem for the infrastructure and the resources needed for the programme. The infrastructure for digital exams is provided for, but the use of proctoring software may need to be periodically reviewed.

The biggest and ongoing challenge for distance learning courses is the ever-changing digital environment, which has to be mitigated in any regard to guarantee the optimal learning and teaching experience for the students and the faculty members.

Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?

The application documents contain no information in this point. This is due to the programme not yet running. During the onsite visit, students from other DL Masters' programmes reported that they had no difficulty accessing and receiving adequate support.

How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?

The student learning will be very well supported. For the detailed information see area two.

How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?

As also stated in detail under area two, there is an extensive and sophisticated support system in place to monitor and mitigate special needs and different capabilities of students. Either through the feedback system, where the students are monitored on their performance, the various support system (pedagogical, technical etc.) or in the regard that special needs due to physical or psychological disabilities (e.g., learning difficulties) are taken into account.

Throughout their studies, students are supported in multiple ways at the University of Nicosia. As stated, there are the helpdesk and support services. Additionally, the DLA Unit provides students with services including the advising and approval of pre-registration, assistance with financial difficulties, advising about students' grades and CPA, handling of petition requests and explanation of students' tuition fees, balance, and installments. Furthermore, students are asked to inform the University of any particular requirements, so that those needed are addressed accordingly (e.g., sign language translation to deaf students). Where

needed, for the students with special needs (facing either physical and/or learning difficulties) special arrangements are being made during their studies or during the DL Final Exams (e.g., extension to the submission of assignments). Lecturers who have students with special needs enrolled in their sections are provided by the University with relevant guidance and support so as to be properly informed and to proceed with relevant adjustments (if this is applicable) (p.20 f. of the Distance-Learning-Outline).

How is student mobility being supported?

The University of Nicosia enables student mobility through Erasmus + internship participation.

From the review of the application and the findings from the onsite visit, the evaluation committee finds that the requirements for the fifth and final area, and its respective subareas are met and exceeded by the University of Nicosia, Faculty of Law.

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

The greatest strength, aside from the extensive support system for all lecturers, faculty members, and all students is the extensive coverage of teaching and learning resources, physical resources, human support resources and student support service of the University of Nicosia.

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

We have not identified any problems in this area.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant

D. Additional Criteria

Criteria and Quality Indicators for Distance Learning Programmes of Study (Number: 2)

Source: https://www.dipae.ac.cy/index.php/en/enimerosi/anakoinoseis/133-2017-09-13-criteria-quality-indicators-distance-learning-programmes-study

The Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, has decided and informs all institutions of Higher Education, the following:

All Distance Learning programmes are expected to meet the following criteria and quality indicators:

1. Establishment of a Pedagogical Planning Unit for distance learning, which will be responsible for the support of the Distance Learning Unit and will address the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards.

The criterion is met, there are extensive pedagogical support structures especially for distance learning in place (particularly the ePSU), please see p.10, 19, 21 and 37 ff. of the Evaluation and p.1 ff. Distance Learning Outline.

2. Stipulating feedback processes for students in relation to written assignments.

The criterion is met, there are various feedback opportunities and processes in place, as well as the specific feedback of lecturers regarding the various assessment types including written assignments. Please see p.13, 19 f., 23, 40, 45 of the Evaluation and p.8, 10, 12, 14, 19, 20 f., 23 ff., 29 and 39 f. of the Evaluation for the feedback processes in general.

3. Specific plan to ensure student interaction with each other, with the teaching staff, and the study material

The criterion is met. There are extensive quality control processes in place, including such to identify and detect at risk students, please see p.11 f., 18, 21, 24 f., 29 ff., 39 and 45 of the Evaluation.

4. Development of teacher training programmes focusing on interaction and the specificities of distance learning.

The criterion is met. There are sophisticated training programmes and support structures in place. Please see p.28 ff. of the Evaluation.

5. A complete assessment framework design, focusing on distance learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.

There is a complete assessment framework in place, which not only includes distance learning methods but also consists of written exams. Please see p.17 ff., 45 f. of the Evaluation.

6. Plan of a set number of expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, guidance.

This criterion is met. Please see p.18 ff., 22 and the statement below p.44 of the Evaluation.

7. Development of a Study Guide for each course, fully aligned with distance learning methodology and the need for student interaction with the material. The study guide also includes, for each course week / module, the following:

7.1 Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner

7.2 Presentation of course material, on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)

7.3 Weekly outline of set activities and exercises and clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback

7.4 Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide.

7.5 Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study.

7.6 Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material.

7.7 Synopsis

The requirements of the criterion 7 including its sup-criteria 7.1 to 7.5 and 7.7 are met by the study guides for each course of the distance learning programme. The criterion 7.6 regarding the number of assignments/ papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material is only partially met, as the instructions and outlines of some of the written assignments could be outlined in more detail (e.g. p.104, 118, 244 of the study guides), as the topics of the assignments are not stated. Nevertheless, the study guides do outline the topics and give guidance and a description of other tasks and activities (e.g. p.7, 10, 14, 19, 23, 27, 31, 36, 43, 48, 52, 58, 63, 68, 74, 78, 82, 86, 91, 95, 102, 108, 324 of the study guides). Finally, it should be noted that the lecturers tend to give additional information about the assignments as well as the final exams via Moodle, as outlined above (please see p.8, 11, 18, 20, 22, 24, 38 of the Evaluation).

Announcement 04.05.2020 - Evaluation of Distance Learning Programmes (No. 2)

Source: https://www.dipae.ac.cy/index.php/en/news-and-events/announcements/693-04-05-2020-enimerosi-axilogisi-distance-programme-2-en

Following the announcement dated April 29, 2020, which concerns the above matter, the Agency points out the following:

*The study guide for each course contains 12-13 weekly, interactive activities that utilize the virtual environment and include simulations, scenarios and problems to be solved, transfer of knowledge to a new environment, research skills, **for all courses** of a specific programme and more importantly for all postgraduate programmes.*

Specifically, it is required to organize online weekly activities, at least 12 for each course, such as:

- *Simulations in virtual environments*
- *Scenarios for problem solving*
- *Interactive learning and concurrent assessment games*
- *Activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities of re-creating reality and further processing on the basis of hypotheses*
- *Placing students in real life situations so that they can make decisions and consider the consequences of their decisions*
- *Building skills both in real-life and lived experiences and attitudes- not just memorising knowledge*

Based on the above, the study guides will include what the student will watch, experience and participate in during the activities, rather than the lesson plan description.

It is also pointed out that the reference, during the weekly activities, to YouTube accompanied by re-enactment questions, does not constitute an interactive activity but a simple replacement of the text with audio-visual material.

The brief descriptions of the Study Guides per week with reference to objectives, suggested bibliography, expected learning outcomes and student self-assessment exercises, which at their base include comprehension and memorization questions, are not consistent with the level of programme activities (Bachelor's/Master's) and are not acceptable.

It is pointed out again that for Master's level programmes, the study guides must also be fully developed in English, so that there is no restriction on the composition of external evaluation committees involving international academics on the basis of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).

For the evaluation of four-year degree-level programmes of study, fully developed study guides in English are submitted for the first two years of study and before the end of the first two years, the remaining are submitted with fully developed study guides, as above.

The criterion is met:

There are fully developed English study guides, which enable a thorough evaluation of the study programmes. For each course and each week there are clear and detailed lists of the expected learning outcomes, key concepts, relevant bibliography and weblinks, as well as activities and tasks for the students to complete and a synopsis (please see Study Guides and p.18 ff. of the Evaluation).

The activities and tasks range from organizing moot courts in collaboration with other EU Universities where students will appear remotely, through video or other means to contemplating about specific problems at hand. The students are not only encouraged to actively participate in problem-solving activities on a weekly basis and reflect on the material discussed during the courses but also get plenty of possibilities to exchange ideas with experts in the respective fields (please see Study Guides and p.18 ff. of the Evaluation).

Announcement 29.04.2020 - Evaluation of Distance Learning Programmes

Source: https://www.dipae.ac.cy/index.php/en/news-and-events/announcements/692-29-04-2020-enimerosi-axilogisi-distance-programme-2-en

Based on the evaluations of the distance learning programme carried out so far and the recurring observations of the experts, CYQAA points out the need to apply the specific distance learning criteria and requirements in order to ensure their quality.

1. As the institutions have already been notified, the philosophy of the distance learning programme and the principles arising from it should be followed, which are indicatively and briefly highlighted on the CYQAA's website and which were thoroughly discussed in the specialized Seminar entitled «Strengthening Institutions for Quality Assurance- Workshop on the Quality of Distance Learning Programmes», on 20 September, 2020.
2. As it follows from the largely autonomous activity of the students in the distance learning programme, the admission criteria are more demanding, and the skills of the prospective students are checked by interviews and further cultivated with special courses included in the programme and/or modules that pervade all courses.

3. Course activities are interactive and the expected outcomes are at levels 6 and 7 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), which cultivate students' research and higher cognitive skills as well as their unique specialized and interdisciplinary thinking.

4. The syllabi of all courses for the postgraduate distance learning programmes must be fully developed.

5. The study guides for each course contain 12-13 weekly, interactive activities that utilize the virtual environment and include simulations, scenarios and problems to be solved, transfer of knowledge to a new environment, research skills, for all courses of a specific programme and more importantly for all postgraduate programmes.

6. Student participation and the posting of student answers/solutions to the weekly activities is checked by the academic staff and evaluated.

7. The final exam essays correspond to the level of the programme and assess the achievement of the predetermined expected learning outcomes.

All the above criteria are met. Please see the statements above on p.42-44 of the Evaluation.

E. 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.

1. Study Programme

Overall, the described new programme aligns well with the guidelines of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in all relevant aspects. The programme has a comprehensive quality assurance process, involving internal and external reviews, feedback solicitation from various stakeholders, and continuous evaluation. The involvement of multiple committees and the use of plagiarism detection software demonstrate a commitment to maintaining high standards.

The programme is designed to address contemporary challenges in legal frameworks related to new technologies, aiming to produce professionals with interdisciplinary skills and a deep understanding of technology regulation. The objectives align with the evolving needs of society, particularly in the areas of IoT, AI, Blockchain, etc.

The University also handles the extensive challenge of maintaining these commendable commitments over time very well. Especially sustaining the high standards of quality assurance, maintaining relevance to societal and technological developments, and actively involving students in programme development require continuous effort and analysis, which the University and the Faculty of Law undertake with great commitment.

To address these challenges, the University continuously analyses student feedback, evaluates programme outcomes, and adapts to emerging needs. The commitment to preventing student dropouts and providing a supportive learning environment necessitates ongoing monitoring and improvement. The evaluation committee had the impression that the connection between the compulsory courses seems to be a bit vague. And some more information concerning the technical issues of the programme could be helpful.

As the programme is yet to be launched, the University's success in meeting these commitments will be demonstrated through its ability to utilize student feedback effectively, make informed programme enhancements, and ensure that the programme remains aligned with the evolving landscape of technology and legal frameworks. Continuous self-assessment and a proactive approach to refining the educational experience will be key to maintaining the programme's effectiveness and meeting the outlined goals.

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment

The programme is highly relevant, not only regarding its field of study and research, but also regarding the dynamic of the same. Furthermore, it is especially suited to be delivered effectively through the chosen distance learning method. Programme aligns well with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), emphasizing current and future legal doctrines in this highly relevant field. The robust and well-developed e-learning infrastructure supports student-teacher interaction, utilizing tools like Cisco WebEx and Moodle.

The Quality control procedures in place are sophisticated. Support services, including counselling and success centres, address diverse student needs. The pedagogical model emphasizes multimodality, various teaching and learning methods such as interactivity, and metacognition, as well as authentic assessments.

In conclusion, the programme has a strong foundation. Regular reviews and a culture of innovation will contribute to sustained excellence in preparing students for the intersection of law and digital technologies.

3. Teaching Staff

The University of Nicosia excels with its e-learning faculty qualifications, in particular with comprehensive training programmes and ongoing professional development and support (systems). The continuous adaptation to emerging trends is suggested.

The multifaceted approach to teaching performance assessment, including quality control and student feedback is well designed. Incorporating industry input ensures alignment with real-world demands.

The commitment to the synergy of teaching and research efforts is commendable. The Encouragement of interdisciplinary research projects and the strengthening of the link between research outputs and courses as it is undertaken by the University and its Faculty of Law enhances the academic environment for the faculty and the students.

Visiting teaching staff enriches the programme.

The highly qualified teaching staff maximize benefits through knowledge exchange forums. Periodic assessments of workload distribution and faculty satisfaction contribute to a positive teaching environment. But, as mentioned before, the workload for the faculty is very high, too.

Enhancements to the student evaluation process involve systematic feedback analysis and a feedback loop for continuous improvement. The University generally aligns well with EQF standards.

In conclusion, the University of Nicosia's Faculty of Law demonstrates a strong commitment to quality education. Emphasizing continuous improvement, periodic evaluations, and proactive measures for industry alignment will fortify sustained success.

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

The University of Nicosia's admission criteria for the master's programme are highly satisfactory, considering academic qualifications, language proficiency, and professional experience. However, continuous review and adaptation to evolving educational landscapes are recommended.

The recognition of prior learning and work experiences aligns with European standards and the Bologna Process Declaration. To enhance this process, the University may consider periodic evaluations and updates to ensure ongoing conformity with international standards.

Concerning the students' workload the evaluation committee had the impression that the students may feel some pressure because they have to work very hard during the programme.

The University's commitment to the Bologna Process Declaration includes providing a diploma supplement in line with European and international standards, demonstrating compliance with ESG/EQF-Standards. Regular reviews and updates of the diploma supplement content can further enhance its relevance.

In conclusion, the University of Nicosia, Faculty of Law, has also met the ESG/EQF-Standards in the fourth area of evaluation. The recommendations focus on continual evaluation and adaptation to ensure sustained alignment with international educational benchmarks.

5. *Learning Resources and Student support*

The evaluation of the University of Nicosia's master's degree programme, particularly in the context of EQF standards, reveals a robust and well-established infrastructure. The extensive facilities, including numerous buildings, classrooms, laboratories, and a well-equipped library with international affiliations, provide a commendable foundation for the programme.

The integration of a hybrid infrastructure model, utilizing both internal hardware and various cloud providers, demonstrates the University's commitment to staying technologically current. The adoption of virtualization, cloud services, and collaboration tools further enhances the efficiency and scalability of the educational environment.

While the application lacks specific details on the feedback from teaching staff, the absence of such information can be neglected without any impact on the current evaluation, given the newness of the programme. However, a future assessment should include this aspect to gather valuable insights for further improvement.

The continuous review process and the utilization of student feedback demonstrate the University's great commitment to quality assurance. The University's forward-thinking consideration of potential risks, especially in the dynamic digital environment, and the measures taken to mitigate these risks reflect a proactive approach to maintaining high-quality distance learning experiences.

The committee acknowledges the programme's strong support structures for students, including counselling services, flexibility in the study programme, and accommodations for special needs. The University's proactive measures, such as adjustments for students with special needs and support for faculty members in handling such situations, further enhance the inclusivity of the programme.

In the overall assessment, the University of Nicosia's Faculty of Law not only meets but exceeds the ESG/EQF standards. The programme showcases a commitment to excellence, adaptability to contemporary requirements, and a strong foundation for providing a high-quality master's degree experience.

F. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Prof. Dr. Brigitte Tag	
Prof. Andrew J. Charlesworth	
Prof. Jeanne Pia Mifsud Bonnici	
Prof. Rob Koper	
Margarita Panteli	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 23.04.2024