

Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**

University of Nicosia

Intercollege

- **Town: Nicosia**

School/Faculty (if applicable):

University of Nicosia: School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department/ Sector:

University of Nicosia: Department of Languages and Literature

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

In Greek:

Προπαρασκευαστικό _Πρόγραμμα _Εκμάθησης _της _Αγγλικής
_Γλώσσας (_1_ _Έτος)

In English:

Foundation Programme for Learning the English Language (1
Year)



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].

- **Language(s) of instruction:** English
- **Programme’s status:** New
- **Concentrations (if any):**

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations



A. Introduction

This part includes basic information regarding the onsite visit.

The visit started with Professor Philippos Pouyioutas' presentation who introduced the university which was established in 2007. Prior to this the university existed as Intercollege. The campus covers a large area and has a range of buildings serving a variety of purposes. The university is a truly international institution and is the largest private university in Cyprus with 12,000 students, almost 1,000 staff members and 8 schools offering education from undergraduate to PhD level on-site and distance. The proposed programme is based in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. The university is research active and has increased in international ranking exponentially over the years. The university has secured a large amount of research funding. The university is part of the European University Alliance. It is very active in internationalisation strategy, aiming to expand in offering double-degrees, distance programs and franchising. The key principles that drive the university are digital innovation, equality, diversity and inclusion and enhanced mobility.

The first session also included a presentation by Chris Constantinou, Deputy Executive Director, Intercollege. Intercollege was founded in 1980 and offers two-year diplomas and four bachelor degrees. It has a small number of staff including academic staff and industry experts. The internships and industry associations are crucial for programme development, quality assurance and teaching delivery. The college is part of the Erasmus exchange programs.

In the question and answer session, Professor Pawlak asked about how and in which institution the program will be run and requested additional information on quality assurance documentation by Intercollege. The institutions clarified that the programme will be run on an identical curriculum but separately at each institution.

In the second part of the visit Professor Rossie Artemis presented a short overview of the programme and the quality assurance mechanisms highlighting that students and teachers are fully involved in the quality assurance processes. She also presented the short learning outcomes and the profile of teaching staff as well as the results of the SWOT analysis. The ensuing discussion centred around the exit level proficiency after the completion of the programme. Professor Pawlak asked questions relating to the development of second language speaking skills and grammatical knowledge within the foundation course and requested some more detail on quality assurance mechanisms. Professor Csizér requested clarification on mitigating circumstances, specifically retakes of exams.

In the third part of the visit, we met the teaching team of the University of Nicosia and Intercollege.

Professor Rossie Artemis, Dr Christine Savvidou, Dr Kasia Alexander, Dr Katherine Fincham,

Dr Victoria Kalogerou, Chrysa Papaioannou, Irene Papakyriakou participated in this session. Professor Csizér started asking questions about the choice of coursebooks and the focus on the IELTS exam. The teaching team responded that IELTS is the most frequently taken exam in Cyprus but they will explore and offer other possibilities. Dr Victoria Kalogerou also said they are considering adopting a new coursebook that covers a range of exams accredited in Cyprus. Further questions were raised about developing learner autonomy, individualization of learning and the use of digital technology in the classroom.



The last part of the online visit involved a discussion with the administrative staff who gave a detailed account of the relevant support mechanisms available upon enrolment and in case students have disabilities. The head of the library explained that students have access to a wide range of online resources including e-books.

The exit discussion summarized the main findings of the visit including recommendations for widening the curriculum to help prepare students for exams other than the IELTS exam and considering a more specific focus on speaking skills. The suggestion that part-time members should be given opportunities for professional development and promotion was also mentioned by the panel chair. The committee was very much impressed with the expertise of the teaching staff. Chris Constantinou asked the panel chair to give a short discussion of the standing of IELTS at other international universities.



B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

| <i>Name</i> | <i>Position</i> | <i>University</i> |
|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Prof. Judit Kormos | Chair | Lancaster University |
| Prof. Kata Wein Cszér | Member | Eötvös Loránd University |
| Prof. Mirosław Pawlak | Member | Adam Mickiewicz University |
| Agathi Gavrielidou | Student member | University of Cyprus |

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*
- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
 - (a) sub-areas*
 - (b) standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
 - (c) some questions that EEC may find useful.*
- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*
- *Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements of each sub-area. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

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

Strengths

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- *The EEC should state the compliance for each sub-area (Non-compliant, Partially compliant, Compliant), which must be in agreement with everything stated in the report. It is pointed out that, in the case of standards that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted.*
- *The EEC should state the conclusions and final remarks regarding the programme of study as a whole.*
- **The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.**

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

Sub-areas

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

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the programme of study:*
 - *has a formal status and is publicly available*
 - *supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes*
 - *supports teaching, administrative staff and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance*
 - *ensures academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud*
 - *guards against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff*
 - *supports the involvement of external stakeholders*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *The programme of study:*
 - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
 - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
 - *benefits from external expertise*
 - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*

- *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
- *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
- *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
- *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
 - *key performance indicators*
 - *profile of the student population*
 - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*

- *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
- *learning resources and student support available*
- *career paths of graduates*

- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*
- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*
- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*



- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- **How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?**
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*

Findings

Based on the analysis of the documents submitted by the University of Nicosia/Intercollege as well as the information obtained during the online meetings with the representatives of the two institutions, the following findings can be reported:

- 1.1. The foundation program has been developed in collaboration between the University of Nicosia and Intercollege, and it is going to be run independently by these two institutions. Based on a review of relevant documents, transparent policies for quality assurance have been adopted in both of them. When it comes to the University of Nicosia, the following principles of quality assurance have been formulated: (1) quality of student experience will satisfy or exceed internal and external requirements, (2) quality of programs of study will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis, (3) opinions of external assessors will be taken into account, (4) enhancement of quality will be informed by robust monitoring and feedback mechanisms at the university, school and department levels, and (5) quality will be supported through professional development programs, staff appraisal, teaching observations and peer review. In accordance with these principles, there are bodies that are responsible for quality assurance at three levels: (1) University of Nicosia Internal Quality Assurance Committee (UNIQAC), (2) School Internal Quality Assurance Committee (SIQAC), and (3) Department Internal Quality Assurance Committee (DIQAC). The indices, measures and tools for quality assurance developed by the UNIQAC are then implemented at the two lower levels where periodical audits of programs of study are undertaken. While the composition of the committees varies across levels, importantly, all of them include teacher and student representatives. Another element of the system of quality assurance is the Academic Compliance Office, reporting directly to the Rector, which monitors the implementation of quality assurance activities by relevant university bodies and units. In Intercollege, the responsibilities related to quality assurance rest with the Internal Quality Assurance Committee (IQAC) which monitors all the relevant academic and administrative procedures, ensures transparency and, if need be, revises and introduces new procedures in order to enhance transparency and quality. It has the authority to audit all sectors of the institution, form subcommittees and invite external auditors when necessary. The IQAC is appointed by the Executive Director for the period of two years, and, apart from members of management and quality assurance officers, includes the representatives of faculty, students and administration. According to respective internal regulations, both the University of Nicosia and Intercollege follow clear policies for the introduction of new programs of study as well as regular review and evaluation of such programs. A variety of tools are used in both institutions for this purpose including, among other things, student evaluation of courses and faculty (questionnaires), data concerning student performance, assessment and withdrawal, available



resources, staff development, peer review, faculty ranking, etc. As clarified during the virtual visit, all these mechanisms will be applicable to the foundation program in English as well. One potential cause for concern is the fact that the program will in practice be run interpedently by two institutions (i.e. the University and Intercollege) and therefore somewhat different quality assurance procedures will be implemented. It would be advisable that the institutions agree on a common set of quality assurance measures with respect to this program.

As evident in the internal regulations as well as information made available through the Internet, both the University of Nicosia and Intercollege have adopted clear-cut policies concerning academic ethics (e.g., guarding against cheating, plagiarism, etc.). Policies are also followed to prevent instances on discrimination on any grounds, ensure as much as possible gender equality, foster work-life balance, promote diversity and inclusion, as well as safeguard academic freedom and take steps to foster sustainability. Information concerning the quality assurance practices and procedures adopted by the University of Nicosia and Intercollege is not available publicly but can be accessed by interested parties (e.g., students, teachers) through University Intranet or Moodle platforms.

- 1.2. In line with the recommendations issued by the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, the English Language Foundation Course aims to prepare international students for successful admission into institutions of higher education in the country. The program constitutes a response to an increase in the number of students with diverse academic backgrounds and levels of English language skills as well as demands of the labor market. In accordance with internal regulations, in the University of Nicosia, it was developed by an ad hoc committee set up by the Department of Languages and Literature, composed of faculty members of the Department Council with experience in program development and accreditation procedures, while in Intercollege, its development was preceded by a required feasibility study by the Program Coordinator. Specifically, the foundation course aims to: (1) develop proficiency in all target language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, (2) develop academic vocabulary and language necessary for studies in higher education, (3) enhance communication skills needed for academic and social interactions, (4) increase confidence in participating in class discussions, debates and presentations concerning academic topics, and (5) improve critical thinking and analytical skills through reading and writing tasks. In addition to the enhancement of English language skills, the projected learning outcomes include, among others, application of requisite study skills and strategies (e.g., note-taking, organizing resources), developing understanding of cultural nuances, applying critical thinking skills allowing decision-taking and problem-solving, strengthening teamwork and collaborative skills through group projects, fostering interpersonal communication and leadership abilities, as well as embracing elements of academic culture (e.g., academic integrity, research ethics, effective time



management).

The course covers one academic year and consists of four modules, two per semester: Semester One: 1. ENGL-010 Academic Writing and Academic Environment, 2. ENGL-020 Reading and Introductory Listening Skills; Semester Two: 1. ENGL-011 Academic Writing and Academic Vocabulary, 2. ENGL-021 Advanced Listening and Language Practice. Each module comprises a total of 104 50-minute periods. The course coordinator and teaching staff provided a convincing rationale for this modular approach. Particularly noteworthy is the inclusion of instructional contents facilitating integration into higher education by acquainting students with academic language expectations as well as academic culture. This said, there are two areas that are in need of potential improvement. One is insufficient focus on speaking skills in academic contexts. Such skills should be either emphasized to a greater extent in the modules or a separate module should be devoted to this area, perhaps together with listening. The other is related to the need for greater emphasis on the development of learner autonomy together with effective use of language learning strategies.

On the whole, the course is consistent with current developments in society, enabling the development of a number of important skills going beyond sheer mastery of the target language (e.g., critical thinking, collaboration, intercultural awareness). Based on the analysis of the contents of the modules, methodology and assessment criteria, there is no doubt that the program will allow meeting its objectives and enable students to achieve intended learning outcomes. Instrumental to the attainment of these objectives is the expertise and enthusiasm of the teachers clearly demonstrated during the meeting with the members of the Evaluation Committee. The program is coherent and allows smooth student progression. In light of the small number and involvement of the teaching staff, it can be assumed that the course will be implemented in a consistent manner in the two institutions, with the important caveat that similar quality assurance measures should be applied to ensure such consistency (see above). Similar to other courses in the university, the course will be subject to regular review and evaluation.

- 1.3. The information about the program will be made public once it has been accredited, as is the case with other programs (courses) run by the University of Nicosia/Intercollege.
- 1.4. Information about effective management of the program is not yet collected because the course is not running. However, careful analysis of the policies and procedures for quality assurance indicates that such information will be regularly collected and analyzed by the institution, as is the case with the programs that are currently in progress.

Strengths



- comprehensive procedures for ensuring quality assurance with respect to the programs of study on offer;
- an explicit focus on familiarizing students with the different requirements of the academic environment.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- steps need to be taken to ensure the same measures for ensuring quality with respect to the foundation program run by the University of Nicosia and Intercollege;
- greater focus on the development of speaking skills needed in academic contexts, either within the existing four modules or by creating a separate module for this purpose;
- more pronounced and explicit focus on the development of learner autonomy and adept use of language learning strategies.

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

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

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

Sub-areas

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

2.3 Practical training

2.4 Student assessment

2.1 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.*

2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *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.*

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.

Based on the submitted materials, we can ascertain that the courses offer support opportunities for students to develop their academic skills, primarily in writing and reading. Teamwork and collaborative skills are emphasised in the course description. Additionally, the importance of students' self-confidence in learning and using the language is consciously facilitated.

In the interview coordinating committee, it has also become apparent that soft and transferable skills are considered important, and intercultural encounters and exposure are taken into account. It was reassuring to see that not only lifelong learning but also learning languages other than English are acknowledged in the program. Furthermore, academic skills are developed not in isolation but within the context of raising awareness of social, environmental, and global concerns. The intended learning outcomes are clear, detailed, and well-justified.

During the interview with teachers, it became apparent that the coursebook submitted in the application will be accompanied by other sources, and based on the experience with the first cohort, the book might be replaced if necessary. Teachers explained how skills will be taught in an integrated way and assured that no skills will be overlooked. Activities will be designed to use the four skills through discussion, workshop-like teaching, and problem-based teaching techniques. Additionally, collaborative learning is encouraged.

Concerning students' individual differences, several teaching strategies were mentioned to lower student anxiety and increase their engagement and motivation by encouraging them to take an active role in learning. Students are supported in selecting topics they are interested in and self-reflecting on the learning processes in individual ways. Independent use of resources, micro-strategies in the classroom, and awareness-raising about their own learning styles further contribute to influencing students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Teachers explained how they will use technology in their classrooms to increase student motivation and positively influence the learning processes. Technology is not used for technology's sake but to enhance

cooperation among students and teachers. AI technologies are acknowledged and used creatively. The integration of technology also addresses some limitations by increasing students' awareness and critical thinking skills.

Assessment in the foundation courses will include both continuous in-class assessment and formative assessment, which are clear and transparent in the submitted materials. It is praiseworthy that students with additional needs are offered help and that both teaching and assessment processes are adjusted to their needs. We were also informed that one-to-one sessions are offered to support students if needed.

Strengths

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

Teachers are well-educated and experienced and they are very motivated to do their best.

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 course content could be better aligned with the learning aims.

More emphasis on speaking skills in the courses would be beneficial to students.

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

| Sub-area | | <i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i> |
|------------|---|---|
| 2 | Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology | Compliant |
| 2.2 | Practical training | Not applicable |
| 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

Teaching staff recruitment procedures are described in great detail in the annex to the documentation submitted. Opportunities for professional development include attending conferences and workshops, membership in professional organisations and pursuing additional degree courses with time off. Student feedback on teaching is sought and shared with lecturers. The Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report also supports teacher development. Workload is clearly delineated in the internal regulations and the number of teaching hours for staff at different levels of academic ranking is specified.

Dr Katarzyna Alexander holds a PhD and is an experienced associate lecturer with expertise in teaching English for academic and professional purposes, including course and materials development.



Dr Kalogerou Victoria also has a PhD and has worked on several EU funded projects enhancing the quality of English language teaching in higher education.

Ms Apostolia Michael has completed an MA programme in English literature and has a CELTA degree as well as relevant teaching experience in higher education in Cyprus.

Mr Stephen Gateley holds an MA TESOL degree and has vast experience teaching English in wide variety of contexts.

Ms Chrysanthi Papaioannou completed a relevant MA programme in the UK and is a highly experienced teacher of English (over 20 years of experience).

Ms Irene Papakyriakou has relevant experience in teaching English for academic purposes and an MA in English and comparative literature.

Strengths

It is excellent that the teaching ability of applicants to academic positions is assessed during the hiring process. The university regulations clearly and transparently state the criteria on the basis of which teaching presentations are assessed and the criteria for appointment to different ranks within the institution are also elaborate and specific. The criteria for promotion are detailed and take into account research, teaching and service and contribution to the university. The qualifications of teaching staff are outstanding and they all have relevant experience in teaching English for academic purposes in higher education. Teaching staff are research active and research outputs are rewarded by the institution. The university participates in different international exchange programs.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

It is not clear why teaching presentations are not required from candidates with over 5 years of teaching experience. Experience in teaching alone does not guarantee the quality of teaching and might create bias towards applicants with longer experience but potentially less effective teaching skills. Part-time faculty do not benefit from promotion or professional development opportunities which should be considered in the future.



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

| Sub-area | | <i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i> |
|----------|--|---|
| 3 | Teaching staff recruitment and development | Compliant |
| 3.2 | Teaching staff number and status | Compliant |
| 3.3 | Synergies of teaching and research | Not applicable |

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

Admission requirements are externally regulated, but the institution only lists IELTS and then states equivalent language qualifications as requirements. It might be better to list all the relevant requirements as per the ministry regulations.

Strengths

Students receive counselling upon enrolment and their progress is monitored. The Student Success Centre assists with transition into higher education. Students' attendance is continuously monitored through an electronic portal. There are in-built procedures for flagging attendance and progression issues, in which case the academic advisor is informed and contacts the student. Student support is activated if a student is identified as high-risk students a

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The institution cannot award a certificate in this programme. Please make sure this amendment is made and only a certificate of attendance is issued. The documentation could have included more detail on how students' progress will be assessed and monitored within the programme.



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

| Sub-area | | <i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i> |
|----------|---|---|
| 4 | Student admission, processes and criteria | Compliant |
| 4.2 | Student progression | Compliant |
| 4.3 | Student recognition | Not applicable |
| 4.4 | Student certification | Not applicable |

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

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Evaluate the supply of teaching materials and equipment (including teaching labs, expendable materials, etc.), the condition of classrooms, adequacy of financial resources to conduct the study programme and achieve its objectives. What needs to be supplemented/ improved?*
- *What is the feedback from the teaching staff on the availability of teaching materials, classrooms, etc.?*
- *Are the resources in accordance with actual (changing) needs and contemporary requirements? How is the effectiveness of using resources ensured?*
- *What are the resource-related trends and future risks (risks arising from changing numbers of students, obsolescence of teaching equipment, etc.)? How are these trends taken into account and how are the risks mitigated?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*



- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*

Findings

The Foundation Programme for Learning the English Language provides comprehensive course materials, including a blend of lectures, peer review sessions, individual and group assignments, and in-class discussions. Course content covers academic writing, vocabulary, listening skills, and preparation for integration into higher education. Bibliography for courses includes credible and widely recognized resources, such as IELTS preparation materials. The programme is offered at the University of Nicosia and Intercollege, both of which are equipped with necessary infrastructure, including classrooms, laboratories, and libraries.

The programme boasts a highly qualified teaching staff with significant experience in TESOL and related fields. Continuous professional development for teaching staff is emphasized, ensuring up-to-date teaching practices. The library offers a dedicated Distance Learning section and support services, including email, phone, and Team Viewer support for distance learners. Regular training sessions and workshops are organized to enhance students' skills and knowledge. There is a wide range of library resources available, including 500,000 e-books, 30,000 full-text e-journals, and access to over 80 databases. The library provides extensive online resources and support for both on-campus and off-campus students, indicating efforts to meet contemporary needs. The program collaborates with various libraries and institutions in Greece, which can support student mobility and access to resources. There is guidance from program coordinators, the Centre for Research and Counselling Services, Student Affairs Department, Academic Advising, and others. The program includes support teaching, where older students or graduates help younger students, which aids in academic success and progression.

Strengths

The programme is well-structured to cover essential academic skills and prepare students for higher education. Use of credible and authoritative bibliographic resources supports the learning objectives and outcomes. Emphasis on developing both language skills and study techniques, which are critical for academic success. Availability of modern facilities and resources supports an effective learning environment. Libraries are well-stocked and provide access to both physical and digital resources. Experienced faculty members contribute to a high-quality educational experience. Professional development initiatives help maintain teaching excellence and adapt to new educational trends. Comprehensive support services cater to learners, ensuring accessibility of resources. Emphasis on information literacy and critical thinking skills aids in students' academic and professional development.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Provision of online forums in which students have the opportunity to give feedback to the professors (anonymously or not) with their own comments and recommendations on how the programme and specific courses can cater to their individual strengths and needs.



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

| Sub-area | | <i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i> |
|----------|---------------------------------|---|
| 5 | Teaching and Learning resources | Compliant |
| 5.2 | Physical resources | Compliant |
| 5.3 | Human support resources | Compliant |
| 5.4 | Student support | Compliant |

6. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

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?*
- *Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?*

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

| Sub-area | | <i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i> |
|----------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 6 | Selection criteria and requirements | Choose answer |
| 6.2 | Proposal and dissertation | Choose answer |
| 6.3 | Supervision and committees | Choose answer |



D. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC concluded that the program under consideration has the potential to deliver quality education of the expected standards that complies with the standards of the CYQAA. The visit was well organized and the submitted documentation contained relevant level of detail. The institution responded efficiently and quickly to additional requests to provide information. However, quality of internet connectivity and sound was not always appropriate. The EEC was very much impressed by the student-centered teaching, and the enthusiasm and expertise of the teaching staff. The university has wide ranging experience in working with international students and has highly supportive procedures in place to assist their integration in the student community. Lecturers demonstrated a high level of experience and expertise in teaching English for academic purposes and are very well equipped with pedagogical tools to ensure that students complete the foundation year successfully. Learning, teaching, infrastructure and administrative resources are excellent.

The committee has made the following suggestions:

The course content could be better aligned with the learning aims.

More emphasis on speaking skills in the courses would be beneficial to students.

Part-time faculty do not benefit from promotion or professional development opportunities which should be considered in the future.

Steps need to be taken to ensure the same measures for ensuring quality with respect to the foundation program run by the University of Nicosia and Intercollege.

E. Signatures of the EEC

| Name | Signature |
|--|-----------|
| Judit Kormos | |
| Kata Csizér Wein | |
| Mirosław Pawlak | |
| Agathi Gavrielidou Click to enter Name | |

Date: 3rd June 2024



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



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