

Doc. 300.1.1/2

Date: Date.

# External Evaluation Report (E-learning programme of study)

- **Higher Education Institution:**  
Philips University
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **School/Faculty (if applicable):** Education and Sciences
- **Department/ Sector:** Educational Studies
- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

## In Greek:

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΙΚΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΔΑΚΤΙΚΗΣ ΕΠΑΡΚΕΙΑΣ (ΠΔΕ)

**In English:** 18 months/90 ECTS, MSc., Distance Learning

MSc Teaching and Pedagogical Adequacy

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

**In Greek:** Concentrations

**In English:** Concentrations



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

## A. Introduction

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

The EEC reviewed the application for the launch of a new MSc Pedagogical and Teaching Adequacy (18 months/90 ECTS – 60 ECTS for course work and 30 ECTS for a final thesis.

It aims to respond to changing regulations in Greece regarding the certification of teachers – some of whom are already teaching in schools, and others with a Bachelor qualification where they hope to join the teaching profession. To date this has not been a requirement. Our understanding is that these regulatory changes are intended to ensure that teachers in classrooms in Greece (and potentially those in Cyprus) have adequate training in ‘the how and why’ of teaching (that is knowledge of pedagogy, assessment and the curriculum and the contexts which mediate teaching and learning, beyond the discipline areas that they have acquired expertise in.

The EEC received the paperwork in good time to analyse them, with some video and paperwork arriving several days prior to the site visit. We undertook a full day site visit on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023, that was complemented by recorded lessons of Philips University professors, and virtual tour of the campus facilities.

The day was spent hearing presentations from each of the groups, and whilst the committee found this very helpful, time issues emerged as a result of sequential translation. This meant we often did not have sufficient time to drill down into the detail of the various courses that make up the overall programme. During the site visit we noticed an open, constructive and friendly climate where every staff member felt free to speak out. There were occasional moments of understanding due to language issues.

As the programme has not yet been approved to be taught, we were searching for evidence in our meetings of the policies, infrastructures, and resources that the university has in place to support the delivery of this innovative distance teacher education programme.

The EEC (see section B below for the list of evaluators) appreciated the opportunity to meet with, receive input from, as well as direct questions to, (i) the programme coordinator and the team who would be involved in the delivery of the programme, (ii) those with key roles in both the overall governance and administrative support structure, and (iii) several students who were able to talk about their overall experience of studying at Philips University in Cyprus. It was disappointing that no students who were enrolled in one of the distance education programmes of Philips University were able to meet us.

## B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>University</i>
<b>Susan L. Robertson</b>	Professor	U of Cambridge
<b>Wilfried Admiraal</b>	Professor	Oslo Metropolitan
<b>Hans Hummel</b>	Professor	Open U of the Netherlands
<b>Victoria Michaelindou</b>	PhD student member	U of Cyprus
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

## C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

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

### Findings

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

### Strengths

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

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

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

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

### **Sub-areas**

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

### **1.1 Policy for quality assurance**

#### **Standards**

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

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

#### **Standards**

- *The programme of study:*
  - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
  - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
  - *benefits from external expertise*
  - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
  - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
  - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
  - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
  - *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
  - *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*

- *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
- *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
- *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
- *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

### 1.3 Public information

#### Standards

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

### 1.4 Information management

#### Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
  - *key performance indicators*
  - *profile of the student population*
  - *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
  - *students' satisfaction with their programmes*
  - *learning resources and student support available*
  - *career paths of graduates*
- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *How/to what extent are students themselves involved in the development of the content of their studies?*
- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*
- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*
- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate? Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content? What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- ***How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?***
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *Have the results of student feedback been analysed and taken into account, and how (e.g., when planning in-service training for the teaching staff)?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*



### Findings

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

Philips University received its university status in 2020 but has a longer institutional footprint that takes in Philips College established in 1978. Its mission is to establish programmes that make a vital contribution to the wider community – in Cyprus and also in Greece. It also prioritises research informed teaching and supporting its faculty to engage with research. It also aims to have graduate from its programme's professionals with a strong sense of their professional responsibilities.

The University has a quality assurance system in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for quality assurance in the European area, and the Researcher Development Framework (RDF), a professional framework developed for researchers. It is further certified by The Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education (CYQAA).

The President (Mr. Philippos) made clear there is a growing need for a program that caters for resolving current problems in pedagogical quality of teachers. The Philips University is thought to be different from other universities in Cyprus/Greece because of the different courses it provides, and because of strong collaborations with professional bodies (like the chartered accountants). According to the President, Cyprus is turning swiftly into a business hub with stronger needs for services.

The University also has internal quality assurance procedures for all its operations (based on self-evaluation, under the supervision by an Internal Evaluation Committee. There is also accreditation by professional bodies (Chartered Associations, Institutes) where relevant. It has a Distance Learning Unit that is actively involved in supporting staff and emerging programmes.

Another unique aspect of the wider university is the international orientation with students from over 20 countries. The university is proud of its alumni and organizes events and seminars for them abroad.

There is an External Advisory Board that keeps track of market needs and suggests new academic programs to the Senate / Council of the university, this was the case for the Programme under study.

The University Quality Assurance System follows the external regulations. There is a University Internal Quality Assurance Committee in which faculty members, and students participate. Students have the opportunity to give feedback at the programme, course and tutor levels. This feedback is taken into account, e.g., in programme development and in recruitment.

The University Quality Assurance seems in place to internally monitor the quality on a regular basis, on aspects such as, programme standards, performance of teaching and administration staff and student learning experiences. Some members were present during a site visit session to further explain these procedures. The EEC noticed they had scored the program on all aspects as good to excellent.

Philips University (PU) houses four departments with this online Master of 'Pedagogical and Teaching Adequacy' being part of the School of Education and Sciences.

Scholarship funding is available for some students enrolled at Philips U and presumably the Master under review is by private donations and matriculation fees (about EUR 10.000 per student per year), and a smaller (undefined) percentage from externally funded research projects.

The qualification system is clear and well delimited, and in accordance with regulations. Feedback is provided to the students appropriately.

The broad directions for the Design, Approval and Monitoring processes are in place to ensure student progress, however in relation to this specific programme (see section 2) it will need specific elaborations beyond that which is typical of the current programmes (see Conclusions and Final Remarks).

Students enrolled at Philips University have support to help them with different kinds of problems (disabilities, emotional issues, etc.).

In relation to information management there was no specific information on the standards to monitor and analyse overall performance, such as student progress and drop-out rates in general. That said, at the site visit we were given some evidence on student welfare support.

### Strengths

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

- Its mission is to establish programmes that make a vital contribution to the wider community – in Cyprus and also in Greece. It also prioritises research informed teaching and supports its faculty to engage with research. It also aims to have graduates from its programmes see themselves as professionals with a strong sense of their responsibilities able to contribute to the community and to the labour market.
- The Programme intends to undertake 1- and 2-yearly Reviews of the program. We note that regulations from the Accreditation Agency mean that intermediate changes are not allowed.
- In relation to the design of the specific programme we are reviewing, we agree with the Programme and its Coordinator that there is a strong need to contribute to higher pedagogical quality amongst teachers in Cyprus/Greece, and that the programme will meet this need. Needs derived from schools will feed this provision. The program is intended to be highly practical with students working with(in) operating schools which is hard to organize (but with MOU's having been signed with 8 schools for this already) and will be characterized by deploying innovative teaching methods ("teach as you preach" principle). We found the program coordinator to have some inspiring ideas, but the challenge is now how to implement these into concrete activities. We note some might not also be that feasible (like the idea to use AI for teachers to generate their learning materials).

### 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.*

- According to the standards, it is necessary to include information about graduate employment support and key performance indicators on the website so that this can be consulted by the public and especially potential candidates for student and faculty recruitment. This should be included for the program. The

University publishes programs, selection criteria, intended learning outcomes, and course descriptions. On the website, there is also information about the campus and facilities at the University.

- Key performance indicators, including career paths of graduates for the program, maybe also the subprograms, should be collected and properly processed, and analyzed thoroughly. Data analysis is one of the best resources to improve programs and plan next steps in a changing Higher Education scenario. The Faculty should periodically collect and analyze such data and generate possible explanations of the results in order to improve in the future.
- We also recommend considering if the amount of work required and ECTS given for each course unit should be the same ('one size fits all'), independent of content. From an administrative perspective we understand the practicality, but from the academic perspective we feel there could be more variety in needs, and more mutual alignment between courses. This might also introduce more options for the students with the same amount of work for the teachers. This also applies to the way in which units are being assessed upon completion. For example, assessment of the knowledge presented in the courses on research methodology could be relegated to other courses, in which this knowledge is to be applied.

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

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

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

### Sub-areas

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

**2.2 Practical training**

**2.3 Student assessment**

**2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities**

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

#### Standards

- *The e-learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.*
- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*
- *A specific plan is developed to safeguard and assess the interaction:*
  - *among students*
  - *between students and teaching staff*
  - *between students and study guides/material of study*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the students focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of e-learning delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the e-learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*

### **2.2 Practical training**

#### Standards

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

## 2.3 Student assessment

### Standards

- *A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on e-learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.*
- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for the method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the e-learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

## 2.4 Study guides structure, content and interactive activities

### Standards

- *A study guide for each course, fully aligned with e-learning philosophy and methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:*
  - *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*
  - *Presentation of course material, and students' activities on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)*
  - ***Weekly schedule of interactive activities and exercises (i.e. simulations, problem solving, scenarios, argumentation)***
  - *Clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
  - *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
  - *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
  - *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
  - *Synopsis*
- *Study guides, material and activities are appropriate for the level of the programme according to the EQF.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

- *Is the nature of the programme compatible with e-learning delivery?*
- *How do the programme, the material, the facilities, and the guidelines safeguard the interaction between students, students and teaching staff, students and the material?*
- *How many students upload their work and discuss it in the platform during the semester?*
- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*
- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- ***Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?***
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- ***Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?***
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*

### Findings

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

### **Teaching and Learning Methodology**

The teaching methodology online as described in the study guides is rather conventional and leans on (virtual) class lectures with additional (online) teaching materials and assignments to be done in practice, typically the workplace of the students. The pedagogical model provides a generic setup of 7 courses (semesters 1-and 2), and a semester with a master thesis (semester 3). All courses have the same structure. This allows for easy organization and administrative support.



The EEC noted the intention to implement a sufficient variety in teaching methods, but this was only partly reflected and specified in the study guides we received. There was mention of case studies and role play to make the practical assignments and exercises more active and immersive. We stress there still will be a need for clear scripting and templates in advance to be used for that in the LMS (i.e., Moodle in combination with Teams).

It is expected to be sufficient interaction between the student and the teacher in a course. Students are expected to collaborate with each other facilitated by educational technology. An intended example is where students will use a forum to simulate by role-play a board of teachers who are in disagreement. Again, this would require some advance collaboration scripting of the online environment.

### **Practical Training**

The study guides did not sufficiently reflect educational activities which encourage students' active participation in the professional practice. However, the discussion revealed this is intended to be the case (again discussion of case studies, analysis of applications in your own context, some actual implementation of the various components of the educational reality, etc.). Other examples are the courses on Teaching Methodology of Special Courses (PDE 121) and Teaching Practice (PDE 122) where this will be the case.

Students without any teaching post (pre-service teachers) will only experience their teaching practicum online with students who are physically present in school. These students will be licensed to teach in regular schools as well, which might mean that they are not well-prepared for classroom management.

### **Assessment**

Students do assignments and hand in results. Assessment is based on these assignments, on active participation, and on a final exam. Procedures are clear.

Regarding thesis support and assessment, no other information about the methodology of supervision and evaluation criteria is available than just a short policy document. The rubrics for 'scientific assignments' in courses and thesis research are procedural and do not contain research quality criteria (research design, operational research questions / hypotheses, APA criteria for writing and lay out, et cetera).

### **Study Guides, Content and Interactive Activity**

The Bibliography of the courses should be updated to include more recent publications as well as more international publications.

The purposes of the program of 90 ECTS are clearly defined with the program having no specific specializations. The main intended target groups are Bachelor students (that want to become teachers) and teachers already working in schools. Typical job context is that of a teacher working in secondary education schools (both public and private), that require the didactical accreditation this program (on 'Pedagogical

quality and teaching') provides. From the documentation received we came to understand that teaching practice would have a focus on Ancient Greek and history of education. There was mention of Teaching Methodology of Specific Courses (four other domains) with domain experts as staff contributing (PDE121), but no domain specific information was presented in the application. During our discussion it became clear that teaching practice will indeed be possible on a variety of domains, which should be made clearer in the public information.

The emphasis is on development of knowledge. But skills development and practical training with regard to the development of teaching skills play an important role. It was only during the discussions that we came to find out the practical component is indeed important and substantial part of the programme. The programme coordinator, for instance, mentioned that students online will be overlooking / participating online (or recorded) classroom practice. The Moodle environment will be used for break out rooms (channels) with small groups exchanging their experiences from the classroom practice and/or real life own experiences.

### Strengths

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

- The well-structured Program with the -for both Cyprus and Greece- rather unique (as staff claims) possibility for teachers to receive didactic accreditation attracts students that are (future) teachers.
- Some ambition for research-informed teaching is evident.
- Flexibility and organization of the DL program attracts (working) students and makes them get back for other programs. However, there is currently only one other DL program (Counselling) currently operational at Philips University so it was kind of hard to establish how the DLU and organization are successfully working in operation.
- Some learning activities, exercises and projects are designed to promote collaboration among students. A variety of digital tools are used to support collaborative online learning. Moodle is used to work together using Break-out rooms etc., where Teams is used for more directive communication.
- There is clear evidence of good use of peer-assessment and formative assessment during courses, which on a course level are stored in Moodle.
- The use of external experts in some specialist domain and research methodology courses was also well placed.
- Good tutor-student relationships were reported both by teachers and students that were present, but from other existing (non-Distance Learning) programs. The instructors intend to work in close contact with the students providing the guidance and the encouragement that will be needed especially in distance learning settings.



### 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 found good coverage of some important and topics from the Educational Sciences. We remained concerned about the absence of more up to date innovations in pedagogical approaches and teaching methods, and the references that are kind of outdated (most dating before 2010). We would like to see a more up-to-date curriculum that also engages with digitally mediated teacher education, especially since this is a fast-evolving field of research, especially taking into account the crucial role of 'digital didactics' and learning technology.
- In the site visit, it was proposed that there would be an increasing complexity in knowledge and skills across the three semesters. This is not reflected in the paperwork. The courses are still rather 'stand alone'. It is not clear how they build upon each other nor how all required competence areas of the European Quality Framework (Dublin descriptors) are distributed over the courses. However, during the site visit the committee heard intentions and ideas to align courses and include missing competences, distribute research competences across courses, and introduce more innovative instruction formats. This needs to be worked out and made more explicit. Some innovative approaches presented by staff made us more confident that more will be achieved than what the application on paper suggests.
- Include more opportunities for students to take an active role in knowledge construction.
- We recommend considering more diversity in final course assessments (e.g., design of interventions, games, lesson plans), and ask for additional proof in the form of videos, portfolios, results of questionnaires, et cetera.

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

Sub-area		<i><b>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</b></i>
<b>2.1</b>	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Partially compliant
<b>2.2</b>	Practical training	Partially compliant
<b>2.3</b>	Student assessment	Compliant
<b>2.4</b>	Study guides structure, content and interactive activities	Partially compliant

### 3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

#### **Sub-areas**

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

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

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

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

#### **Standards**

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Training, guidance and support are provided to the teaching staff focusing on interaction and the specificities of e-learning.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

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

#### **Standards**

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

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

#### **Standards**

- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*

- *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
- *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

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

### Findings

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

Staff recruitment and development procedures and practices are clear and in place. **Recruitment** of teaching staff seems to be based on research output indicators (publications, grants) instead of previous teaching performance. No teaching statement is required if teachers applied for university positions. Teaching staff attends just-in-time just-in-place **professional development** activities: the Distance Education Unit provides workshops, courses, and advice for teaching staff to be updated with the newest technologies and technology-enhanced practices.

The **number** of teaching staff is limited, which can be expected of a program that has to be implemented. Each course will be taught by one teacher. A majority of the teachers are indicated as '**visiting**' but are actually part of agreements with Greek universities to ensure that additional teaching staff can be hired if needed. This flexibility in staffing can have repercussions for community building amongst teaching staff to provide quality teaching in the program. In addition, one teacher per course might increase the work of that teacher considerably if many students enrol (which is the expectation that has been stated during the meetings) as interactivity and student collaboration are part of the programme philosophy.

Teaching staff **publish research** that is directly related to the content of the course they are involved in. The expertise and research output of the Programme Coordinator in her field (Ancient Greek) is without any doubt and strongly visible in locally available documentation (e.g., from the Greek Ministry of education, as

was mentioned during the site visit. This will be an important asset in the recruitment of students. Opportunities for the development of an international profile should be encouraged.

The research CV of the teaching staff is sufficient to update their knowledge and skills in research in their field and adapt their teaching and teaching materials if needed. This gives the chance that teachers teach based on their research knowledge in their particular field. Teaching staff CVs are not specific on **teaching in distance education** programmes, but they are supported by the distance education unit. Student evaluations of the programme included teaching evaluations and the results are feedback to programme coordinator. The EEC further noted that the CV-section had repetitions and was rather unstructured. We would advise that Philips University consider using one of the internationally accepted standards to their CVs.

### Strengths

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

- All teaching staff are PhD holders, except for two (Asimakopoulos, and Georgakopoulou who is currently PhD candidate).
- Flexibility in staffing with agreements with other universities to add teaching staff if needed
- Teacher perform research on the topics they teach in the programme
- Teaching and administration staff are supported by the Distance Education Unit

### 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.*

- More emphasis on teaching performance as part of the recruitment of teaching staff
- As the programme matures, more teaching staff recruited to teach in the particular programme which in turn will support community building
- The nucleus of fixed staff needs to be extended for generating research output with PU members as principal investigators, even for a relatively small faculty and students of the master's program. Currently, there is a lack of tenure tracks and high risk of losing high potentials when no career perspective can be offered. Internal research nuclei are still scarce but considered necessary in the future.
- Professional development opportunities with respect to teaching methods, such as case studies, simulation, data-driven assignment, active learning, etc., should be provided to the teaching staff on a more regular basis to make the program (even more) practice-oriented. The support personnel are enthusiastic and technically knowledgeable, so the possibilities are there. There still appears to be a need for more guidance on 'digital didactics'.

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

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

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

##### Sub-areas

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

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

###### Standards

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

##### 4.2 Student progression

###### Standards

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

##### 4.3 Student recognition

###### Standards

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

##### 4.4 Student certification

###### Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*

- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*

*You may also consider the following questions:*

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

### Findings

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

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

Admission criteria are in place and the admission process is clear. For this Distant Learning MSc, the institution aims mainly to prospective students who are proficient users of the Greek language (i.e., Cypriots, Greeks) and holders of an undergraduate degree from an accredited institution of higher education with no disciplinary restrictions. Through the site visit, together with the study of the material provided, it seems that the student admission policies and criteria are implemented consistently. Students state that are adequately advised and supported by the administrative staff throughout the process of admission and enrollment in a study program.

#### **Student progression**

Student-centred approaches seem to be in place at the institution's espoused culture and principles, making sure that student's individual needs are seriously addressed. Regulations regarding student progression and assessment are in place. The processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information pertinent to student progression exist. A combination of summative-final assessment and continuous assessment is established with pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition in place. Ongoing and productive feedback seems to be provided to students during their studies by the teaching staff. Students seem to manage to address all the requirements of the programme (i.e., core courses- 60ECTS, master thesis- 30ECTS) and are satisfied by the distribution of weight and workload given.



## Student recognition & certification

There are intended learning outcomes in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework. The recognition procedures are in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and there seems to be cooperation with other institutions (especially in Greece) and quality assurance agencies in both Cyprus and Greece. Regarding the certification, it was explained that the graduates of this MSc will be eligible to apply for being employed in a secondary school setting, as recently defined by the legislation of the Greek government. Thus, this degree will be supplementary to the students' bachelor's degree in order to have the right to teach in a secondary school.

### Strengths

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

- Offering a supplementary degree which will enhance future teachers' employment opportunities in Cyprus and Greece.
- The multidisciplinary, diversity and previous experience of prospective students can give another dynamic to the learning process.
- The institution's electronic system seems to work well according to the different stakeholders interviewed, namely students from other MSc, teaching staff and administrators. These monitoring processes are in place to address students' progress, requests and/or concerns.
- Students from other MSc, believe that the admission requirements to enrol in the program are appropriate, they feel prepared and supported enough by the administrative staff throughout this process.
- Students from other MSc, state that are being adequately supported and advised by the teaching staff, having productive feedback when in need.
- The student's workload seems to be balanced. The students from other MSc mentioned that they sufficiently manage to address all the requirements of the course.
- Students are adequately informed about the online services available to them (E-Learning facilities/computer labs/library support, student career services/alumni services, etc)
- Students have initial training about the use of e-learning tools (i.e., Moodle, Teams, etc) as well as additional training for new tools that are emended during their studies.
- Technical assistance is provided to distance students in cases of facing difficulty or having a problem using the e-learning tools, etc.
- Students are given the opportunity of providing feedback by the end of each course (i.e., through a course evaluation questionnaire).



### 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.*

- Considering that this MSc program is going to operate in an e-learning manner, further information is required in regard to the admission criteria, particularly on how the institution assesses the “Distance Education General Criteria” mentioned in the student admission requirements Paragraph 5.3. *“Students... must have a satisfactory level of digital and technological knowledge and have access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection, speakers, microphone and camera”.*
- Additional admission criteria would be good to take place, such as a relevant fitness-to-practice document, letter of reference from the head-teachers for candidate students with previous teaching experience (i.e., in-service teachers, etc) as well as more clear guidelines on the recognition of how the years of previous experience will be examined when recruiting prospective teachers.
- The institution needs to ensure that there is a clear explanation provided of the different courses available and how they operate (especially for courses such as Science, Mathematics, Technology, etc) whether a student is full-time or part-time in an e-learning manner.
- Additional opportunities for more research-oriented activities (i.e. projects, conferences, etc) need to be provided not only at the end of students’ studies (i.e. thesis) but also during their studies.
- Research courses are important to be taught at the beginning of the student’s studies and not only during their thesis. Students need to be trained in the use of various research tools and methods in order to apply them in research-related assignments or other activities during their studies.
- A mentoring approach needs to be more clearly established during the students’ practicum at schools. In the documentation, is not clear whether a member of the teaching staff will undertake the role of mentor in order to support students during their teaching practice at schools.
- 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. A more detailed approach to the accreditation of prior learning and work experience is required, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions.
- More clear information and published regulations related to student certification need to take place for this specific MSc program. Students must receive a certification explaining the qualification gained, the level, content and status of studies that were pursued and successfully completed. At the moment the above mentioned are not clearly articulated neither on the committee’s understanding after the site visit nor in the documentation provided.

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

Sub-area		<i>Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant</i>
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant

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

### Sub-areas

#### 5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

#### 5.2 Physical resources

#### 5.3 Human support resources

#### 5.4 Student support

### 5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

#### Standards

- *Weekly interactive activities per each course are set.*
- *The e-learning material and activities take advantage of the capabilities offered by the virtual and audio-visual environment and the following are applied:*
  - *Simulations in virtual environments*
  - *Problem solving scenarios*
  - *Interactive learning and formative assessment games*
  - *Interactive weekly activities with image, sound and unlimited possibilities for reality reconstruction and further processing based on hypotheses*
  - *They have the ability to transfer students to real-life situations, make decisions, and study the consequences of their decisions*
  - *They help in building skills both in experiences and attitudes like in real life and also in experiencing - not just memorizing knowledge*
- *A pedagogical planning unit for e-learning, which is responsible for the support of the e-learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of e-learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

### 5.2 Physical resources

#### Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*

- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

### 5.3 Human support resources

#### Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*

### 5.4 Student support

#### Standards

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

*You may also consider the following questions:*

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

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

### Findings

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

## **Teaching, Learning and Physical Resources**

Laboratory facilities, library and learning materials are provided at satisfactory level, and are at times used in relation with the courses for this Master of ES. The EEC feels that the potential of labs is not fully exploited in this master's program, esp. regarding the EdTech Lab and courses on learning technologies. There was mention of the presence of virtual labs and simulations at the campus, but these seem to be mainly used for other Masters.

The same underuse seems to apply for available software at PU, as for video imaging and authoring in education, and interactive learning experiences.

The Moodle platform is functionally in good condition and a backup server is available. There is sufficient support for exchange, groupwork and student monitoring. The pedagogical approach (socio constructivist) caters well for group collaboration but needs shared and understood templates and (collaboration) scripting to be in place. We did not receive evidence of that (yet).

A good range of textbooks and journal articles are readily accessible to students and staff through the online library. It is focused on journal articles and lacks other media like video tutorials or interactive programs.

The Moodle environment is potentially a LMS (Learning Management System) enabled to support socio-constructivist learning, but still mainly used here as electronic blackboard to provide digitised content (syllabi, articles/books) with virtual classes with the teacher explaining content and students asking questions. The intention however seems to be that students will also communicate with each other about their studies, and occasionally real collaboration will take place through Moodle. There are not yet existing examples (from other programs) where courses contain case-based material and/or explanatory animations/video on which students need to apply their knowledge. We did therefore not encounter any examples of real project-based, collaborative or research-driven activities through Moodle. Here again, our discussions and the ideas and presentations provided by staff during the site visit have made the committee more positive in this regard.

Especially for DL programs, controls for fraud should be in place, taking into account recent revolutions with generative AI. This is an ongoing development of which the program seems to be aware and will take measures (like software for plagiarism detection).

**Physical resources** are in place, but not relevant to the current distance education programme. All have their online support in place, which seems to be ensured for increasing student numbers. Students have the same rights as university staff for open-access publications, software, and the like.

For **students**, the Distance Education Unit provides support for students who have technological issues. Until now, there is not much experience with supporting students at a distance, but the unit seems to be (technically) equipped for it.

### Human Support Services

Human support resources are in place. Study advisers, counsellors, and administration are placed in a separate administrative unit. A mentor to support students throughout their studies including school placement seems to be missing.

What is missing is **school placement coordinator/unit**. Teaching practicum is an important part of the curriculum and students have to teach online to a physical class in a Greek school. This means school placement requires some organization of recruiting schools, connecting students to schools visa versa, and follow-up questions and issues of students with their practicum school. Even if students are in-service teachers -who bring in their own school- this requires quality checks of whether the school is the right place for school placement in the programme.

### Student support

Student support is in place. More attention is needed to the diversity of the student population, which includes both in-service teachers and pre-service teachers who do not have any teaching experience yet. This requires a differentiated approach to student support.

### Strengths

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

- The use of a Learning Management System to provide students free library access to the most important databases is a strong point of this approach (although we did not have information on satisfaction results and usage of the library resources) yet.
- We had the pleasure to encounter a committed and visionary President, and some enthusiastic staff members who presented more innovative ideas (and actual examples) of how the program should address competences like critical thinking, problem solving and carrying out research, that were not contained in the application we had to review before the site visit. The committee feels this responsive attitude will work well for continuous learning and improvement. To have a larger fully employed staff will help generate a collaborative workforce for enabling more effective and innovative DL programs in the future, especially when supported by a dedicated DL and research unit.
- Support provided by the distance education unit for both teaching staff and students

- Online support provided by the physical resources

#### 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.*

- In respect to controlling for plagiarism and fraud we recommend looking for DL improvements, taking in account recent technologies (pattern/handwriting/iris recognition) and proctoring during exams.
- To address the concerns, we have for the DL to support the desired competences, a real DLU should contain more substantial and more dedicated expertise for instructional methods and interactive e-learning, to design and develop a more active and experiential program, needed to achieve some of the higher order competences in HE (see other comments). It appears recently new staff with more ICT and innovation affinity was contracted, but this is an ongoing process.
- Install a school placement coordinator/unit to organize the connection between university programme and schools.
- Appoint mentors as support for students throughout their study programme

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

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



## D. Conclusions and final remarks

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

### Overall

The EEC is thankful for the trust placed in us as reviewers of this potentially innovative programme. The opportunities to observe and talk with the students, faculty, and staff of the OUC have been professional. We have learned a lot. The present situation is promising, but not unproblematic. Finding a way to attract good students to the programme, as well to keep them till graduation are of the essence. We offer the following conclusion and final remarks to justify suggestions for improvements.

### Ambition for the Programme

The EEC appreciated the ambition of the proposal; to offer an 18-month MSc programme of preparation of (i) either secondary teachers already in posts in schools but without requisite certification, or (ii) those hoping to enter secondary teaching but who do not have a pedagogical qualification. Recent changes in Greek regulations for secondary teachers are moving to mandate certification. In relation to already employed secondary teachers, a virtual learning MSc programme focused on teaching and learning, policies, history, organisational and administrative theory, development theory, and research would enable them to continue with their classroom activities, whilst undertaking certification.

### Overall Quality Assurance, Design, Monitoring and Distance Learning Unit

We were confident that the overall Quality Assurance mechanisms, at the institutional level are in place that will help deliver this new programme. However, there are specific demands that also come with offering a teacher education programme that include the recruitment of students who will be suitable for the profession (e.g. safeguarding concerns, expertise, evidence of orientation to working with students), the recruitment of schools for placements, the placement of students who are not already teachers in schools, the ongoing monitoring of the practicum including how issues and concerns are dealt with.

### Challenges/Improvements

As noted above, we see challenges, however, that need to be improved and we therefore flag these as areas that were assessed as *partially complete* - and thus need further attention leading to the overall improvement of the *MSc Pedagogical and Teaching Adequacy*:

#### 1. Overall Framing of the Rationale

We felt that the overall framing might also take account of the commitments and regulatory frameworks that operate at the global level that include the Sustainable Development Goals, global competences, digital



literacies, large scale assessments, citizenship, and so on. This can also then be taken up as part of the contemporary context for Greek education and be added to courses like PDE110 and PDE111.

## *2. Coverage of Subject Knowledge/Up to Date Reference Lists/*

We reviewed all courses and note that several e.g., PDE111 do not have an up to date reading list. Only one reading was written in 2007; the rest prior to 2000. That this is the sociology of education course, and that social issues and social relations are changing, we would expect to see a very contemporary list that include social inequalities (class/gender/race), contemporary debates on governance, and so on. PDE121 needs to include reference to subject knowledge domains that include mathematics and the sciences and add references to the course outline to indicate to the students who are recruited in these areas what they might read.

## *3. Recruitment of Students*

We note that fluency in Greek as well as a Bachelor's degree are the only requirements for gaining a place on the programme. However, given it is a professional qualification where at least for those not teaching in schools issues of 'fitness to teach' (safeguarding), plus evidence of an orientation toward working with young learners, should be part of the recruitment interview prior to being offered a place. For those already teaching, the applicant would provide a letter of reference from either a Head Teacher or a Department Head indicating support to study.

## *4. Mixed Cohort*

The proposed Programme expects to enrol a mixed cohort; those with teaching experiences, and those without. More thought needs to be given to how the Programme Coordinator and the various professors delivering the programme will work with these different levels of teaching experiences to make the most of these affordances (more experienced versus less experienced). An indication of learning activities that can be offered across the different courses of the Programme that are alert to this cohort mix should be considered.

## *5. Making Research Knowledge and Skills More Explicit, Sequential*

In the paperwork and in our site-visit conversations much was made of the prioritising of research knowledge and skills taught and acquired over the courses and realised in a 30-credit thesis. However, we did not see explicit attention given to different research skills, such as reading historical texts, critical reviews, systematic reviews, discourse analysis of policy, use of small and large data sets, interviews, narrative enquiry, managing qualitative data, use of different kinds of data, deriving axial codes, social network analysis, ethics, risk assessments, and so on. These should be made explicit in the course outline as an orientation, and in each of the courses regarding how they are introduced and built upon leading to the accomplishment of a thesis. This could be complemented with relevant references to the courses.

## *6. Broadening exposure to research activities/research-informed teaching*

For students additional opportunities for more research-oriented activities (i.e. projects, conferences, etc) need to be provided not only at the end of students' studies (i.e. thesis) but also during their studies. For

academic staff teaching on the programme to provide some illustrative examples of how their research will drawn upon to inform their teaching.

### *7. Practicum*

Whilst this could be viewed as an opportunity to pair off students in the programme with no practice experience with more teachers already practicing, there are quality assurance issues that teacher education programmes more generally must face. That is, all practice placement classrooms must be assessed by the University's practice placement personal as meeting a minimum standard of professional competence for the practicum classroom teacher. This will require a dedicated practicum placement coordinator/unit who recruits schools, school mentors, monitors students, irons out issues, manages safeguarding requirements, and ensures the ongoing relationship with the school. This will require coordination with the Distance Education Unit, to ensure that the virtual practicum for students who are not a practicing teacher are properly supported technically.

### *8. Thesis Work*

We believe carefully crafted thesis topics could enable the students to use their current access to their school and classroom – assuming all ethics, risk and safeguarding protocols are properly completed, to carry out relevant and timely research that is useful for the teacher, their school, and the community. Examples in the paperwork would help to communicate to prospective students what might be expected and ensure that the overall ambition of the programme is traced down into each of the courses that make up the programme.

### *9. Strategic Partnerships to Enhance Digital Teacher Education Offer*

The EEC notes that Philips University has a number of partnerships that it has established and we commend them for this. We suggest exploring and pursuing collaborations or partnerships with other universities who are offering a digital professional qualification like teacher education. What can be learned, researched and shared across the partnership and the wider education community?



## E. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Susan L Robertson	
Wilfried Admiraal	
Hans Hummel	
Victoria Michaelidou	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

**Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023