



Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 19/9/2024

# External Evaluation Report

## (Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
CYPRUS POLICE ACADEMY
- **Town:** NICOSIA
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

**In Greek:**

Programme Name

**In English:**

TRAINING FOR FIRE SERVICE RECRUITS (3 years, 192  
ECTS, Higher Diploma)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Language(s)
- **Programme's status:** Choose status
- **Concentrations (if any):**

**In Greek:** Concentrations

**In English:** Concentrations



The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws” of 2015 to 2021 [L.136(I)/2015 – L.132(I)/2021].

## A. Introduction

*This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.*

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) conducted a formal visit at the Police Academy Cyprus on 18th September 2024. The purpose of this visit was to evaluate the programme "Training for Fire Service Recruits" and to engage in meaningful discussions with various stakeholders.

Prior to the site visit, the EEC convened on 17th September to review the written application and the submitted evidence provided by the programme. During this preparatory meeting, we identified several areas that warranted further examination. These points guided our detailed discussions with the programme providers during the site visit.

The visit began with introductory meetings with the senior leadership of the institution, followed by comprehensive sessions with the Internal Evaluation Committee and the programme's departmental leaders. Throughout the day, the EEC had the opportunity to explore various aspects of the programme, including its structure, teaching methods, and assessment criteria. We also met with teaching staff, administrative personnel, current students, and graduates to gather insights into the effectiveness of the programme and the resources available to support learning.

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
<b>Herodotos Phylaktou</b>	Associate Professor	University of Leeds
<b>Ernesto Salzano</b>	Full Professor	University of Bologna
<b>Nils Johansson</b>	Associate Professor	Lund University
<b>Neofyta Christoforou</b>	Student	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University
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:*
  - *is a part of the strategic management of the programme*
  - *focuses on the achievement of special goals related to the quality assurance of the study program.*
  - *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*
    - *is developed with input from industry leaders and other stakeholders (i.e. industry leaders, professional bodies/associations, social partners, NGO's, governmental agencies) to align with professional standards.*
    - *integrates employer surveys to adapt to evolving workplace demands.*
    - *regularly utilizes alumni feedback for long-term effectiveness assessment.*
    - *is published and implemented by all 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*

- *Aligns course learning outcomes with student assessments using rubrics to ensure objectives are met.*
- *Connects each course's aims and objectives with the programme's overall aims and objectives through mapping, aligning with the institutional strategy.*
- *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*
  - *collaborates with industry experts for curriculum development.*
  - *conducts joint reviews with external academic specialists to maintain academic rigor.*
  - *performs periodic assessments with external stakeholders to ensure continuous alignment with market needs.*
  - *establishes collaboration with international educational institutions or/& other relevant international bodies for a global perspective.*
  - *conducts regular feedback sessions with local community leaders for societal relevance.*

### 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*

*In addition, the program has established mechanisms of transparency & communication to ensure that*

- Professional bodies validate program descriptions and outcomes.
- Community leaders actively participate in ensuring that the program's public information is relevant and resonates with the local and societal context.
- External auditors review public information for accuracy & consistency vis-à-vis the actual implementation of the program.
- Industry-specific & societal information is regularly updated with expert inputs.
- Alumni testimonials are included for a realistic portrayal of program outcomes.

## 1.4 Information management

### Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed using specific indicators and data i.e:*
  - *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*
  - *industry trend analysis.*
  - *feedback mechanisms from external partners/stakeholders*
  - *data exchanges with professional networks*
  - *employer insights concerning career readiness*
- *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?*
- *How and to what extent are external stakeholders involved in the quality assurance process of the program?*
- *How is external stakeholder feedback gathered, analyzed and implemented?*
- *In what ways do external stakeholders assist in making program information publicly available?*
- *How do external stakeholders contribute to evaluating graduate success in the labor market and obtaining feedback on employment outcomes?*

## Findings

### **Policy for quality assurance**

*From the materials provided and site visit, it is evident to the evaluation committee that the programme's quality assurance is integral to its strategic management. The programme's objectives are clearly defined, and upon completion, participants will be fully equipped to serve in active roles within the Cyprus Fire Service. This includes operational, communication, and administrative responsibilities.*

*The programme upholds academic integrity and encourages equality, fairness, and diversity. Both the Cyprus Fire Service and the University of Cyprus actively contribute to improving the programme by supporting academic and administrative staff.*

### **Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review**

*The programme has an effective system for collecting student feedback at the end of each semester. Discussions with management and students confirmed that this feedback system has led to tangible improvements, such as incorporating more practical elements in response to student requests. Adjustments have also been made to courses offered by the University of Cyprus, such as adding a course on "Engineering" based on programme evaluations.*

*Student feedback indicates high overall satisfaction with the programme, instructors, and learning environment. The vast majority of students rated their satisfaction as "High" or "Very High," with fewer than 7% expressing dissatisfaction. Regular surveys of students' psychological wellbeing are conducted, which helps to identify potential issues early.*

*Stakeholders, including the Cyprus Fire Service and the University of Cyprus, play an active role in the programme's design, taking local conditions and technological advancements into account. For instance, course content has been updated to address emerging risks, such as lithium battery fires.*

*The evaluation committee did note some concerns regarding the sequencing of courses. Due to a large intake of 259 recruits last year, resources were strained, and the cohort was divided into smaller groups following a different training sequence. This has raised concerns about students' progression, which could benefit from more consistency.*

*Additionally, there is room for improvement in how core skills and abilities are tracked across courses. Developing a comprehensive list linking specific skills (e.g., firefighting, teamwork, report writing) to courses would provide a clearer view of student progress.*

*Before the site visit, the ECC was concerned that students lacked theoretical knowledge before starting practical courses. However, the visit confirmed that theory is integrated into practical courses, which is a strength. A more detailed syllabus would clarify this*

*Some students also expressed dissatisfaction with the option of one of the courses at the University of Cyprus being an elective module particularly since not all students got their preferred option. The value of electives should be explained to the students and where possible accommodate their preferences.*

### **Public information**

*The selection criteria for recruits are transparent and accessible during the recruitment process. The programme has successfully increased the proportion of female recruits (14%), a notable achievement compared to other European countries where the figure is typically below 10%.*

*The intended learning outcomes and course details are clearly communicated at the start of each module. However, module descriptors could benefit from more detail, including the names of responsible lecturers, course level, and descriptions of any laboratory components.*

*Graduates are employed by the Cyprus Fire Service from the outset and are expected to continue their careers within the Service.*

*The overall pass rates for individual courses and the programme as a whole are high according to information at the site visit.*

*The programme has good mechanisms for communication review and development and good input from many leading professionals on the island, in this process.*

*We note that the Fire Service is currently in a transitional period where it is becoming separate from the Police structure and more autonomous with its own training academy and new training grounds. Both the Fire Service and the CPA indicated that their plans for the close collaboration between these public bodies is to continue and together will carefully manage the effects on this teaching programme during the transition which is not likely to be completed within the validity period of this accreditation.*

### **Information management**

*The CPA presented various statistical analysis of the student recruitment and performance demonstrating that these are monitored. The stakeholders are informed of these, and they base their decisions affecting the programme on this information.*

*The career paths of the graduates are clearly intended to remain within Cyprus Fire Service with progression through the ranks. It is possible that these graduates would also find employment in related sectors, particularly in fire safety consultancy if and when they decide to leave the service. Some of the students did not seem to be aware of their progression options within the Fire Service after graduation and some emphasis should be given in making them more aware.*

### **Strengths**

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

**Integrated Quality Assurance:** The quality assurance framework is embedded in the strategic management of the programme, ensuring continuous alignment with its goals and objectives.

**Responsive to Feedback:** The programme has an effective feedback mechanism in place. Student and stakeholder feedback has led to practical adjustments, such as incorporating more hands-on training and modifying course offerings.

**High Student Satisfaction:** Student surveys indicate high levels of satisfaction with the programme, instructors, and learning environment, with the vast majority rating their experience as "High" or "Very High."

**Adaptability to Societal and Technological Changes:** The programme is regularly updated to reflect technological advancements and emerging challenges, such as adjustments made for new risks like lithium battery fires.

**Strong Stakeholder Involvement:** The programme benefits from active collaboration with external stakeholders, including the Cyprus Fire Service and University of Cyprus, ensuring relevance to local conditions and needs

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.*

**Course Sequence Consistency:** *The programme’s intended course sequence is not always followed, particularly after the large intake of recruits last year. This inconsistency may hinder student learning progression and should be addressed to avoid future disruptions.*

**Tracking of Core Skills:** *The programme could improve the system to track student progress in key competencies (e.g., firefighting, teamwork, report writing). A comprehensive framework linking these skills to specific courses would provide clearer oversight of student development.*

**Communication of Course Relevance:** *Some students find certain courses, especially electives and those taught at the University of Cyprus, less relevant to their future roles. Improved communication between lecturers and students regarding the purpose and long-term value of these courses is recommended to enhance student engagement.*

**Module Descriptor Detail:** *The level of detail in module descriptions is insufficient. Key information such as lecturer names, course levels, and laboratory components should be included to provide clearer guidance to students and stakeholders.*

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
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 – centred 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**

### **2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**

#### Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of 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 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.*
- *Detailed schedules in course materials are included, explicitly stating the expected hours for lectures, self-study, and group projects, ensuring transparency in time allocation.*
- *A system is integrated where each learning activity is assigned a weight proportional to its importance and time requirement, aiding in balanced curriculum design.*

### **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.*
- *The expected hours for different components of practical training, such as lab work, fieldwork, and internships are clearly documented in the training manuals*
- *A weighting system is applied to various practical training elements, reflecting their significance in the overall learning outcomes and student workload.*

## 2.3 Student assessment

### Standards

- *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 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.*
  - *The time allocation for each assessment task is explicitly stated in course outlines, ensuring students are aware of the expected workload.*
  - *A balanced assessment weighting strategy is implemented, considering the complexity and learning objectives of each task, to ensure fair evaluation of student performance.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *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.*

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#### **Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology**

*The physical library at CPA has limited resources related to fire science and fire service activities. However, this is not a major issue as students have digital access to a wide range of publications through MyAthens. Additionally, plans to expand the fire service library with more physical books are a positive development.*

*Teaching occurs at the CPA and various training facilities, but there is limited flexibility in accommodating individual students' needs. While an online platform allows for streaming lectures, increasing accessibility, it does not currently support submitting assignments, viewing lecture notes, or facilitating student collaboration, which limits its effectiveness.*

*The course descriptions given to the EEC include details on periods per week, weeks, and total study periods, except for those offered by the University of Cyprus. Additional information on the expected self-study hours would help students better plan their time for each module or course.*

#### **Practical training**

*The practical training is the core of the programme of study and is always implemented after and introduction to the theory. There are practical elements in most of the courses offered at the CPA. All recruits are constantly trained for the achievement of learning outcomes and for the future needs of the fire service in the country. A high number of ECTS (74) are devoted to the practical experience part of the programme, which is relevant for the needs of the Fire Service. The level of details for the training regarding learning outcomes and student workload is substantial. The on-field training is the vocational strength of the programme.*

*In documentation of the individual courses/ modules, it can be made clearer how the relation is between theory and practice. Furthermore, based on the discussions during the visit it seems like several of the courses have laboratories or similar activities, this should be clear in the course descriptions.*

### **Student assessment**

*The student assessment is appropriate and transparent. Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*

*Assessment supports the development of the learner.*

*The criteria for the assessment method and marking are published in advance.*

*The students' general competencies (as digital skill) are supported in the educational activities, but no innovative teaching methods are adopted.*

*The general feedback of students on the practical training is positive. All recruits are intensely involved in practical activities and would like to have more of these.*

*There are some inconsistencies in how the students' final grade is arrived at. The courses at University of Cyprus are weighted 25% of the total score of the program. Since the credits are only 30 ECTS that would translate to 15,6% of the total 192 ECTS in the program. If the practical experience is 74 ECTS, does not contribute to the final grade then the University of Cyprus contribution would be 25% (as listed).*

*The practical experience is instead evaluated separately as an individual portfolio. Although an essential component of the programme it does not contribute to the final mark. This system needs to be more transparent and clearer to the students.*

### **Strengths**

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

**Practical Training:** The general feedback of students on the practical training is very positive. All recruits are intensely involved in the practical activities

**Learning Methods:** The education is student-centred, using active learning methods like workshops, discussions, and role play, encouraging strong interaction between students and teachers.

**Individual Development:** The teaching supports individual development with small student groups and individual feedback. There are community service courses, and practical experience to encourage responsibility and social skills.

### **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.*

**Inconsistencies in Grade Component:** There are inconsistencies in grading, with University of Cyprus courses are making up 25% of the final score despite being only 15.6% of the total ECTS. The practical experience, worth 74



ECTS, is assessed separately and does not affect the final grade. This system needs clearer communication to students.

**More Detailed Course Descriptions:** All course descriptions, including courses at University of Cyprus, should be clearer and include information about number of periods per week, weeks, and total study periods for the course/module. More information should be available on the expected number of hours for self-studies in the course descriptions to allow the students to plan better.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	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.
- 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:*

- *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.*

### **Teaching staff recruitment and development**

*The teaching staff at the CPA possess strong practical experience within the fire service, which is particularly valuable as it ensures that instruction is delivered in a relevant and practical context.*

*There is a formal recruitment process for police and fire service teaching staff within the programme. To enhance their skills as instructors, fire service teachers are sent abroad for training, such as to the Fire Service College in the UK.*

*According to the CPA's SWOT analysis, one identified weakness of the programme is the limited number of staff with the right academic credentials. However, this is mitigated by the involvement of the University of Cyprus. Academically qualified staff, visiting lecturers, and experts with appropriate qualifications are integrated into the programme. Additionally, the management team has demonstrated a clear commitment to maintaining a balanced mix of practical and academic staff.*

*During the visit, the administrative team explained the process for recruiting visiting lecturers. Prospective visiting lecturers apply to be included in the register, and when their expertise is needed, the CPA contacts them. A three-member committee evaluates each application before approval and inclusion on the register.*

*While visiting lecturers provide valuable external expertise, the programme's heavy reliance on them presents a clear risk. Reducing dependence on individual visiting lecturers would be beneficial, even though their external connections are advantageous.*

### **Teaching staff number and status**

*The teaching staff includes several experienced permanent members with good academic credentials and extensive experience in the fire service. They are fully capable of supporting the programme of study.*

*The number of visiting lecturers is primarily linked to the academic components of the course and does not exceed the number of permanent staff.*

### **Synergies of teaching and research**

*The teaching staff from the Universities are actively involved in research and some of that feeds into their teaching on this programme. There is collaboration with the Fire Service and Police in identification and collaboration on research topics. The teaching programme includes a 2 ECTS module on Scientific research including research methods and a small research project. The direct research activity is however not considered as the core activity of the programme of study. It is recommended that, where possible more emphasis is given on research and in particular helping students understand that research can result in improved fire avoidance and more effective suppression and mitigation and more protection for the firefighters themselves.*

### **Strengths**

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

**Practical Experience:** *Staff have strong practical fire service experience, ensuring relevant teaching.*

**Ongoing Training:** *Continuous professional development, including international training, is provided for instructors.*

**Balanced Team:** *A good mix of CPA teachers, academics, and visiting lecturers supports the programme.*

**Robust Recruitment:** *There is a structured recruitment process for permanent and visiting lecturers.*

**Research Integration:** *Teaching staff are involved in research, which is partially integrated into the curriculum.*

**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.*

**Academic Credentials:** *There are limited permanent staff with academic qualifications, although mitigated by external involvement.*

**Reliance on Visiting Lecturers:** *High dependence on visiting lecturers poses risks.*

**Research Focus:** *More emphasis on research, particularly in fire safety, would strengthen the programme.*

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
<b>3.1</b>	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
<b>3.2</b>	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
<b>3.3</b>	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

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

##### Sub-areas

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

##### 4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

###### Standards

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

##### 4.2 Student progression

###### Standards

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

##### 4.3 Student recognition

###### Standards

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

#### 4.4 Student certification

##### Standards

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

*You may also consider the following questions:*

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

##### Findings

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

##### **Student admission, processes and criteria**

*The submitted documentation provides a detailed description of the pre-requisites for recruitment to the Cyprus Fire Service. The admission requirements for the programme contain several requirements (e.g. physical and requirement that men should have fulfilled their military service) which for academic programs would be considered to be strange and irrelevant, however regarding the physical nature of the job as firefighter these requirements are reasonable.*

*There is also a procedure for recognition of prior with awards of extra application points for different levels of previous achievements – this encourages students with previous university degrees to apply to the program.*

*Overall, the EEC is in the understanding that the admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

*The programme attracts many applicants of a range of ages and backgrounds which are documented. An “entrance” exam testing language and numeracy skills (designed by the ministry of Education) which typically reduces the number of applicants by 50%. 32% of those recruited in the last cohort had a university degree.*

##### **Student progression**

*There is an ideal path/sequence for the students to follow Semester A to Semester E in sequence but not always kept except that Semester A is always first. As discussed earlier this deviation should be avoided*



The students are required to achieve 55% on any module in order to proceed. If they fail any module, they have one chance within 2 months from the first attempt to retake the assessment. A second failure on any module takes them off the course with associated dismissal of the Service. Although harsh, these rules are known to the students from the start and ensure discipline and commitment throughout. There is good provision in identifying potential problems and difficulties, for example due to ill health or family problems and there is provision for study suspension and continuation with a following cohort.

Regarding the practical experience, a portfolio/journal is used to keep track of the different activities that the student performs and consequently also the progression.

Some of the courses build on each other, which is clear from the course title and that there are requirements on previous courses, e.g. the course 503 Firefighting procedure III requires the courses 103 and 203. But it would be beneficial to, as suggested in Section 1, that the CPA would define some specific skills and abilities (e.g. firefighting, rescue, group work, writing reports) that are important considered important to fulfill the learning outcomes of the entire program. It would be valuable to clearly show how the different courses related to these skills and abilities and how there is a progression in these during the program.

### **Student recognition**

Student recognition is in place. To this aim, a Diploma supplement is adopted, according to the Lisbon Recognition Convention for the European Higher Education Area. In the Diploma supplement, several, mandatory information about the periods of study are included. An "award" document is also adopted.

### **Student certification**

The Diploma supplement represents a student certification. All Institutions of Higher Education in Cyprus are assessed and assured by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the Assurance and Accreditation of Quality in Higher Education and the establishment and operation of the Agency for relevant matters Law 2015 and 2016.

### **Strengths**

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

**Pre-Requisites for Recruitment:** There are clear and detailed descriptions of the pre-requisites for recruitment to the Cyprus Fire Service.

**Documentation of Practical Experience:** In the practical experience part of the programme there is a good and well-documented procedure with a portfolio/journal to track the progression of each student.

**Recognition:** Student and programme recognition is fully in place.

### **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.*

**Documentation of Progression:** *It would be beneficial if the CPA would define some specific core skills and abilities that are important considered important to fulfil the learning outcomes of the entire program. It should then be documented how different courses or learning activities and how there is a progression in these during the program.*

**Sequence of Learning and Training:** *The identified optimal sequence of learning and training should be followed.*

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

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

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *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 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

- *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.*
- *Students receive support in research-led teaching through engagement in research projects, mentorship from research-active faculty, and access to resources that enhance their research skills and critical engagement with current studies.*

*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.*

#### Teaching and Learning resources

The programme is delivered across multiple facilities. The EEC visited both the CPA in Nicosia and the Fire Service training facility in *Kofinou*. CPA classrooms hold about 15 students, while those at the training facility can accommodate slightly more. Although larger rooms may be needed occasionally, the current classroom sizes appear adequate for the teaching methods used.

*The SWOT analysis identifies building infrastructure as a weakness. Classrooms at the CPA require modernisation, and the training facility uses temporary structures. While not a critical issue now, it is important that the planned construction of a new training centre and academy is completed.*

*The practical training facility in Kofinou is well-equipped for essential firefighter exercises, such as using ladders, hydrants, hoses, breathing apparatus, and conducting firefighting drills (industrial and compartment fires), search and rescue operations, and various demonstrations. The setup clearly supports student-centred learning. In addition to the fire service training facility the recruits are also trained at other facilities like different fire stations and airports.*

*There is no indoor lab facility to study small-scale fire experiments or demonstrations. This would be an improvement along with modernised classrooms.*

*There is also a development of modern technologies for training, such a technology is the use of Virtual Reality (VR), a technology that can be used to simulate incidents or events that are not possible to train on in the current training facilities. This would provide the opportunity for additional training, particularly in scenarios not catered by the physical training facilities currently available.*

### **Physical resources**

A library facility at CPA is available. even if there are some limitations in the fire science and fire service activities. Students have access to MyAthens and IT infrastructure is available. The course resources are adequate for a high number of students and can face any change or oscillation in the total number.

### **Human support resources**

There is a system in place at the CPA to provide the recruits with the help for personal and professional development. The student welfare of the CPA should support the recruits in dealing with any academic or personal problem or issues that they may have. The student welfare is available for meeting with recruits and after an initial meeting there is an evaluation if any further actions are needed.

The student welfare also coordinates the provision of welfare, clothing, equipment, administrative issues etc.

The administration services at the CPA are also in place for supporting the programme and the recruits.

### **Student support**

*The students are supported in all special needs and requirements throughout the entire duration of the study. If potential problems and difficulties due to ill health or family problems or any other serious issue, there is provision for study suspension and continuation with a following cohort.*

*The feedback on support services and counseling from interviewed Students has been very positive.*

*Students receive full support and access to resources that enhance their skills and critical engagement with their studies, in particular for the training aspects.*

The students' mobility across the higher education systems is possible. An interviewed student has declared to be students of Bachelor degree at other University Course at the same time.

**Strengths**

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

**Student Support:** Students are fully supported in the case of health problems, maternity or other serious issues.

**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.*

**Need for Modern Facilities:** The current facilities are sufficient for the needs of the program, but it is considered important that the current plans to construct a new training centre and academy for the police and fire service is realized. An indoor lab facility to study small-scale fire experiments or demonstrations should be considered when designing the new facilities.

**Use of New Technology:** Innovative technology like VR or AR could be an addition to the current teaching methods. It could be used to simulate complex incidents or events that are not reasonable to train on in the physical training facilities.

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

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

## 6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG) -----N/A

### Sub-areas

#### 6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

#### 6.2 Proposal and dissertation

#### 6.3 Supervision and committees

### 6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

#### Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
  - *the stages of completion*
  - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
  - *the examinations*
  - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
  - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*

### 6.2 Proposal and dissertation

#### Standards

- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
  - *the chapters that are contained*
  - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
  - *the minimum word limit*
  - *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

### 6.3 Supervision and committees

#### Standards

- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
  - *regular meetings*

- reports per semester and feedback from supervisors
- support for writing research papers
- participation in conferences
- The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.

You may also consider the following questions:

- How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?
- Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?
- Are the criteria reflected in dissertation samples?

### 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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

### Strengths

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

### 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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
<b>6.1</b>	Selection criteria and requirements	Choose answer
<b>6.2</b>	Proposal and dissertation	Choose answer
<b>6.3</b>	Supervision and committees	Choose answer



## D. Conclusions and final remarks

*Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the programme of study under review may be achieved, with emphasis on the correspondence with the EQF.*

The Training for Fire Service Recruits programme at the Cyprus Police Academy demonstrates a well-structured and effective approach to preparing recruits for roles in the Cyprus Fire Service. The programme aligns with European quality standards and integrates a balance of theoretical and practical components crucial for firefighting roles.

### Key strengths of the programme include:

**Strong Practical Component:** The practical training is highly relevant, involving real-world exercises and hands-on experience, which is critical for the nature of the profession. This component is well supported by adequate facilities, including training fields and various locations like fire stations and airports.

**Stakeholder Involvement and Feedback Mechanisms:** Both students and external stakeholders are actively involved in the design and continuous improvement of the programme. Feedback from students is regularly gathered and has led to tangible improvements, such as increasing the practical elements and adapting course content to address emerging risks like lithium battery fires.

**Student-Centred Learning:** The programme promotes student-centred learning, with active engagement in workshops, discussions, and practical exercises. Students benefit from individual feedback and have a positive perception of the overall learning environment.

**Integration of Quality Assurance:** The programme's quality assurance processes are deeply integrated into its strategic management, ensuring that it meets defined objectives and standards.

Despite these strengths, there are **areas for improvement** that the institution should focus on to further enhance the programme:

**Consistency in Course Sequencing:** The sequencing of courses was disrupted by the large intake of students, resulting in variations in how the course material was delivered. This inconsistency could affect student progression and should be addressed to maintain coherence in learning outcomes.

**Tracking Core Skills Development:** The programme would benefit from a more formalized system to track student progression in key competencies. A detailed framework linking specific skills to course outcomes would help provide clearer oversight of student development during the programme.

**Infrastructure and Resources:** The physical infrastructure, including classroom environments, could be modernised, and the training facilities, currently based in temporary structures, would benefit from the completion of the planned new training centre. Additionally, the use of modern technologies, such as Virtual Reality (VR) or Augmented Reality (AR), could enhance training by simulating complex scenarios that cannot be replicated in the training facilities.

**Weighting of Academic and Practical Components:** There is an imbalance in how the academic components and practical training are weighted in final student assessments. This should be clarified.



In conclusion, the programme is well aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and provides a solid foundation for recruits entering the Cyprus Fire Service. With improvements in infrastructure, consistency in course delivery, and further integration of core skills tracking, the programme can continue to evolve and meet the demands of modern firefighting.





## E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Herodotos Phylaktou	
Ernesto Salzano	
Nils Johansson	
Neofyta Christoforou	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: 19/9/2024