Thematic analysis on PhD Program's Evaluation

Report 5: 2016-2020

Contents

Introduction:

The design of the CYQAA'S Reports

Since the beginning of the Bologna Process in 1999, **Quality Assurance** (QA) has been key to establishing the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). QA is essential for building trust and to reinforce the attractiveness of the EHEA's offerings, including in the provision of cross-border education, as the Ministers responsible for Higher Education in the Bologna signatory countries stated.

In 2003 the Ministers asked ENQA to develop, in cooperation with ESIB (nowadays ESU), EUA and EURASHE, "an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines" (Berlin Communiqué). Following this mandate the "*Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA*" (ESG) were presented to the ministers in Bergen (2005) and the document was adopted by them. The European quality assurance landscape changed considerably in since then. In this context, the Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (CYQAA) which was established in 2015, has adopted the guidelines of ENQA and based on the European Standard Guidelines has designed its own EEC reports (different in each programme category i.e. BA, MA, PhD, Distance Learning etc.).

The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.
1. At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:
    1.1. Sub-areas
    1.2. Standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)
    1.3. 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.

The PhD programmes framework in Cyprus

In general, the PhD programs of the Cypriot Universities are operating in the same framework as follows:

i. With the completion of all the programme requirements, the PhD title is awarded

ii. European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The programmes are based on the European Credit Transfer System points (ECTS). An ECTS normally corresponds to a 25-30 hours' workload per semester. Students can register in courses up to 30 ECTS per semester.

iii. A PhD programme is composed of 240 ECTS as follows: courses workload – at least 60 ECTS and research part of the programme – at least 120 ECTS. The remaining ECTS are acquired through the comprehensive examination, the preparation and presentation of the research proposal, the writing of the doctoral thesis, etc. A PhD student who is either registered in a research or writing stage is considered to have a workload equivalent to 30 ECTS in a given semester.

iv. Duration of Study: the minimum period of study for a PhD programme is six (6) semesters. The maximum period of study for a PhD programme is sixteen (16) semesters. Semesters where a student postponed his/her studies or where she/he got a maternity/paternity leave are not included in the normal period of study

v. Courses: a PhD programme includes two types of courses (e.g. compulsory, compulsory and electives). Up to two courses may be undergraduate courses from any other department. Some of the PhD courses are evaluated with a Pass/Fail grade. These courses will not count in the student's grade point average and must not exceed 25% of the programme's ECTS, excluding the thesis

vi. Submission of a PhD Thesis: a PhD thesis may be submitted in an international language. If this is the case, there is an abstract in Greek. The PhD student may not submit or defend a dissertation until she/he has completed six semesters from the day of admission to the postgraduate programme

vii. Comprehensive Examination: the PhD student must succeed in a comprehensive examination between the third and the seventh semester of studies by the latest. The nature, content and assessment of the Comprehensive Examination are described in the curriculum of the Department and regulated by each department. Comprehensive examination may be either written and/or oral. The department is responsible for the coordination of its comprehensive examinations. Each Department must offer a comprehensive examination at least once a year. Each student should have two opportunities up to the 7th semester of his/her studies to succeed in the comprehensive examination. Comprehensive examination is evaluated with a Pass/Fail grade

viii. Proposal regarding a newly designed PhD programme submitted to the Graduate School: the proposal regarding a newly designed programme is approved by the Graduate School (in terms of its academic aspect) and in turn by the Senate Committee Planning and Development (in terms of its financial aspect). Particular information/data should be provided to the Graduate School for each proposal regarding a newly designed programme:

- Title of study programme in both Greek and English
- Grounds for the Proposal: description of programme's scope, aims and objectives, general needs to be met, especially in research, specifying their impact on society, feasibility study, activity based costing, teaching work load and possible additional needs/resources, specifying the existing expertise and know-how of Departmental Faculty members on the subject to enable the Department to offer it, number of students to be admitted in the programme

ix. Criteria – Admission Requirements have to be specified (e.g., whether candidates must hold a Master degree or a Bachelor degree, whether candidates must hold a degree accordingly in a subject related to their proposed field of study, the required knowledge of a foreign language, the professional experiences, etc)

x. Admission Procedures: application, assessment and selection procedures have to be described clearly (e.g. candidates are also required to have a personal interview or/and take a written examination)

xi. Programme's Structure for each semester

xii. Particular information/data should be provided for each course: course title in both Greek and English ,course description in both Greek and English, course code in the Curriculum, kind of the course (e.g. compulsory, compulsory and elective, or elective) , course assessment, ECTS points required for the course, Justification for the number of ECTS points, course prerequisites

xiii. Comprehensive's Examination Structure and Content

xiv. Evaluation Criteria of PhD Dissertation

xv. Self-financed programmes at a PhD level are approved in exceptional cases

This Report refers to the collected data of 31 PhD Programs from 5 different institutions in Cyprus between the periods 2016 to 2020. These institutions are the University of Cyprus, the European University, the University of Nicosia, the Neapolis University Pafos and the Cyprus School of Molecular Medicine – The Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics.

The following table shows the evaluated/accredited by the Agency as shown in the following ling

https://www.dipae.ac.cy/index.php/en/accreditation-en/accredited-programmes-en

Institution Type	Institution	Programme of Study	Com/ment of Accreditation	Accreditation Expires
Public University	University of Cyprus	Law (6 academic semester, 240 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2018 - 2019	Spring Semester 2023
Public University	University of Cyprus	Translation Studies (3 academic years, 240 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2018 - 2019	Spring Semester 2023
Public University	University of Cyprus	English Literature and Comparative Cultural Studies (3 academic years, 240 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2018 - 2019	Spring Semester 2023
Public University	University of Cyprus	Chemistry (8 academic semesters, 240 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2018 - 2019	Spring Semester 2023
Public University	University of Cyprus	Linguistics (6 academic semesters, 240 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2018 - 2019	Spring Semester 2023
Public University	University of Cyprus	Turkish Studies (3 academic years, 240 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2018 - 2019	Spring Semester 2023
Public University	University of Cyprus	Finance (3 academic years, 241 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2018 - 2019	Spring Semester 2023
Public University	University of Cyprus	Sociology (3 academic years, 240 ECTS, Doctorate(Phd))	Fall Semester 2019 - 2020	Spring Semester 2024
Public University	University of Cyprus	Political Science (3 academic years, 240 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2019 - 2020	Spring Semester 2024
Public University	University of Cyprus	European Studies (3 academic years, 240 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2019 - 2020	Spring Semester 2024
Public University	University of Cyprus	French Studies (3 academic years, 240 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2019 - 2020	Spring Semester 2024
Public University	University of Cyprus	Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2019 - 2020	Spring Semester 2024

Institution Type	Institution	Programme of Study	Com/ment of Accreditation	Accreditation Expires
Public University	University of Cyprus	Advanced Materials and Nanotechnology (4 academic years, 120 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2019 - 2020	Spring Semester 2024
Public University	University of Cyprus	Learning in Natural Sciences and Environment (3 academic years, 273 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2019 - 2020	Spring Semester 2024
Public University	University of Cyprus	Architecture (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2019 - 2020	Spring Semester 2024
Public University	University of Cyprus	Special and Inclusive Education (3 ακαδημαϊκά έτη, 273 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2020 - 2021	Spring Semester 2025
Public University	University of Cyprus	Modern Greek Studies (3 academic years, 240 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2020 - 2021	Spring Semester 2025
Public University	University of Cyprus	Educational Evaluation and Administration (6 semesters, 273 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2020 - 2021	Spring Semester 2025
Public University	University of Cyprus	Psychology (4 academic years, 255 ECTS, Doctorate (PhD))	Fall Semester 2020 - 2021	Spring Semester 2025
Public University	University of Cyprus	Byzantine Studies and the Latin East (3 academic years, 240 ECTS, Doctorate (PhD))	Fall Semester 2020 - 2021	Spring Semester 2025
Private University	European University Cyprus	Psychology(180 ECTS, Doctorate(Phd))	Fall Semester 2017 - 2018	Spring Semester 2022
Private University	Neapolis University	Modern and Contemporary History (3 academic years, 180 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2017 - 2018	Spring Semester 2022
Private University	Neapolis University	Theology (3 academic years, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2017 - 2018	Spring Semester 2022
Private University	Neapolis University	Psychology (Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2017 - 2018	Spring Semester 2022

Institution Type	Institution	Programme of Study	Com/ment of Accreditation	Accreditation Expires
Private University	University of Nicosia	Human Rights, Society and Multilevel Governance (3 academic years, 180 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD)), Joint Programme with the Universities (a)University of Padova (b)University of Sydney (c) University of Zagreb (d) Panteion University and Social and Political Sciences)	Fall Semester 2017 - 2018	Spring Semester 2022
Private University	University of Nicosia	Theology (3 academic years, 180 ECTS, Doctorate(PhD))	Fall Semester 2017 - 2018	Spring Semester 2022
Private University	European University Cyprus	Music: Music Education, Musicology, Composition (3 years,180 ECTS, Doctorate(Phd))	Fall Semester 2020 - 2021	Spring Semester 2025
Private University	European University Cyprus	Public Health (3 academic years, 180 ECTS, Doctorate (PhD))	Fall Semester 2020 - 2021	Spring Semester 2025
Private Institution of Higher Education	Cyprus School of Molecular Medicine – The Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics	Doctor of Philosophy in Neuroscience (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Doctorate(Phd))	Fall Semester 2015 - 2016	Spring Semester 2020
Private Institution of Higher Education	Cyprus School of Molecular Medicine – The Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics	Medical Genetics (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Doctorate (PhD))	Fall Semester 2020 - 2021	Spring Semester 2025
Private Institution of Higher Education	Cyprus School of Molecular Medicine – The Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics	Molecular Medicine (4 academic years, 240 ECTS, Doctorate (PhD))	Fall Semester 2020 - 2021	Spring Semester 2025

As it is aforementioned, following the establishment of the CYQAA in 2015 and the development of external evaluation and accreditation procedures, a gradual amount of comments made by the experts of the External Evaluation Committees (EEC) have been recorded by CYQAA. The most useful data given were gathered in this report and are commented after being grouped into 5 basic categories and their subcategories as defined by the European Standard Guidelines as follows:

- Effectiveness of Teaching Work – Available Resources
- Program of study and Higher Education Qualifications
- Research – Teaching Synergies
- Administrations Services, Student Welfare and Support of Teaching Work
- Doctoral Programs of Study

Effectiveness of Teaching Work – Available Resources

General Findings

An analysis on the comments of the External Evaluation Committees' Reports shows that they are satisfied with the learning environment. Mechanisms for consultation with students are in place, and staff is very active in encouraging students' interests and engaging with their concerns. The teaching facilities are modern and well-maintained. They are also happy with the proposed number of students and the organisation of the educational process as well as the adequacy of the learning processes. The substantive content of the programmes is suitable to the level of study and the achievement of the programmes learning aims. Many EEC comments show the enthusiasm they had: "*The EEC was highly impressed by the professionalism, dedication, coherence, and achievements. In the institute the general atmosphere is very positive. In particular communication between staff and students was very strong*". On the other hand some negative issues were raised such as the workload. A comment by an EEC Committee stressed this issue very clear "*The risk contained in the current situation is that the teaching staff, who are very capable and motivated, are working at their limit, because of a heavy teaching load and intensive research activity, and will have not the time needed to renovate and open new directions in developments of teaching. It seems that new recruitments and a well-planned recruitment strategy are needed to secure the future development potential of the current teaching and research group. Strategic plans of how competent researchers and teachers*

can advance in their careers are urgently needed." Some useful recommendations were extracted by the reports such as the production of a PhD student handbook. A handbook could bring together all of the procedures and information necessary for the understanding of the educational process (academic calendar; supervision arrangements; assessment requirements; dissertation information; forms; points of contact; complaints, appeals and escalation etc.). Also some committees felt the need of a clear and uniform policy on feedback in supervision sessions; the adoption of individual supervision forms recording the outcome of each supervisory meeting. Plagiarism detection software should be used as a matter as a matter of course at each stage that involves the submission of original work. Finally it is proposed the doctoral students to expose to a range of critical methodologies, fields and positions that augment their individual research topics. Each student is assigned a supervisor and also has access to other staff where their specialisms are in alignment with the student's research areas. Additional provision for courses or workshops to accompany the PhD in order to support the writing for publication and teaching development is proposed.

Organization of Teaching Work

In the field of Organisation of Teaching Work there are the following subcategories:

- **The student admission requirements to the program of study:** the *student admission requirements to the program of study* are based on specific regulations which are adhered to in a consistent manner. In this subcategory 27 out of 31 reports i.e. 87,09% shows the aforementioned. As it was mentioned by an EEC Committee "... *The Admission Criteria have been defined and specified ... They are appropriate and comparable to those pertaining to other higher education institutions. In this respect, the first requirement of the Agency's Guidelines for Doctoral Programmes is met*".

    Yet, some experts' reports indicate the need for those doctoral programmes delivered only in Greek, to be delivered in English raising as **mandatory** the excellent knowledge in English. "…*The doctoral programme will be offered in Greek. The Committee suggested the provision of the programme in English as well given that an excellent knowledge of English is a mandatory admission requirement*…" *The Committee noted the possibility of the submission of the dissertation in a language other than Greek. The encouragement of the submission of*

the doctoral thesis in English will facilitate the wide dissemination of research findings and ideas and will enhance the employability of students internationally…" (and help better align the programme with the Bologna criteria). One out of thirty one reports i.e. 3,22% shows that the committees were not satisfied with the admission criteria. As it was mentioned by a committee *"…admission policy is not as clear as needed…"*

- ***The organization of the educational process safeguards the quality implementation of the program's purpose and objectives and the achievement of the learning outcomes. Particularly, the following are taken into consideration:***

  ➢ ***The implementation of a specific academic calendar and its timely publication:*** Twenty five out of 31 reports are compliant i.e. 80,6% and six out of 31 are partially compliant i.e. 19,32%.

  ➢ ***The disclosure of the program's curricula to the students, and their implementation by the teaching personnel:*** twenty our out of 31 I.e. 77,41 reports are fully compliant i.e. while seven out of 31 i.e. 22,58 is N/A (not applicable).

  ➢ ***The course web-pages, updated with the relevant supplementary material:*** the reports show 29 out 31 as fully or partially compliant i.e. 93,54% while only two out of 31 I.e. 6,45% are non-compliant. Overall, the EEC Committees are very satisfied. The two reports with the non-compliant marks have not justify the mark given by the Committees.

  ➢ ***The procedures for the fulfilment of undergraduate and postgraduate assignments / practical training:*** six reports are N/A (not applicable) while 25 out of 31 i.e. 80,64 are fully compliant without mentioning any details on that.

  ➢ ***The procedures for the conduct and the format of the examinations and for student assessment:*** It is evident that the EEC Committees are very satisfied as far as this field is concerned as the percentage of fully compliant is up 83,87%. As it is stressed "… The composition of the research and assessment committees for individual students ensures quality, as does the comprehensive examination procedure. Students are given ample opportunities to provide feedback on their learning experiences."

- *Adequate and modern learning resources, are available to the students, including the following:*

  ➢ Facilities: As for facilities, strong point is the fact that the majority of the programmes i.e. 29 out of 31 (93,54%) of the reports refer to fully compliant and two out of 31 i.e., 6,45% are partially compliant. Overall the teaching facilities are modern and well-maintained. However, in one case the Committee stressed "...During the visit, the committee did not observe special facilities for students with special needs (for instance ramps and toilets for wheelchair users supported by adequate and modern facilities fully available to students.

  ➢ Library: Comments given on the library are very positive with comments such as the following:
  "...The new Library is an impressive investment by the University that the Department would benefit from...", "... the library facilities are excellent, the buildings and environment are world class...". Some recommendations were given in the subscription of an online monograph series and the ensuring of the fact *"... students having good access to data as it seems that the library does not have access to databases directly…"*

  ➢ Infrastructure: 29 out of 31 evaluations on infrastructure were fully compliant and only two partially compliant.
  Thought there was not a non-compliant mark, there was one case where the Committee stressed that *"...this is a great strength of the group and suggests that with proper resource and infrastructure the program may become regarded as internationally outstanding...".* In general, the reports were extremely positive as indicated below:
      ✓ *"...We are also happy with the infrastructure and support provided..."*
      ✓ *"...Support The infrastructure at all levels is excellent and state-of-the-art..."*
      ✓ *"...This pastoral priority does not detract from the fact that on the vast majority of other aspects, the Committee feels that the Department and University provide excellent infrastructure and administration and technical support to their students, especially given the limited size of the institution and should truly be praised for that..."*
      ✓ *"...The Committee found a lot to praise when it comes to administrative services and infrastructure..." "...The quality of the infrastructure should also be praised. It would also be positive to provide the PhD students with some shared physical space in the Department to encourage them to spend some time together and feel part of the Departmental Community..."*

➢ Academic mentoring:

Academic mentoring is one of the strengths of the reviews and although there is a very high percentage of fully compliant, however there are no further comments in the reports from the committees.

Teaching Personnel

Overall, the Committees were satisfied "…*by the energy, creativity, and resilience of the teaching personnel and …that they are capable of carrying out research at the highest level*…" The majority of the personnel are active and suitably qualified researchers with current and ongoing track – record of publication. However, there is concern that the institutions are not providing them with the necessary support and investment in staff, and that, over time, the high teaching load is likely to have "…*an adverse effect on our colleagues research output…*" To this end PhD supervision ought to be credited in academic workloads and the university should proactively support the Department. Another recommendation is "…*while areas of specialisation will necessarily dictate the distribution of teaching workload, the departments might reflect on the desirability of co-supervision across the department, both to spread the workload and to ensure, where appropriate, more colleagues gain experience of doctoral supervision*…" During the course of the site visit, the EEC proposed the introduction of a supervisor training programme for new or inexperienced teaching staff to ensure consistency of delivery. As far as the quality of supervision given to the students it is stressed that "…*the students that we spoke to, were satisfied with the amount and quality of supervision they received and the access they had to their supervisors and other members of the staff. Evidence of good supervising can also be seen in the doctoral theses made available to us, which were of a very high standard*…"

The student admission requirements to the program of study are based on specific regulations which are adhered to in a consistent manner.	▪ n/c 1 ▪ p/c 2 ▪ f/c 28
The number of students in each class allows for constructive teaching and communication, and it compares positively to the current international standards and/or practices.	▪ p/c 6 ▪ f/c 25

The organization of the educational process safeguards the quality implementation of the program's purpose and objectives and the achievement of the learning outcomes. Particularly, the following are taken into consideration:

The implementation of a specific academic calendar and its timely publication.	▪ p/c 6 ▪ f/c 25
The disclosure of the program's curricula to the students, and their implementation by the teaching personnel	▪ n/c 1 ▪ p/c 1 ▪ f/c 29
The course web-pages, updated with the relevant supplementary material	▪ n/c 2 ▪ p/c 4 ▪ f/c 25
The procedures for the fulfilment of undergraduate and postgraduate assignments / practical training	▪ p/c 4 ▪ f/c 27
The procedures for the conduct and the format of the examinations and for student assessment	▪ p/c 5 ▪ f/c 26

Adequate and modern learning resources are available to the students, including the following:

Facilities	Library
▪ p/c 2 ▪ f/c 29	▪ n/c 1 ▪ p/c 1 ▪ f/c 29
Infrastructure	**Academic Mentoring**
▪ p/c 2 ▪ f/c 29	▪ p/c 2 ▪ f/c 29

A policy for regular and effective communication, between the teaching personnel and the students, is applied.	▪ n/c 1 ▪ p/c 4 ▪ f/c 26

The teaching personnel, for each course, provide timely and effective feedback to the students.

- n/c 1
- p/c 4
- f/c 26

Statutory mechanisms, for the support of students and the communication with the teaching personnel, are effective.

- n/c 1
- p/c 4
- f/c 26

Control mechanisms for student performance are effective.

- p/c 2
- f/c 29

Support mechanisms for students with problematic academic performance are effective.

- n/c 1
- p/c 9
- f/c 21

Academic mentoring processes are transparent and effective for undergraduate and postgraduate programs and are taken into consideration for the calculation of academic work load.

- p/c 5
- f/c 26

The program of study applies an effective policy for the prevention and detection of plagiarism.

- n/c 1
- p/c 2
- f/c 28

The program of study provides satisfactory mechanisms for complaint management and for dispute resolution.

- n/c 3
- p/c 3
- f/c 25

Teaching Personnel

The number of full-time academic personnel, occupied exclusively at the institution, and their fields of expertise, adequately support the program of study.

- n/c 1
- p/c 5
- f/c 25

The members of teaching personnel for each course have the relevant formal and fundamental qualifications for teaching the course, as described by the legislation, including the following:

Subject specialization, preferably with a doctorate, in the discipline.

- p/c 2
- f/c 29

Publications within the discipline.

- p/c 2
- f/c 29
-

The specializations of Visiting Professors adequately support the program of study.

- n/c 1
- p/c 9
- f/c 21
-

Special Teaching Personnel and Special Scientists have the necessary qualifications, adequate work experience and specialization to teach a limited number of courses in the program of study.

- p/c 10
- f/c 21
-

In every program of study, the Special Teaching Personnel does not exceed 30% of the Teaching Research Personnel.

- p/c 9
- f/c 22

The teaching personnel of each private institution of tertiary education, to a percentage of at least 70%, has recognized academic qualification, by one level higher than that of the program of study in which he/she teaches.

- p/c 3
- f/c 28
-

In the program of study, the ratio of the number of courses taught by full-time personnel, occupied exclusively at the institution, to the number of courses taught by part-time personnel, ensures the quality of the program of study.

- p/c 5
- f/c 26
-

The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching personnel is adequate for the support and safeguarding of the program's quality.

- p/c 3
- f/c 28
-

The academic personnel's teaching load does not limit the conduct of research, writing, and contribution to the society.

- n/c 1
- p/c 5
- f/c 25

Future redundancies / retirements, expected recruitment and promotions of academic personnel safeguard the unimpeded implementation of the program of study within a five-year span.

- n/c 2
- p/c 7
- f/c 22

The program's Coordinator has the qualifications and experience to efficiently coordinate the program of study

- p/c 1
- f/c 30

Program of Study and Higher Education Qualifications

General Findings

After a thorough study of the 31 PhD reports, a synopsis of these reports is given below focusing on the findings of the Committees followed by recommendations:

Overall, the evaluation committees finds that the purpose, objective outcomes of the programmes are clearly outlined, the management of the programmes is conducted effectively, and the doctoral programmes entails the highest potential for connection and impact on the labour market and society. As far as the connection with the labour market and the society it is stressed the developing of links with the employer community because it is important to appreciate the range of careers available the students and to provide them with the opportunity to engage with the full range of potential employers. The departments should consider focused career events, and consider how some form of an external advisory grouping drawing on potential employers could assist in designing of new and more broadly based-courses that will appeal to a wider recruitment pool. It was noticed that there is a lack of opportunities for the PhD students for international mobility and it was unclear to what extent this mobility is encouraged or if any support exists for it. To strengthen international links, many Committees suggest encouraging more outward visits by students, for example through the Erasmus programme. There is no formal coursework for PhD students though there are comprehensive exams. Many students are encouraged or required to take some MA level courses but this is done on an ad hoc basis. While this is understandable, it should be noted that many PhD students note that the doctoral experience can be quite solitary and crave contact. A more structure seminar series for PhD students is proposed in addition to the excellent annual colloquium to ensure some contact as some PhD students seem to be "disappearing" from the system and the number of meetings with supervisors seems to vary greatly. Another good idea is the Departments to come up with a system of guest lectures by advanced PhD students or organize a series of ad hoc lectures that

PhD student would give and where undergraduate and MA students would be invited as an audience. Also there is the recommendation, the Departments and the University to review the role of the supervisor in the formal research-focused examinations. Good practice would suggest that at least one of these, preferably the Comprehensive Examination, is carried out in the absence of the supervisor, but is recommended that the supervisor makes a written assessment to the Panel. Internationalization of the PhD programmes should also aim at establishing thematic synergies with experienced professors and experts as well as research centres.

Purpose and Objectives and learning outcomes of the Program of Study

The programs broadly address the stated objectives and learning outcomes. The majority of them are working in the right directions and trains students for research and research methodology in compliance with the current requirements of academic knowledge. :…the overall purpose, objectives and learning outcomes are appropriate for doctoral-level and commensurate with international standards..~. In the field of *purpose and objectives of the program and the learning outcomes* a Committee stressed ""…the importance of incorporating rigorous as well as analytical PhD-level training to support cutting-edge research…" It is also mentioned the need of the feedback to be provided to students' written work and the adoption of a clear upper word limit for a doctoral dissertation "…the figure of a 100,000 words including footnotes would be a good basis for this…"

The purpose and objectives of the program of study are formulated in terms of expected learning outcomes and are consistent with the mission and the strategy of the institution.	▪ f/c 29 ▪ n/a 2
The purpose and objectives of the program and the learning outcomes are utilized as a guide for the design of the program of study.	▪ f/c 29 ▪ n/a 1 ▪ p/c 1
The higher education qualification and the program of study, conform to the provisions of their corresponding Professional and Vocational Bodies for the purpose of registration to these bodies.	▪ f/c 27 ▪ n/a 4
The program's content, the methods of assessment, the teaching materials and the equipment, lead to the achievement of the program's purpose and objectives and ensure the expected learning outcomes.	▪ f/c 30 ▪ n/a 1

The expected learning outcomes of the program are known to the students and to the members of the academic and teaching personnel.	▪ f/c 30 ▪ n/a 1
The learning process is properly designed to achieve the expected learning outcomes.	▪ f/c 30 ▪ p/c 1
The higher education qualification awarded to the students, corresponds to the purpose and objectives and the learning outcomes of the program.	▪ f/c 31

Structure and Content of the Program of Study

The programs are well structured with clear milestones and assessment mechanisms that "…*gave us a high level of confidence in terms of an international recognition…*". An issue is raised when it comes to the two formal assessment stages; the Comprehensive Examination, followed by the Doctoral Thesis Proposal. "…*this is very good practice and adheres to international standards. We note, however at this point, that the research supervisor has a formal role in all aspects of research assessment and student progression. It is clearly important that the supervisor contributes to the decisions, but this is not necessarily the same as being present in the examination. Our experience suggests that there is better practice available*…." The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is applied and there is true correspondence between credits and workload. There were three out of 31 reports saying that "…the writing of the thesis comes quite late and is not in line with standard international practice…."

The course curricula clearly define the expected learning outcomes,the content, the teaching and learning approaches and the method of assessing student performance	▪ f/c 29 ▪ p/c 1 ▪ n/a 1
The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is applied and there is true correspondence between credits and workload	▪ f/c 30 ▪ p/c 1

The program of study is structured in a consistent manner and in sequence, so that concepts operating as preconditions precede the teaching of other, more complex and cognitively more demanding, concepts.

- f/c29
- n/a1
- p/c 1

Quality Assurance of the Program of studies

In the majority of reports it is clear that the Quality Assurance of the Program of studies is twofold evaluated. a) All suggestions made by the Departments on academic matters are approved by the Senate of the institution. b) The evaluation of the study programs is conducted within the broader framework of the External Developmental Evaluation, which takes place every five years. In the reports it is evident the feeling that the members of the Academic staff have strengthened the quality by significant individual effort. Therefore, the quality of the programs seems to be in the able hands of academic and administrative staff that are highly competent and committed.

The arrangements regarding the program's quality assurance define clear competencies and procedures.

- f/c 30
- n/c 1

Participation in the processes of the system of quality assurance of the program, is ensured for the members of the academic personnel

- f/c 31

Participation in the processes of the system of quality assurance of the program, is ensured for the members of the administrative personnel

- f/c 29
- nc 1
- n/a 1

Participation in the processes of the system of quality assurance of the program, is ensured for the students.

- n/c 1
- f/c 28
- n/a 1
- p/c 1

The guide and / or the regulations for quality assurance, provide detailed information and data for the support and management of the program of study.

- f/c 31

The quality assurance process constitutes an academic process and it is not restricted by non-academic factors.

- f/c 31

Management of the Program of Study

Communication between staff appears to be open in a collegial atmosphere. The support staff is consulted in the program management as are student representatives Management of the Program of Study Procedures are in place across the institutions for the effective management and development of the programs, and information about all aspects of programs management are transparent and publicly available. Overall, the programs are well managed with considerable staff dedication. It is suggested to introduce a formal procedure of annual assessment of progress in the PhD program conducted by an independent staff member not directly involved in the supervision of the student as "…*this will identify early on weak candidates so that they do not spend up to 8 years to complete their PhD degree*…." In the field *The effectiveness of the program's evaluation mechanism, by the students, is ensured*, a Committee stresses "…*It would be advisable to include student representatives in the PG Management Committee*…"

Effective management of the program of study with regard to its design, its approval, its monitoring and its review, is in place.	▪ f/c 31
It is ensured that learning outcomes may be achieved within the specified timeframe.	▪ f/c 31
It is ensured that the program's management and development process is an academic process, which operates without any nonacademic interventions.	▪ f/c 31
The academic hierarchy of the institution, (Rector, Vice-Rectors, Deans, Chairs and Programs' Coordinators, academic personnel) have the sole responsibility for academic excellence and the development of the programs of study.	▪ f/c 31
Information relating to the program of study are posted publicly and include The provisions regarding unit credits	▪ f/c 31
Information relating to the program of study are posted publicly and include The expected learning outcomes	▪ f/c 31

Information relating to the program of study are posted publicly and include The methodology	▪ f/c 31
Information relating to the program of study are posted publicly and include Course descriptions	▪ f/c 30 ▪ n/a 1
Information relating to the program of study are posted publicly and include The program's structure	▪ f/cx31
Information relating to the program of study are posted publicly and include The admission requirements	▪ f/cx 31
Information relating to the program of study are posted publicly and include The format and the procedures for student assessment	▪ f/c 31
The award of the higher education qualification is accompanied by the Diploma Supplement which is in line with the European and international standards.	▪ f/c 29 ▪ n/a 2
The effectiveness of the program's evaluation mechanism, by the students, is ensured.	▪ f/cx 29 ▪ n/a 2
The recognition and transfer of credit units from previous studies is regulated by procedures and regulations which ensure that the majority of credit units is awarded by the institution which awards the higher education qualification	▪ f/c 31

International dimension of the Program of study

The majority of the programs meet the international standards. Many Committees "…*we were impressed by the quality of the theses that we examined as well as the quality of the staff and the students*…" with whom they engaged. A point that was stressed is the opportunities to strengthen international links associated with the research base by encouraging more outward visits by staff and students. As indicated "…*While research collaborations may compare positively with other institutions, it is unclear whether any teaching collaborations are being actively pursued to a high*

level, like training networks in Europe and overseas…" . The same applies to students as *"..There is potential for students to take part in exchange programs. However, current students have not taken advantage of the opportunity for personal reasons. Opportunities could be enhanced by participation in the European PhD…"*

The program's collaborations with other institutions are compared positively with corresponding collaborations of other departments / programs of study in Europe and internationally.	▪ n/a 2 ▪ f/c 29
The program attracts Visiting professors of recognized academic standing.	▪ n/a 3 ▪ n/c 1 ▪ f/c 27
Students participate in exchange programs.	▪ n/a 3 ▪ f/c 27 ▪ n/c 1
The academic profile of the program of study is compatible with corresponding programs of study in Cyprus and internationally.	▪ f/c 30 ▪ p/c 1

Connection with the labour market and the society

From the findings in the reports it is concluded that the PhD candidates have different aspirations. Many of them are doing their PhD to enhance their future employability, while others want to follow academic careers. Others, are already professionals who seek to enhance their skills and qualifications to be better in their job (especially teachers), and get a promotion. Useful recommendations were made such as *"…the students are trained on how to enter and succeed in the job market (mock interviews, mock presentations, global jobmarket openings and proper labour-market search); the role of a jobmarket/placement officer is instituted, who will be responsible for the successful marketing of the programme's job-market candidates; (iii) the enhancement of the funding for the organisation of an extended seminar series, PhD travelling for conferences, and/or semesters abroad to create a necessary network for a successful job-market experience upon completion of the PhD…"* Similarly, benefits to the society and industrial processes can be strengthened by industrial involvement in the PhD, especially in terms of advice and feedback given by a suitably qualified Professional.

The procedures applied, so that the program conforms to the scientific and professional activities of the graduates, are adequate and effective.

- f/c 29
- n/c 1
- p/c 1

According to the feasibility study, indicators for the employability of graduates are satisfactory.

- f/c 29
- n/a 2

Benefits, for the society, deriving from the program are significant

- f/c 31

Research – Teaching Synergies

In general the Committees are satisfied that the programs are highly informed by the new research, that the faculty's research is sufficiently integrated with the programs of study and the research outputs of the faculties are published in quality international peer – reviewed outlets. The majority of teaching staff are researchers of international standing as evidenced by the extensive staff CVs which demonstrate ample participation in international conferences, publications with major European and US journals and research monographs. Strong synergies were found in research, teaching, and "…*as far we can judge there seems to be a close connection between research interests of the supervisors and those of their research students*…" There is also remarkable synergy between academic staff, departmental administrator and students particularly in terms of supporting final years.

New research results are embodied in the content of the program of study.

- n/a 3
- f/c 28

Adequate and sufficient facilities and equipment are provided to support the research component of the program of study, which are available and accessible to the personnel and the students.

- f/c 31

The results of the academic personnel's research activity are published in international journals with the peer reviewing system, in international conferences, conference minutes, publications etc.

- f/c 31

It is ensured that teaching and learning have been adequately enlightened by research	• n/a 4 • f/c 27
Student training in the research process is sufficient.	• n/a 2 • f/c 29

Administration Services, Student Welfare and support of Teaching Work

In general, the administration services are available, well organised particularly in areas such as housing, social support, career development and the mechanism operates properly. The majority of the departments enjoy highly committed and motivated technical and administrative teams who clearly deliver an outstanding service. Support facilities to use modern teaching technology are provided and the departments acquire books and journals regularly. The provision of traditional books and journals compares well with similar institutions abroad and the provision of digital materials indicates genuine commitment to the future development of teaching and research. Financial support for the programmes seems broadly adequate, though it would be enhanced with the addition of new staff. Students commented that they would welcome further financial support in the form of grants and bursaries. In some cases, the need to work undermined students' academic progress, and in the past some promising students were forced to withdraw for financial reasons. More financial support for students would also aid in future recruitment of students. There is also some comments as for the financial recourses and a provision for the future stating that "…*while the current financial resources are suitable for the program in its current size, development in range and numbers would require further investment in staff*…" , "…*Funding of the program seems adequate. However, we have concerns that the income from the existing Master's program (according to the fee structure) is approximately half the expenditure. Conversely, the running costs of the PhD program are significantly more than the income. Consequently, we have concerns that the Master's program is in effect subsidising the PhD program*…." Finally, in the subcategory *Student tuition and fees are consistent to the tuition and fees of other respective institutions* it is commented "… *to European standards it is comparable, but given the economic conditions in Cyprus it is too high*…" "… *Although the level of fees are consistent with other universities, the lack of internal and external funding for the*

majority of Doctoral students significantly constrains the attractiveness of the program to students from both Cyprus and worldwide. .."

There is a Student Welfare Service that supports students with regards to academic and personal problems and difficulties.	▪ f/c 29 ▪ p/c 2
Statutory administrative mechanisms for monitoring and supporting students are sufficient.	▪ p/c 3 ▪ f/c 28
There is a supportive internal communication platform.	▪ n/a 1 ▪ f/c 30
The facilities are adequate in number and size.	▪ p/c 1 ▪ f/c 30
The equipment used in teaching and learning (laboratory and electronic equipment, consumables etc.) are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate.	▪ f/c 29 ▪ p/c 1 ▪ n/a 1
Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are adequate and accessible to students.	▪ f/c 31
The teaching personnel are provided with training opportunities in teaching method, in adult education, and in new technologies on the basis of a structured learning framework.	▪ p/c 2 ▪ n/a 1 ▪ n/c 1 ▪ f/c 27
The management and allocation of the financial resources of the program of study, allow for the development of the program and of the academic / teaching personnel.	▪ n/a 1 ▪ p/c 1 ▪ f/c 29
The remuneration of academic and other personnel is analogous to the remuneration of academic and other personnel of the respective institutions in Cyprus.	▪ n/a 4 ▪ f/c 27
Student tuition and fees are consistent to the tuition and fees of other respective institutions	▪ p/c 1 ▪ f/c 30

Doctoral Programs of study

The general estimation of the EEC Committees is that the supervisors of the PhD programs have the necessary academic qualifications and are appropriate to the provisions of the programs. They are experts in their field of research and this reflects positively on the support of PhD projects. There are strong synergies between teaching and research, which promotes the development and encourages new ideas and innovation. The establishment of a high quality PhD programs in Cyprus represents an important development and enhancing the research profile and culture. According to a quote from an EEC report, "*The Doctoral program builds on the very strong research competence of the teaching staff. The research method the program introduces provides students with a good overview of all most important research approaches and methodologies. The program supports PhD students' development in applications of the methodologies and methods appropriate for independent research on topics important in learning sciences. It appears that the structure of the program strategically provides more support in the initial stage, and then provides more flexibility and guidance to support the student's growth as an independent researcher*…" Some EEC Committees raised some issues such as the addition of courses in the area of methodology since "…*these are courses that could be given at Faculty level to all PhD students of related disciplines. This will encourage collaboration across disciplinary and departmental lines. There is also an acute need to offer a departmental dissertation writer's seminar which will include students preparing their research proposals as well as students at the writing stage. In such a seminar, students will present to professors and peers their prospectuses as well as chapters and other materials from their dissertations when ready*…" In addition to that we should stress the issue of the small number of staff responsible in some programs which*"… imposes some constraints on the range of the given topics that can be supervised" and because of that "…there is an urgent need for active international recruitment of more faculty members, which will contribute to an environment of research excellence. Towards this goal, an expansion of the members of the faculty is warranted, along with an expansion of the visiting academic scholar programme*." Furthermore, plans for staff replacement should be fully implemented. Another point to be raised is the lack of multiple activities that would give the opportunity and momentum to PhD students to interact with one another as well as the need on behalf of the institutions to explore possibilities for providing more financial support to PhD students as it is listed in one of the reports "…*There were some concerns about the limited financial support available to students. The EEC also noted that more*

could be done to enhance the sense of students' community and collective identity. We would like to make the following recommendations. 1) Plans for staff replacement should be fully implemented; 2) Staff recruited should specialize in a broader range of topics than currently represented; 3) More activities should be organized to give students a chance to interact with one another; 4) The university should explore possibilities for providing more financial support to PhD students.''

The provision of quality doctoral studies is ensured through Doctoral Studies Regulations.	▪ p/c 1 ▪ n/c 1 ▪ f/c 29
The structure and the content of a doctoral program of study are satisfactory and they ensure the quality provision of doctoral studies.	▪ n/c 2 ▪ p/c 1 ▪ f/c 28
The number of academic personnel, which is going to support the doctoral program of study, is adequate.	▪ p/c 2 ▪ n/c 1 ▪ f/c 28
The doctoral studies' supervisors have the necessary academic qualifications and experience for the supervision of the specific dissertations.	▪ f/c 31
The degree of accessibility of all interested parties to the Doctoral Studies Regulations is satisfactory.	▪ p/c 1 ▪ f/c 30
The number of doctoral students, under the supervision of a member of the academic personnel, is apt for the continuous and effective feedback provided to the students and it complies with the European and international standards.	▪ n/c 1 ▪ f/c 30
The research interests of academic advisors and supervisors are satisfactory and they adequately cover the thematic areas of research conducted by the doctoral students of the program	▪ f/c 28 ▪ n/c 2 ▪ p/c 1