ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA

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

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Doc. 300.1.1

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report

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

- **Higher Education Institution:**

  The Cyprus Academy of Art

- **Town:** Limassol

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

- **Department/ Sector:** N/A

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

  In Greek:

  Προπαρασκευαστικό Πρόγραμμα Εκμάθησης της Αγγλικής Γλώσσας

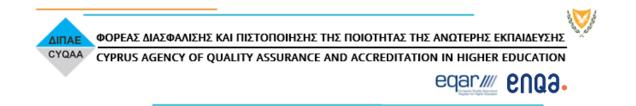 **In English:**

  English Language Foundation Course

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

- **Programme's status:** New

- **Concentrations (if any):**

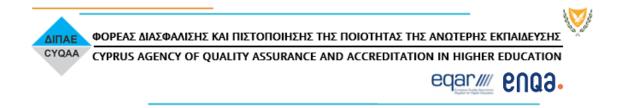**In Greek:** Concentrations

In English: Concentrations

A. Introduction

The meeting started with the introduction of the committee members and the presentation of the institution. On part of the institution Yiannis Taliotis, Head of the Institution (Member Evaluation Committee) gave a presentation on the history and mission of the institution and aims to create an inclusive environment for diverse groups of students. Present in this phase of the meeting were Stelios Christophides, Head of Administration (Member Evaluation Committee), Estelle Taliotis, Director Academic Studies (Member Evaluation Committee), Eleni Nicolaou (Course Co-ordinator English FAD Course) and Anni Nicolaou (Lecturer English FAD Course). The school offers three BA programmes in Arts and an MA in Fine Arts (two BA and one MA programs in franchise with UCA, UK) and is proud to be the partner of University of Creative Arts in the UK. Despite its small size, the institution is part of the ERASMUS+ charter and has established partnership with a variety of European universities, Alexandria Library in Egypt. The university offers a range of opportunities for professional development (one day a week paid + other workshops, partnerships, conferences etc.). The language of instruction is English at the institution. Yiannis Taliotis also explained that the new foundation course fills a gap the institution has aimed to fill for a long time, as previously many students were rejected due to lack of competence in English despite meeting other requirements for admission. Currently 160 students study at the institution and 15 tutors employed full time and several part-time members. Professor Pawlak asked some follow-up questions regarding the quality assurance policies.

In the next part of the visit, Eleni Nicolaou (Course Co-ordinator English FAD Course) gave a presentation on the aims, structure. content and methodological approaches of the English Foundation Programme. Ms Nicalaou highlighted that the course will also develop critical thinking skills, intercultural communication and self-regulation skills in addition to enhancing students' English language proficiency. Professor Csizér asked a question regarding how single skills that are represented in the rubrics can be assessed using an integrated skills approach to teaching. Professor Pawlak raised a question about the development of learning strategies, while Ms. Christofides enquired into the rationale and approach for preparing students for different types of proficiency exams. The institution responded to these questions in detail and satisfactory manner.

In the third section of the visit Eleni Nicolaou (Course Co-ordinator English FAD Course), Elena Tsitlakidou and Anni Nicolaou (Lecturer English FAD Course) participated. Professor Kormos discussed professional development opportunities with the staff members. Professor Csizér asked questions about the use of authentic materials in the modules and support available for students with disabilities. It was apparent from the discussion that staff members would need further professional development on supporting students with disabilities and to enhance their assessment literacy.

The final part of the visit assessed the institutions' policies and practices of student admission, progression monitoring and support as well as library and IT resources. Representative of the academy gave detailed and relevant answers to the queries of the panel.
The visit concluded with an exit session at 12.25 Cyprus time.

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Prof. Judit Kormos	Chair	Lancaster University
Prof. Kata Wein Csizér	Member	Eötvös Loránd University
Prof. Miroslaw Pawlak	Member	Adam Mickiewicz University
Vasilia Christofides	Student member	University of Cyprus

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:*

  *<u>**Findings**</u>*

  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.
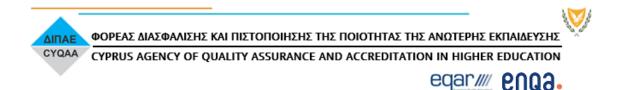
  *<u>**Strengths**</u>*

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

  *<u>**Areas of improvement and recommendations**</u>*

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

- *The 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.*

- *<u>**The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.**</u>*

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*

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- o *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
- o *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
- o *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
- o *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
- o *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*
- o *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- o *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*
- o *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:*
    - o *selection criteria*
    - o *intended learning outcomes*
    - o *qualification awarded*
    - o *teaching, learning and assessment procedures*
    - o *pass rates*
    - o *learning opportunities available to the students*
    - o *graduate employment information*

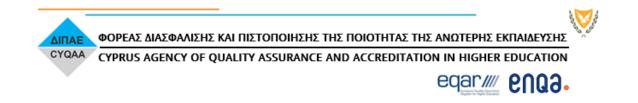## 1.4 Information management

Standards

- ● *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
    - o *key performance indicators*
    - o *profile of the student population*
    - o *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
    - o *students' satisfaction with their programmes*

- o *learning resources and student support available*
- o *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)?*
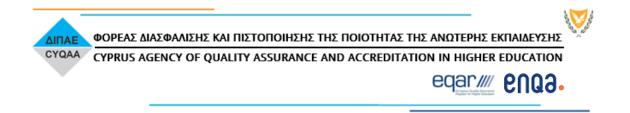- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*

- *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

The analysis of the documentations submitted by the Cyprus Academy of Arts (CAA) and the online meetings with the representatives of the institution allowed the following observations:

1. The institution has adopted transparent policies for quality assurance that will be applicable to the English Language Foundation Course. These policies are laid out in the *Quality Standards & Indicators College Manual*. According to this document, quality assurance in the institution is guided by four overarching principles: (1) ensuring that academic programs have clear and explicit intended outcomes, (2) ensuring that CAA staff are ready, willing and able to provide teaching and learner support that will help students achieve the learning outcomes intended for the programs, (3) providing tangible recognition of the contribution to the CAA work by the members of staff who demonstrate particular excellence, expertise and dedication, and (4) aspiring to improve and enhance the education provided to the students by means of adopting and monitoring specific key performance indicators. The main CAA body responsible for the implementation of the policies of quality assurance is the Internal Quality Committee, which answers to the Governing Body and works closely with the Academic Committee. It consists of College Director, Deputy Director and Director of Studies, Head of School of Art Media and Design, program leaders, two staff members and elected student representatives. External verifiers, consultants and examiners can also be co-opted if such a need arises. The English Foundation Course Leader will also be a member of this Committee, which will ensure that the procedures of quality assurance will be directly applicable to this program as well. The Internal Quality Committee meets at least six times a year and its responsibilities include, among others, the development, approval and validation, monitoring, and periodic review of all CAA programs of study, discontinuation of programs of study, supervision of admissions policies and entry tariffs, approval of proposals and recommendations for program leaders, ensuring that policies and procedures for quality assurance are effective with respect to, for example, curriculum, development and innovation, progression, retention and attainment and the impact of entry requirements and admissions policy, graduate employability, student survey outcomes and student feedback, and external examiner and professional, accrediting and statutory body reports. The tools used in the process of quality assurance include detailed policies for the approval of new programs, annual and period reports, feedback from students (unit evaluation questionnaires, student satisfaction surveys, student representatives in CAA bodies), reliance on internal verifiers and external examiners. On the whole, the policies and procedures for quality assurance and impressive in terms of their aims and scope given the small size of the institution. Equally
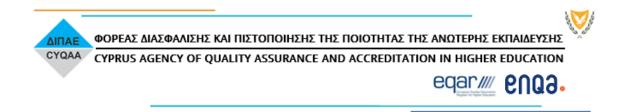
impressive is the return rate of student questionnaires and surveys, which, based on the information provided during the online meetings, exceeds 50% in many cases. It is also a sign of excellent practice that a draft student handbook has been put together for the English Foundation Course even though the program is not even yet running. Yet another good practice is that the documents outlining quality assurance policies as well as specific procedures are available in their entirety on the CAA website.

The analysis of the official documents provided by the CAA, such as the *Quality Standards & Indicators College Manual*, the *Human Resources Handbook*, or the *Student Handbook*, clearly shows that the CAA follows policies of inclusion, equal opportunities, academic freedom and freedom of expression, academic integrity, ethical conduct as well as anti-discrimination when it comes to age, gender, race, culture, disability, sexual orientation or religious beliefs.

2. In line with the guidelines provided by the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, the English Language Foundation Course aims to prepare international students for admission into institutions of higher education by enhancing their English proficiency in order to allow them to improve from the B1 to the B2 levels according to the Common European Framework of Reference to be able to pass any accredited English language examinations but also to enhance their chances of employment on entering the labor market. Importantly, the CAA has gone to great lengths to justify the need for this program by referring to the feasibility study that was conducted by the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus and focuses on trends of employment trends between the years 2017-2027 and elaborating on employability prospects for the graduates. As is evident in the submitted documentation, concrete steps will be taken to allow the students to take advantage of opportunities for interactional mobility (Erasmus+, international universities, organizations, and businesses).

The program is intended to allow students to achieve a number of specific learning outcomes related to improvement in such areas as grammar and vocabulary, listening and reading comprehension, speaking and writing skills, pronunciation and intonation, cultural awareness and competency and critical thinking and analysis. The program is also aimed to encourage the use of appropriate language learning strategies and to help students monitor and self-evaluate their progress in different areas. The program spans one academic year (two semesters) and includes the following specific courses: (1) Introduction to the language expectations of the course and Academic Environment (I & II), (2) Listening and Speaking Skills Development (I & II), (3) Reading Skills Enhancement (I & II), (4) Writing Skills Enhancement (I & II), (5) Academic Vocabulary and Language (I & II), and (6) Language Practice and Application (I & II). Each course involves 3 50-minute periods per week for 13 weeks, with a total of 39 periods per semester. The analysis of the descriptions these courses indicated that the program is consistent with current developments in society, fostering, for example, collaboration, communication, creativity and innovation. Based on meticulous analysis of the contents of the modules, methodology and assessment criteria, it can be concluded that the program will allow students to achieve the specified learning outcomes. The program is coherent and allows smooth student progression. As indicated above, similar to other programs run by the CAA, the English Foundation Course will be subject to regular, thorough evaluation, monitoring and review.

That having been said, there are two areas that should be given attention: (1) there was lack of clarity during the meeting with the program leader concerning the day-to-day monitoring of how the program is running and the extent to which its objectives are in fact implemented; it is thus recommended that specific procedures are developed for this purpose (e.g., lesson observations, teacher meetings, etc.), (2) there is a need to emphasize the development of learner autonomy and appropriate use of language learning strategies in the specific modules in the program; in this connection, some training for teachers might be necessary in this area since there was a surprising lack of understanding of such key concepts in meetings with the course leaders and prospective teachers.

3. The information about the program will be made public once it has been accredited and has started running, as is the case with other programs of study on offer at the CAA.

4. Information about effective management of the program is not yet collected because it is not running. However, careful analysis of the policies and procedures for quality assurance shows 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, coherent and transparent policies and procedures for quality assurance, which are impressive for an institution of such a small size;
- availability of a draft student handbook for the English Foundation program even though it is not yet running;
- involvement of internal and external stakeholders, including students, in ongoing program monitoring and review;
- availability of all the documents regulating quality assurance to all parties involved;
- high return rates of student questionnaires and surveys which can be attributed to the small size of the institution.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- the need for more explicit focus on the development of learner autonomy and adept use of language learning strategies in the modules comprising the program; opportunities for staff development in this area are needed as well;
- implementing clear-cut procedures for everyday monitoring of the running of the program (e.g., lesson observations, regular staff meetings). ·
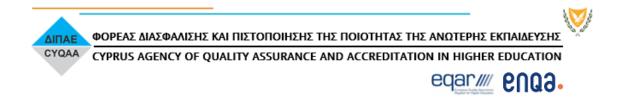
Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas:

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
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)*

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

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

<u>Standards</u>

- *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

<u>Standards</u>

- *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.*
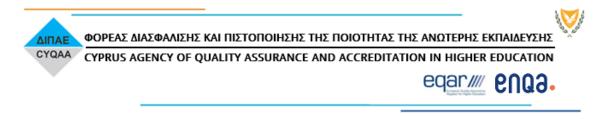
2.3 Student assessment

<u>Standards</u>
- *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 application and the onsite visit, it is evident that the programme provides both academic and social support to students through student-centered approaches, laying a strong foundation for further studies in Higher Education in English. The submitted courses offer flexibility for students to develop their English skills. The content of these courses caters to students' needs by employing various pedagogical methods. The intended learning outcomes are well-aligned with the course content. The courses are designed to encourage students to take an active and independent role in their learning. It is evident that the course designers are aware of the diverse student population and address complex student profiles effectively. The student-centered philosophy of CAA is clearly reflected in the teaching materials. Learning outcomes are developed progressively, with strong emphasis on critical thinking, cultural competency, and language learning strategies. Based on our interview, it is clear that skills will be developed in an integrated manner through task- and project-based approaches, building on students' needs and prior knowledge. Teaching adopts communicative approaches and a detailed SWOT analysis is in place. Differentiation will be achieved by providing personal mentoring sessions as well as peer-to-peer sessions.
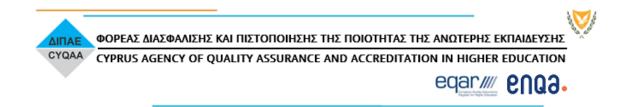
Assessment procedures are appropriate, balanced and consistent. The process is transparent, with mitigation practices in place. Both formative and summative assessment are outlined but summative assessment practices need to be developed. There is an appeal policy and disability support is provided in assessment. Extenuating circumstances are in place.

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

There are several strengths that we can highlight here:

1. Students' individual differences are taken into account in course delivery. More importantly, autonomy, group dynamics, self-confidence, engagement and language learning strategies are emphasized.

2. Small workshops with the help of technology will be offered to develop students' individual differences.
3. The use of authentic materials and texts is praiseworthy including multimodal approaches.
4. Team building and team bonding opportunities are given to both teachers and students.
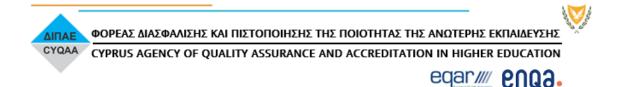5. Students are involved in assessment processes through peer assessment activities.

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

We could not identify any apparent problem areas, however, one aspect to consider could be the integration of skills at the level of course development and assessment. In addition, a clearer focus on the development of individual learning differences within the courses could further support students' language development. Finally, we think teachers should be provided with professional development opportunities to effectively support students with learning difficulties or disabilities as well as professional development may be needed in assessment literacy.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
2	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Not relevant
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

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- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*
- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How are the members of the teaching staff supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills? How is feedback given to members of the teaching staff regarding their teaching results and teaching skills?*
- *How is the teaching performance assessed? How does their teaching performance affect their remuneration, evaluation and/or selection?*
- *Is teaching connected with research?*
- *Does the HEI involve visiting teaching staff from other HEIs in Cyprus and abroad?*
- *What is the number, workload, qualifications and status of the teaching staff (rank, full/part timers)?*
- *Is student evaluation conducted on the teaching staff? If yes, have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*

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

Recruitment and selection procedures aim to ensure impartial evaluation based on merit, devoid of bias or favoritism. Based on the documentation, the institution upholds transparency and reliability throughout the recruitment and hiring process.

The university conducts an annual appraisal of teachers' performance that provides lecturers with useful feedback and suggestions for further professional development. The annual review of programs that is part of the quality assurance framework includes student feedback at module and programme level. The lecturing staff is encouraged and given opportunities as well as financial support for participation in training sessions, workshops, and conferences to enhance their skills and knowledge.

Ms. Annie Georgiadou holds an MA Digital Technology, Communication and Education (TESOL Pathway) and BA English with TESOL. She has extensive experience in teaching English as a foreign language, although mostly in private and secondary school, not at the tertiary level. Ms. Eleni Nicolaou has a BA in English Language Teaching from the University of Szeged and more recently Master of Arts in Educational Administration and Leadership from the European University. Her work experience is also mostly from the private language school sector but she has been engaged extensively in teaching exam preparation classes, which will be a great asset for the foundation year course. Based on the above, 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.
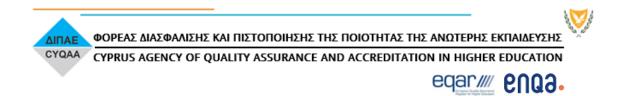
The criterion concerning synergies of teaching and research is not relevant for this type of programme, as research is not part of the job description/requirement for most staff members.

Strengths

The institution conducts an annual staff development review to review lecturers' progress and work progress and set future objectives. As part of the review future development needs and opportunities are also discussed. The institution has clear and detailed policies on staff performance appraisal and professional development. In addition to formal internal and external training opportunities (e.g courses, workshops and conferences), the university offers several innovative means of professional development such as action learning, mentoring, work based projects, research, job shadowing and secondments, and • peer observation and review. The level of detail provided about staff performance review and developmental policies in the application is outstanding, and is exemplary among universities not only in Cyprus but internationally. There is a lot of support available internally for newly joined lecturers in terms of team building and problem solving skills.
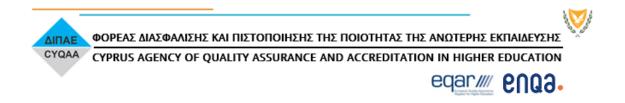
Areas of improvement and recommendations

Teachers' professional knowledge regarding learner autonomy, learning strategies, supporting diverse learners and assessment literacy needs upscaling. The institution has appropriate mechanisms and resources in place for professional development and it is important that the newly joining tutors fully benefit from these.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
3	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Not relevant

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.*
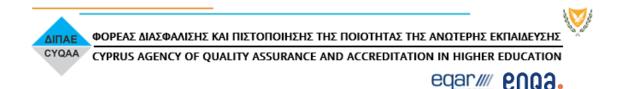
4.2 Student progression

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)?*
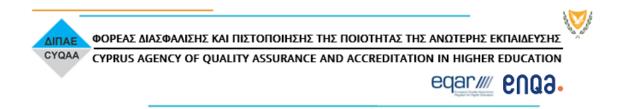> - *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*
> - *Is the certification of the HEI accompanied by a diploma supplement, which is in line with European and international standards?*

Findings

Admission requirements are externally regulated. The institution provided an appropriate and detailed description of the admission requirements and procedures. Students are assessed regularly through written and oral tests and in class interactive activities and their progress is carefully monitored. Student attendance and performance are also closely monitored.

Strengths

The Cyprus Academy of Art has solid and detailed procedures to monitor students' progress and support services ensure that students with difficulties receive relevant and efficient help. Inclusive and reasonable adjustment policies are detailed and provide meaningful and effective support for students with disabilities.

The students have access to staff members in a generous number of office hours (5 hour per week), and have an assigned personal tutor. The monitoring of attendance is thorough. The presentation given by teaching staff outlined detailed and effective procedures for monitoring and supporting students' progress.

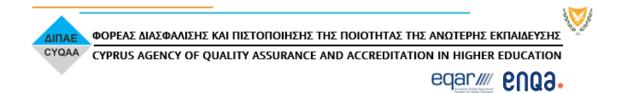*Areas of improvement and recommendations*

The institution is converting to a new digital management system and is planning to hire new administrative staff if student population increases. It will be important to put this in place because 20 new students result in a 15% increase in the student body of the university.

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

Sub-area		*Non-compliant/* *Partially Compliant/Compliant*
4	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Not relevant
4.4	Student certification	Not relevant

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.*
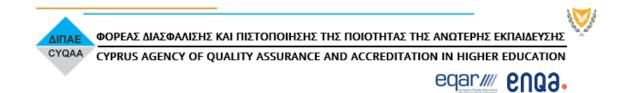
5.2 Physical resources

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.*
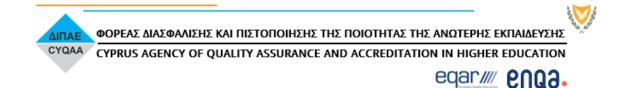
5.4 Student support

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.)?*

ΔΙΠΑΕ CYQAA ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
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- *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?*

The Foundation Programme effectively fills a gap in the current higher education market by offering a tailored academic English curriculum specifically designed for students pursuing further education in the arts. While its primary focus is on arts preparation, the programme is not exclusively limited to this pathway, allowing for broader applicability. The team demonstrates a strong level of motivation, evidenced by the long-term commitment of both academic and support staff. This continuity contributes to a close-knit and collaborative working environment.

The small size of the institution allows the Director of Studies to maintain a high level of oversight and attention to detail—an important asset in the management of a higher education institution. Although certain areas would benefit from more comprehensive planning and development, the institution's leadership has shown a clear willingness to address these challenges. The manageable scale of the HEI positions it well for a smooth transition toward meeting higher quality standards.

Strengths

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

Strengths and Examples of Good Practice

1. Intercollegiate Library Access Initiative
 The HEI has developed an innovative and practical solution to support students' academic development through the creation of an intercollegiate library card. This initiative enables students of the Cyprus Academy of Art (CAA) to access the resources of both the State Technology University of Cyprus (TEPAK), conveniently located across the street, and the Municipal Library of Limassol. This initiative significantly broadens students' access to academic materials, including physical books, online academic journals, and other digital resources. The institution is also in the process of securing EBSCO registration, which will further enhance access to high-quality academic content.

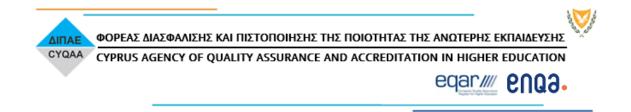2. Support for Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
 The HEI demonstrates a commendable level of awareness and responsiveness to diverse learning needs. It currently implements strategies for identifying and supporting students with SEND, primarily through collaboration with external professionals who specialize in educational support. The institution also provides on-site access to a student counsellor and/or welfare officer, with plans to further expand this provision.

3. Individualised Student Support
 The small student population at CAA allows instructors to adopt a highly personalised approach to teaching and learning. This enables educators to respond effectively to a wide range of learning needs and to provide tailored support to individual students, fostering a more inclusive and student-centred learning environment.

4. Motivated and Committed Staff Team
 The teaching and support staff at CAA demonstrate strong motivation and long-term commitment to the institution. This continuity contributes to a stable learning environment and a strong sense of community among staff and students.

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.

Problem Areas and Recommendations for Improvement

1. Targeted Learning Resources
 Problem:
 The learning resources described in the application are limited and not fully aligned with the goals of a foundation-level programme intended to prepare students for tertiary education. The use of a single course book (Unlock 3, Cambridge University Press) across all English modules is outdated and pedagogically insufficient. Furthermore, the chosen text is aimed at general English learners, rather than those seeking to develop academic English skills.
 Recommendation:
 Adopt a more comprehensive and multimodal approach to learning materials. Resources should include a mix of textbooks specifically tailored to English for Academic Purposes (EAP), supplemented by a curated collection of materials that reflect a variety of formats—such as audiovisual content, academic journal excerpts, and digital tools. Ideally, instructors should be provided with a flexible learning resource pack composed of components from multiple sources, allowing them to adapt to students' individual levels and needs, particularly in the context of creative arts education.

2. Subject-Specific and Arts-Focused Materials
 Problem:
 The current resource strategy does not reflect the specific academic focus of the institution, particularly its orientation toward the creative arts. Teaching materials lack the contextual relevance needed to engage students who are preparing for further study in artistic disciplines.
 Recommendation:
 Integrate subject-specific content into the curriculum, especially resources that relate to academic and professional language used in the arts. This could include case studies, visual and media texts, and vocabulary-building tasks drawn from real-world academic and artistic contexts. Incorporating discipline-relevant materials will help students develop both general academic literacy and field-specific competencies.
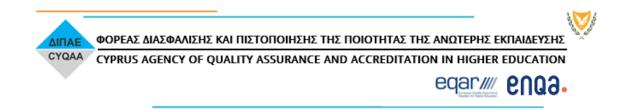
3. Diverse Learning Format
 Problem:
 The programme appears to rely predominantly on traditional print-based course books. This approach is not in step with contemporary pedagogical practices, particularly for a modern foundation programme that seeks to prepare students for digital and multidisciplinary academic environments.
 Recommendation:
 Incorporate a broader range of media and learning platforms into course design. This includes online resources, interactive learning tools, and digital platforms that allow for autonomous learning and self-assessment. Particular attention should be given to the integration of audiovisual materials, which are especially relevant for students with visual learning styles and for those preparing for studies in the visual and creative arts.

4. Differentiation for Higher-Achieving Students
 Problem:

The current approach to curriculum design does not appear to sufficiently account for differentiation, particularly for higher-achieving students. Given that students entering the programme typically hold an IELTS score of band 5, and the primary course book (Unlock 3, CUP) is pitched at a B1 CEFR level, it is likely that a number of students will have already surpassed the level of the core materials upon entry. This creates a risk of disengagement and under-challenging higher-level learners.

Recommendation:
Implement differentiated instruction strategies that include the use of scaffolded authentic resources and materials from higher CEFR levels (B2 and C1), to ensure appropriate academic stretch for more advanced students. This should be done alongside continued support for those requiring remediation. Differentiation can be built into lesson planning, assessment tasks, and supplementary materials, helping to maintain engagement and progression for all learners, regardless of entry level.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
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?*

Findings

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Strengths

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

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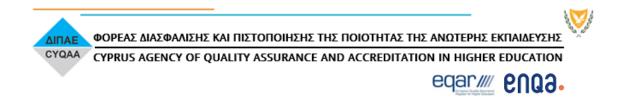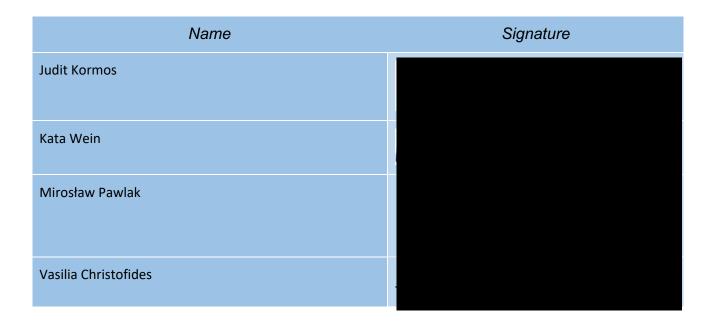| Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant
6	Selection criteria and requirements	Choose answer
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Choose answer
6.3	Supervision and committees	Choose answer

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 EEC concluded that the program under consideration has the potential to deliver quality education that complies with the standards of the CYQAA. The visit was well organized and the submitted documentation contained relevant information. The application could have included more detail on some learning resources and the assessment methods for exams. The EEC was very much impressed by individual attention and support students can receive due to the small size of the academy. The teaching methods planned to be applied are student-centered, but the panel has suggested several improvements regarding the selection of teaching resources, integration of subject-specific content and stronger differentiation in teaching.

The university has relevant supportive procedures in place to assist international students' integration in the student community. Learning, teaching, infrastructure, student support and administrative resources are appropriate but if larger groups of students apply and join the foundation programme, the academy needs to invest in administrative support (human as well as management resources). The panel would recommend that teaching staff are strongly supported and encouraged to undertake professional development in the areas of inclusive language teaching, assessment literacy and supporting learner autonomy. They also need induction and support as lecturers in higher education because they lack prior experience in this sector. We wish Cyprus Academy of Art success in launching the Foundation Programme.

D. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Judit Kormos	
Kata Wein	
Mirosław Pawlak	
Vasilia Christofides	

Date: 15th April 2025