ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
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Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report
(Conventional-face-to-face programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  National and Kapadistrian University Athens

- **Town: Nicosia**

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

- **Department/ Sector: Department of Pedagogy and Primary Education**

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

  In Greek:

  Programme Name

  In English:

  Programme in Pedagogy and Primary Education

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

- **Programme's status:** Choose status

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

The EEC appreciated very much the opportunity to visit the site, to meet with the Vice Rectors, academic and administrative staff, stakeholders, former students of Athens, and the theology programme. The overall programme for the day was well scheduled, though more time with the former students could have been allowed. That said, we did ensure in the session that everyone had an opportunity to speak. The overall programme for the day was divided into initial departmental oversight regarding mission, QA, resources and so on. The other element was the programme that is commented on here. Our main concern prior to our visit, was the overwhelming experience in the paperwork that the details of the branch campus had not been sufficiently elaborated.

A great deal of the paperwork was given over to the history of the NKUA and its status. We therefore came to the site visit with many questions that we are very keen to ensure could be answered. Our understanding even before arriving is that the proposers had been made aware that more detail was required to meet the CAQA criteria for both Department and Programme operations. Our team necessarily had spent a great deal of time on the paperwork we were provided as part of the review process, and had many questions requiring clarification. We were greatly relieved that the various inputs were sufficient for us to feel more confident that the overall programme purpose, quality assurance, resources, staffing and so on have now been considered. Though we have requested some further elaborations, we feel that the programme will be important, viable, properly resourced and housed.

The strength of support at the highest of levels in NKUA was evident in terms of the delegation, the physical presence and commitment amongst and academic, administrative, and senior leadership with only some staff being bought into the meeting via zoom. Our questions and conversations were mutually respectful. We felt that we could raise issues, and have these clarified, or that documents would be provided to enable the EEC to conclude its work. Regarding the programme, we want to state that efforts to provide a more affordable course vis a vis other private providers is to be welcomed, and that a scholarship system properly oversighted could ensure inclusion especially of populations that are increasingly visible in Cypriot society.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Susan Lee Robertson	Professor	University of Manchester
Josefina Sala-Roca	Professor	Autonomous U of Barcelona
Martin Valcke	Professor	University of Ghent
Theano Giagkou	Student	University of Cyprus

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**

- As a general remark, the EEC stresses that tackling the evaluation in view of the "Study programme and study programme's design and development" was challenging. This is mainly due to the 'virtual' nature of the programme in the Cyprus branch and the fact that mostly all information was derived from organisational set-ups, practices, traditions, approaches in the NKUA-setting.

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Findings

- The Cyprus branch will be able to build on an established quality assurance policy that has been developed completely in the NKUA setting. See the "Accreditation Report for the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens - 31 May 2024
- The EEC – during the on-site meeting – got the possibility to meet QA staff from the NKUA branch. During the interaction clear cut answers were received about procedure, tools, approaches (e.g., how is information being collected from students). This meeting also clarified that not all IT-based would be available from the start in the Cyprus branch.
- A key part of the discussion – not documented prior to the meeting – focused on the output of a SWOT analysis to uncover the demand for this new teacher education programme. The information provided was reassuring when they could note that there is no shortage of teachers in Cyprus, that there is a large imbalance in offer for training and the demand for training; the demand exceeding largely the currently available offer (e.g., by the University of Cyprus and the University of Nicosia).
- Less information was provided about the involvement of local stakeholders; the latter is mainly related to the 'virtual' nature of the current programme as defined on paper. Nevertheless, the potential to involve stakeholders became clear during the on-site meeting.

Strengths

- Key is that the mother institution NKUA guarantees their support, direct involvement and provision of resources to establish a full-fledged quality assurance system that is aligned with a local policy.
- The QA staff we met during the site visit was highly qualified.

Recommendations

- Though the information about QA was extensive in the documentation, an easy understanding of the flow of information, actions and decisions was less clear. The EEC therefore asked the applicants to develop a graphical representation of the QA cycle and how this involves critical stakeholders at the different stages in the process in the Cyprus context.

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Findings

- Information about a curriculum committee is not very clear in the documents but became clear during the site meeting. The earlier request as formulated in relation to QA to obtain a graphical representation of the QA process is expected to include the stakeholders being involved in the process.
- The programme "BA Pedagogy and Primary Education" brings together ambitions that are broader than a focus on teacher training. The emphasis on the educational foundations introduces an extra angle, e.g., related to research and student involvement in research.
- The EEC therefore looked at the learning outcomes being put forward that mirror the high-level ambitions of the programme. The available lists of outcomes seem to depend on international regulations, the Bologna ambitions and especially the Greek approach as developed by NKUA.
- The EEC was confronted with a difficult task to uncover the actual list of learning outcomes at programme level. In the document "Application for Evaluation – Accreditation Programme of Study", general objectives are presented at several positions in the text. This is done in the context of a lengthy and historical description of the evolution of the available programmes. This results in a lengthy, non-transparent and unfocused text that confuses the reader.
  Initially, the planning of the programme and the intended learning outcomes are described in section 4.8 of the application documentation. This is a very short description that stresses that the 'outcomes' are in line with the European Qualification Framework and as such could guarantee that students can continue their study at post-graduate level. But it is somewhat surprising to read further descriptions that do not adopt EQF language that normally builds on 'competences' as a key building stone of programmes.
  In the application document at departmental evaluation, we also find several lists of learning outcomes that focus mainly on microlevel teaching behaviour of teachers. On p.19–20, a first short list of general learning goals is presented. This short list, which is

not aligned with available teacher education frameworks, seems to focus mainly on the functioning of teachers at the microlevel (classroom level).

On p.24, the document restarts the discussion about what is pursued in terms of objectives and adds: "The department's aim is the continuous improvement of the level of studies, so that it responds to scientific and social developments, with the aim of shaping the scientist and researcher teacher of primary education …" This section is considered by the EEC as important since it reiterates the focus on an academic foundation of the teacher education programme. But, this ambition seems not being translated into a specific competence related to e.g., research qualifications.

On p.29–30, the explanations related to internships result in an additional list of learning objectives: "Learning objectives: After completing the Internship, students should be able to: They utilize the knowledge they acquired in the theoretical part of the respective courses, in order to meet the requirements of teaching the course and handle student behavioural problems.   …   "

To summarize, the EEC was confronted with a less organized set of materials that – when focusing on the programme outcomes – were not consolidated and not organized at programme level. Secondly, the available information was not stated in terms of 'competences'. Also, we must repeat that this ambition is stated in the context of the NKUA programme and not in terms of the Cyprus programme.

- During the onsite meeting on July 29th, on request of the EEC, the applicants presented a list of key competences that could be considered as the backbone of the programme. This competence list was rather stated in terms of competence-areas; e.g., "ethics".

- It was reassuring that the applicants made reference during the meeting to European teacher qualification frameworks. But this did not yet result in a revised or updated list of qualifications.

- The programme information being presented in the documents is mainly based on and structured along "courses". This does not explain why these courses are relevant to become a teacher. Courses are "means/tools" to help develop competences in teachers. The EEC was in this context interested to know how courses contribute to the development and mastery of the competences presented during the meeting.

- The EEC could clearly analyse the available course descriptions and conclude they are in line with the traditional ECTS descriptions. It was reassuring to see how this NKUA version of the course files was in line with the regulations and standing practices.

- The EEC came convinced – also during the meeting – of the ambitions of the applicants to focus on an academic foundation for the teacher education programme. They explicitly wanted to move away from a professional teacher training approach. Despite this strong emphasis on the academic foundations, less information was available how there would be a spill-over into the teacher related competences. A typical example is how the investment in research competences will be translated into a teacher-inquiry stance or a data driven decision making action of teachers.

- The balance between theory and practice was discussed at multiple stages in the document and during the on-side visit. The word 'practice' seems to be approach from a teaching practice perspective in a school context. This seems to be different from the practical dimension in e.g., the foundation courses. The course descriptions seem less clear how the practical part of these courses contribute to the development and attainment of the list of competences, especially in terms of being a teacher.

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- External stakeholders are available. It is less clear in what stages of the programme design and development they have been involved. The number of stakeholders could be enlarged to mirror additional society and cultural stakeholders inside and outside schools

Strengths
- Though most information in relation to the programme did build on the current version of the NKUA, the available course information is a sound base to develop the Cyprus branch version.
- The emphasis on developing teaching practices is organized – in the Greek version of the programme – along three consecutive phases, starting in the second year and culminating in a two-week internship in the fourth year. Greek students and alumni explicitly appreciate this gradual confrontation with the teaching practice.
- The EEC met an interesting and strong group of Cypriot stakeholders that could be involved in the further design and development of the programme.

Recommendations
- We recommend that the newly stated overarching competences are being rephrased in terms of competences that next to an 'area' also point at the final target behaviour to be attained in students. This could additionally enrich the draft version of the matrix that was presented during the on-site meeting of July 29th.
- The current version of the competence and course matrix seem to neglect some state-of-the-art developments in teacher education worldwide; namely the emphasis on inquiry-based teaching and the emphasis on data-driven teacher decision making.
- The number of stakeholders could be enlarged to mirror additional society and cultural stakeholders inside and outside the school context.

1.3 *Public information*

Findings

- At this stage in the accreditation process the EEC could not screen information that is publicly available.

Strengths

- Not applicable

Recommendations

- Not applicable

1.4 Information management

Findings

- At this stage in the accreditation process the EEC could not screen information that is publicly available.

Strengths

- Not applicable

Recommendations

- Not applicable

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	Partially compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Partially compliant
1.3	Public information	Partially compliant
1.4	Information management	Partially compliant

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

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **2.1 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

Findings

- A section is found in the application document about student centred teaching. This is a short section containing general statements. On p.28 this is repeated in very 'promising terms', e.g., "The teaching of the subjects of the Department of Pedagogy and Primary Education makes significant use of a variety of pedagogical methods and media to ensure the active participation of all students in the learning process. Lectures are a means of delivery, but not the only and exclusive one. Students also attend experiential workshops (theatre, literature, music), experimental workshops in the Natural Sciences and are generally involved in the active life of the Department ..." This information does not explain to a lesser extent the actual 'activating' nature of the teaching approaches.
- During the on-site meeting student-centred teaching extra information derived from the ppt presentations, repeated that to depend largely on fostering student-teacher interaction and student collaboration.
- The course information and general descriptions in the documents list a wide range of instructional strategies such al role play, simulations, collaboration, debates, games, …
- Given no current student are enrolled in the programme it is difficult to judge the way the stakeholders will deal with student complaints. Discussion with students and alumni of the Greek branch mirrored positive sounds as to this topic. Staff seems to lend a willing ear to - student questions, remarks, and problems.
- Staff pointed out how IT tools would be made available. in addition – on demand – specific tools and apps can be procured given a budget has explicitly been provided for this.
- No information is yet available out flexible and/or alternative study routes that could suit students with specific learning needs.

Strengths

- Without doubt, the EEC concludes that the available staff and the way courses have been developed mirror a sound base to implement a student-centred teaching methodology.
- The IT- expertise of NKUA can play a vital role in mirroring the NKUA IT provisions in the Cyprus branch.

Recommendations

- Though a rich variety of instructional strategies is being presented, the EEC suggests looking for innovative instructional strategies that are commonly found in state-of-the-art teacher education programmes, such as the lesson study approach, co-creation, collegial consultation …
- Building on the above, professional development of staff could be geared to enriching the teacher education specific instructional strategies.

2.2 Practical training

Findings

- Both in the documentation and during the site visit, the emphasis on a right balance between theory and practice was discussed.
- The EEC confirms that the programme is academic in nature to ground the related/future practices.
- During the on-site discussions it became clear that two interpretations of the word 'practice' popped up. The first interpretation was related to guaranteeing that student get sufficient opportunities to work as a teacher in a classroom setting. This interpretation was strongly backed by a systematic three-phase approach that starts in the second year and culminates in the two-week internship in the fourth year. The application document 200.1 includes from p. 21 on information about "The students' Practical Training is divided into three phases" . This section is interesting in view of understanding the balance between theory and practice. The second interpretation is related to the 'practice' in relation to foundation courses, e.g., research methodologies. The specific sections and explanations about course design hardly address related 'practices'. The EEC did look for information explaining how the foundations have a spill-over impact on the development and attainment of teacher competences.
- The EEC was surprised the rich cultural and historical context in which the programme will evolve. In terms of practice opportunities this seems to pose plenty of additional opportunities to expand relevant student activities. We refer in this context to the poetry festival, the set-up of museums, the introduction to local history … We also refer to stakeholders that could play a role in developing step by step this additional kind of practice activities.

Strengths

- The systematic three-phase approach to develop practical teaching skills has attained an established position in the Greek program and seems sound to be transferred to the Cyprus context.

Recommendations

- The EEC strongly recommends thinking about the integration of the practical component of the foundation courses into the design and development of the teaching practices in schools.
- Given the rich cultural and historical context of Nicosia and Cyprus, the EEC suggests expanding the practice activities. The EEC refers to the poetry festival, the direct access to museums in the neighbourhood and the history buildings. We also refer to stakeholders that could play a role in developing step by step this additional kind of practice activities.
- Though the number of practice hours for teachers fit the regulations, the EEC suggests looking at alternative practice schemes in other countries where students already start getting acquainted with school reality from the first year on, meanwhile respecting the academic foundations of a programme.

2.3 Student assessment

Findings

- Assessment approaches seem to be varied and are being described at very different positions in the document. Nevertheless, this creates a confusing picture. The EEC did e.g., not find a comprehensive picture of all assessment and evaluation approaches overarching the individual courses and showing how the approaches play a role at the level of assessing student competences. The EEC does not find a comprehensive table that show the proportion of types of assessment and evaluation and how this is mapped on the list of competences.
- The EEC read and observed that the assessment and evaluation approaches seem largely dependent on the decisions of individual teachers; see e.g. p.29, "Each teacher, during the conduct of the courses, parameters and controls the progress of the learning project and the degree of achievement of the objectives, through various techniques (e.g. distributing questionnaires, with student " and later on "Although to a significant extent, student evaluation is done through the final written examination at the end of the semester, most instructors choose a combination of evaluation methods, depending on the subject." The EEC does – in contrast – not find an assessment and evaluation policy that inspires and even direct individual teacher design decisions? This seems key when looking at the final mastery of the competences. The information currently provided mainly focuses on course level evaluations, but not on the way this contributes to the mastery of the competence.
- The EEC – on the base of available information - did not develop a clear picture about the operational approach in relation to giving feedback to students in relation to their daily work and assessment/evaluation work? Only on p.29 (doc 200.1) feedback towards students is mentioned one single time. In the document 200.3 feedback is mentioned many times but not explained in an operational way.
- The variation in assessment approaches includes a focus on portfolio assessment, a strong asset in the context of a teacher education programme. These references link portfolio to the level of course related evaluation and assessment. We don't see the adoption of portfolio assessment at programme level as exemplified in many international student teacher programmes.

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- Peer assessment and self-assessment in relation to the attainment of course learning outcomes is yet not visible in the programme.
- The EEC did not find rubrics that guide the assessment practices of teachers.

Strengths

- The EEC stresses that a large variation in assessment and evaluation practices is already being implemented by prospective individual teachers.
- The language being adopted during the site visit and in the documentation, reflects a sound understanding of effective assessment and evaluation practices at academic and practical level.

Recommendations

- The EEC asks the applicants to develop an integrated of all assessment and evaluation practice at programme level. They could graphically represent the evolution in the se practice following the consecutive semesters and how this is related to the development and attainment of the list of competences. Developing this overview could also help to come to conclusions about consistency in these approaches.
- The EEC suggest looking into the adoption of a comprehensive portfolio to document the attainment level of the teacher competences.

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	Partially compliant
2.2	Practical training	Partially compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Partially compliant

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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

The Department of Pedagogy and Primary Education at NKUA's Cyprus Branch is a **newly established** department, scheduled to begin operations in October 2025. At present, the academic staff has not yet been fully appointed, although a **core team of faculty from the parent** department in Athens has been designated to launch the programme. These members include the Provisional Administrative Council, chaired by Professor Thomas Babalis, and composed of Section Heads from the NKUA central department. The qualifications and research expertise of these professors from Greek branch is appropriate but the biographical profiles of potential teaching staff are included in the application. These reflect appropriate qualifications and research expertise, but their engagement remains conditional upon the final operational start. This does not diminish **the need to incorporate faculty** with expertise in the educational context of Cyprus. Education requires a deep understanding of the local context, and while the faculty from the Greek branch undoubtedly have expertise in the Greek setting, there is no guarantee that they can provide the necessary insight into the Cypriot educational system.

During the visit, the Head of Department informed us that in the first year, they plan to hire 2 full-time professors, and by the end of the fourth year, a total of 8 professors will have been hired. It was stated that these professors will hold full-time contracts with a teaching load of 6 hours per week. At the end of the session, the ECC requested an annual recruitment plan detailing the types and levels of contracts, and asked for it to be submitted.

We were also informed that academic development and promotion opportunities for staff would be the same as those available to staff at the Athens branch. Faculty members from the Athens branch will provide support and mentoring in teaching, research, and career development. By the end of the fourth year of programme implementation, it is expected that 70% of the teaching will be carried out by staff from the Nicosia branch, and 30% by staff from the Athens branch.

However, in the application, the course allocation tables already assign nearly all courses to faculty from the Greek branch. This raises important questions about when and how the recruitment of additional academic staff for the Cyprus Branch will actually take place.

The recruitment and development processes for the teaching staff are not sufficiently detailed in the application. It is unclear how transparency and fairness will be ensured. On page 30, the application describes the procedure used in Athens, where the selection of members for electoral bodies is done by lottery, giving absolute priority to subject-matter relevance. However, there is no explanation of how recruitment and selection will be carried out specifically in the Cyprus Branch, nor whether the same procedure will apply or be adapted to the Cypriot context. Since NKUA is a public university in Athens in Nicosia will operate as private and this could change the recruitment procedures. Although NKUA is a public university in Athens, the Cyprus Branch will operate as a private institution, which may result in differences in the recruitment procedures.

The application does not include any reference to a staff development or training programme aimed at strengthening teaching competences for university-level instruction. This is a significant omission, particularly given the importance of pedagogical training in promoting teaching innovation, student-centred learning, and high-quality educational practices. During the visit, a specific question was raised regarding the training of university teaching competencies. However, the responses provided were somewhat unclear. It was mentioned that there might be a training plan to which the Cyprus Branch could have free access, but this needs to be clearly specified.

The application does not provide information on how the promotion of teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching competences, and their academic mobility. These are key elements in ensuring a well-rounded and merit-based academic career path and should be clearly addressed.

During the visit, a specific question was raised regarding the training of university teaching competencies. The response indicated that this is promoted mainly through encouraging staff to participate in training activities and teaching conferences. However, no structured or formalised training plan was presented, and it remains unclear whether such a programme exists or will be accessible to staff at the Cyprus Branch. If such a plan exists, it should be clearly described and linked to an official document or institutional framework.

The application states the intention to involve recognised visiting teaching staff in the delivery of the study programme. However, no further details are provided regarding the selection criteria, duration of their involvement, specific roles, or how their contribution will enhance the academic quality and international profile of the Cyprus Branch.

The administrative structure is also under formation, with clear intentions to create support services such as a Student Welfare Office, Mobility Office, and Academic Mentorship Unit, each to be staffed with qualified personnel. During the visit, it was also stated that, by the end of the programme's implementation phase, two administrative staff members will be formally employed by the Cyprus Education Branch.

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

The development of the programme will be supported by qualified academic staff with extensive experience in the implementation of the NKUA's long-established programme in Athens. This provides a strong academic foundation and ensures continuity in the programme's design, structure, and pedagogical approach.

NKUA is a university with a long-standing academic tradition and a strong reputation in the field of education in Greece. It has successfully developed and implemented various educational programmes, including a well-established Department of Pedagogy and Primary Education, which has been positively evaluated by the Greek accreditation authorities.

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 institution should provide a clear and detailed annual recruitment plan for the Cyprus Branch, specifying the number, type (full-time/part-time), and academic level of staff to be hired each year. This plan should include a description of the recruitment and academic development procedures to be applied, ensuring alignment with national legislation and adherence to good practices regarding transparency, merit-based selection, and equal opportunities. In addition, the institution should ensure the recruitment of teaching staff with proven expertise and experience in the Cypriot educational system. This will be essential to contextualise the programme content, guide students toward local professional practice, and align the educational offering with the expectations of Cypriot society and the labour market. Furthermore, it is recommended that a structured mentoring and integration framework be developed, enabling effective collaboration between staff from the Athens and Cyprus branches. The institution should ensure that a sufficient number of qualified teaching staff are physically present in Nicosia throughout the academic year to deliver high-quality teaching and provide students with appropriate academic support and guidance. In addition, the institution should ensure that students are able to meet with their subject lecturers for academic tutorials in person. The institution should clearly confirm whether a formal training programme for university teaching competencies exists and whether the Cyprus Branch will have free and full access to it. If such a programme is in place, the institution must provide a precise description of its content,

structure, delivery format, and eligibility criteria; ideally accompanied by a reference or hyperlink to an official document. Furthermore, whether or not an existing training plan is available, the institution should develop and implement a structured training programme specifically tailored for academic staff at the Cyprus Branch. It should support continuous pedagogical development, including: Enhancement of teaching methods Integration of educational technologies Adoption of innovative, evidence-based approaches to higher education. Access to this training—especially for newly appointed teaching staff in Nicosia—should be guaranteed from the outset, with clear guidelines on how staff can enrol and complete the programme. The institution should clarify the criteria and procedures used for academic staff promotion, explicitly addressing how teaching quality, pedagogical development, research output, and international or inter-institutional mobility are taken into account. This would enhance transparency and support excellence in both teaching and research.

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	Partially compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Partially compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

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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*

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CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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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

We noted in the paperwork that the applicants to the programme required a high school certificate or equivalent plus evidence of proficiency in the Greek language, and would be selected based on an interview. We asked in the site visit about the interview. It was stated that 3 people would interview and that the applicant would be asked to write a personal statement regarding their wish to pursue an education and pedagogical qualification. This would be taken into account when making a decision to offer one of the 40 places. There was no statement regarding RPL. The qualification will meet the ECTS. Nor was there mention of a clean criminal record which is important for safeguarding purposes and is needed by all trainee teachers to access schools.

Strengths

This is standard and in line with NKUA requirements. Our view is that the interview is important especially

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Make the Criminal record clearance explicit.

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)*

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

- *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.*
- *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

We were impressed with the site itself and in particular that this is made available from the premises of the Archbishop of Cyprus and specifically where the theology programme is delivered. In the short term, it is evident that the start of the Department can be collocated, however over time, it is clear that other premises as well as adjustments to enable access to the building for those needing assistance will need to be made. We were impressed with the access to broadband and the latest projection technologies. All rooms were air-conditioned and this is important to enable year round access.

We note that student support services are available regarding welfare, and an Erasmus office which will be available via the theology programme.

We appreciated the opportunity to meet with existing and prior students. They made clear that the existing culture at NKUA is very supportive of good relationships between professors and students and that they were role models.

Strengths

The Department will – in the Theology Building - be located with many museums in the neighbourhood. We believe that the Department could access consider synergistic relationships that would enable access to resources such as museum artifacts and library materials that would augment their library holdings. We also are impressed that the library that services the theology programme will, along with the librarian, will be available to the Department. The Department will have access to significant library resources back into Athens; we noted a robust and wide-ranging set of resources that included CUP. The VPN also enables remote access.

There are very positive views of the NKUA academics and their support for students. Students stated they felt well prepared when they went on to other institutions, jobs and so on.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
Click or tap here to enter text.

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

C. 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 External Evaluation Committee (EEC) commends the initiative to establish a new undergraduate programme in primary education, with a strong pedagogical foundation and interdisciplinary scope. We are particularly impressed by the ambition to develop a high-quality teacher education programme in Cyprus, drawing upon the longstanding academic excellence of the University of Athens. The programme has the potential not only to meet local educational needs but also to become a model of innovative and contextually grounded teacher training in the wider region.

The location of the programme, co-located with the theological school in a historically and culturally rich environment, provides unique opportunities for pedagogical integration with local institutions such as museums and archival centres. This setting could support creative and community-engaged forms of education that extend beyond the classroom.

We encourage the implementation team to leverage these resources imaginatively and to ensure that the programme takes on a distinct identity while benefiting from the expertise and experience of the home institution. The inclusion of diverse pedagogical practices—ranging from youth work to museum education and literary festivals—reflects an understanding of pedagogy as a dynamic and socially embedded field. Such a perspective is not only desirable but essential in preparing educators capable of contributing meaningfully to both school-based and non-formal educational settings.

We also highlight the importance of developing the programme with a forward-looking vision. For instance, integrating artificial intelligence and digital literacies into the curriculum, including virtual reality and digital archival work, would position the programme at the forefront of educational innovation.

In terms of staffing, we recommend front-loading academic appointments where possible to ensure effective planning and collaboration in the early stages. A critical mass of academic staff, beyond a minimal skeleton team, will be crucial for maintaining a high-quality student experience and supporting sustainable programme growth. Additionally, careful attention should be paid to defining student competencies in alignment with European standards, ensuring curricular coherence and progressive learning across the four-year structure.

Overall, the EEC strongly supports the programme's development and encourages its aspiration to become not only a national benchmark but also a regional and international exemplar of teacher education.

D. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Susan Lee Robertson	
Josefina Sala-Roca	
Martin Valcke	
Theano Giagkou	

Date: 29/07/2025