



Doc. 300.1.2

Date: October 5th, 2020

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
University of Cyprus
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **Programme of study
Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

In Greek:

Διατμηματικό Μεταπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα στις Βυζαντινές Σπουδές και τη Λατινική Ανατολή (= ΔΜΠΒΣ&ΛΑ), επιπέδου μάστερ (Ενάμισι έτος, 90 ECTS) Διατμηματικό Μεταπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα στις Βυζαντινές Σπουδές και τη Λατινική Ανατολή, διδακτορικού επιπέδου (PhD)

In English:

Interdepartmental Postgraduate Programme in Byzantine Studies and the Latin East (= IPPBS&LE), Master's Degree (one and a half years, 90 ECTS) Interdepartmental Postgraduate Programme in Byzantine Studies and the Latin East, Doctoral Degree (PhD)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek (for the MA) and Greek, English, French, German (for the PhD)
- **Programme's status:** Currently operating



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 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].



A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*
 - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*
 - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.1.1).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.8, 1.9)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

EEC's RECOMMENDATION: The programme objectives and learning outcomes still very much denote their origin in two departments and three 'disciplines': for the benefit of the students and the programme, the number of bullet points should be significantly reduced and thus offer a concise idea of what the programme actually intends to achieve.

HEI's RESPONSE: The Programme's objectives and learning outcomes have been reduced to five each, as shown on the Programme's website: <http://www.ucy.ac.cy/byz/en/general-information>

EEC's RECOMMENDATION: The list of courses on the programme website should state how many of these courses are likely to be available in any given year/during the two to three semesters that a student follows coursework in the Master's programme.

HEI's RESPONSE: This information appears under the subtitle "Additional Information" on the Programme's website: <http://www.ucy.ac.cy/byz/en/master/academic-requirements-master>

EEC's RECOMMENDATION: Information about assessment procedures should be added to the website.

HEI's RESPONSE: This information has been added under the subtitle "Additional Information" on the Programme's website: <http://www.ucy.ac.cy/byz/en/master/academic-requirements-master>

According to the Postgraduate Studies Rules §5.1: "Each Department may regulate with specific internal rules, which shall not contravene the general rules of UCY, ... the procedure for the writing and evaluation of Master dissertations, the procedure for taking and evaluation of the comprehensive examination, etc."

http://www.ucy.ac.cy/graduateschool/documents/Kanones/RULES_METAPTIXIAKIS_FOITISIS_ENGLISH1.pdf

2. Teaching, learning and student assessment (ESG 1.3)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

EEC's RECOMMENDATION: A higher degree of uniformity in the assessment method of the Seminars of the Study Programme would be preferred.

HEI's RESPONSE: The evaluation of a student's performance is regulated by the Postgraduate Studies Rules §1.8: *"The University of Cyprus works on the principle of on-going evaluation in each course. Specifically, a student's performance in a particular subject is evaluated, according to the professor's judgment and with the Department's approval, in at least two different ways. One must be the final written examination. The final examination, where provided, cannot participate in the final grade at a rate over 60%."*

In compliance with the Rules, the following assessment methods are implemented:

- active and constructive participation in class and punctual submission of coursework: up to 10%
- oral and written assignments (e.g. critical review of bibliography, short essays on assigned topics, seminar paper outline, etc.): up to 30%
- seminar paper (oral presentation in class and written form ± 6000 words): up to 60% (evaluation criteria: content, structure, argumentation, methodology, critical thinking, use of sources, expression, number of words). The final decision about the word-limit rests with the professor.

The percentage may vary according to the field of specialization and the instructor. In any case, the students are informed about the assessment methods during the first week of teaching, as regulated by the Postgraduate Studies Rules §1.7: *"During the first week of teaching, the faculty member gives to the students a written outline of the course in which are written the goals, the syllabus, the bibliography and the method of evaluating the course. The outline is filed with the Department Secretariat and relevant information including evaluation is placed on the university electronic systems for use by the students. The evaluation method for the course cannot be amended after the first week of teaching without the students' consent."* See http://www.ucy.ac.cy/graduateschool/documents/Kanones/RULES_METAPTIXIAKIS_FOITISIS_ENGLISH1.pdf.

EEC's RECOMMENDATION: Methodological Seminars which could enable students to understand the primary sources and prepare for further studies, such as Greek Palaeography, are suggested. More specialized topics would be necessary as well.

HEI's RESPONSE: We fully agree with the Committee that proper methodology is a prerequisite for conducting research and writing the seminar paper. Although our students already have some necessary background, the instructor of each course focuses on specific methodological questions and challenges. The first two or more sessions of each seminar are dedicated to methodological and bibliographical issues and offer a general introduction to the topic, while the rest of the sessions focus on more specialized issues. See attached "Syllabi."



The study Programme offers an array of specialized topics from different disciplines not found in any other Byzantine/Medieval Studies programmes. The general titles of some seminars facilitate the teaching of one seminar by more than one professor, each professor focusing on the areas of his or her research interests.

EEC's RECOMMENDATION: A closer contact with archive material and the libraries, especially for philology and archaeology, would also be helpful.

HEI's RESPONSE: We fully agree with the Committee that archival material and library resources are *sine quibus non* for writing a seminar paper or the MA thesis. Use of such resources is certainly encouraged and supported at the research stage of composing the MA thesis. Contact with archival material and libraries, as well as "hands-on training," are organized according to the requirements of each course and can also be gained through participation in research projects. Students make use of the interlibrary loan service or visit larger libraries abroad for this reason, through the Erasmus Programme or with grants from the partner Departments. The attached seminar papers and MA theses are exemplary of students making a good use of library resources and archival material.

EEC's RECOMMENDATION: Given the small number of students, the regulation of five (5) students as a minimum for the operation of a Seminar needs to be revisited; a minimum of three (3) students is recommended instead.

HEI's RESPONSE: The Programme's faculty fully agree with the EEC's suggestion.

EEC's STATEMENT: 2.2 Practical training evaluated as Partially compliant

HEI's RESPONSE: Concerning this statement, we received the following clarification from the Committee:

Concerning 2.2 (i.e. Practical Training of students):

It is clearly given on the EEC's suggestions of the «Areas of Improvement», on p.13:

Namely, i. Seminars on the study of primary sources, such as Greek Paleography,

ii. Closer contact of the students with archive material and special libraries and museums.

Cf. also the «Conclusions and Final Remarks» on p. 33 of the Report.

As we have already suggested, primary sources (such as manuscripts) are studied in the context of seminars, and methodological issues are substantially addressed at the beginning of each seminar. As the EEC correctly noted (EEC's Report, p. 13), "Theory and praxis are interconnected; teaching introduces the students to the discipline and guides them to the presentation of their work, composition of essays or field work..... Practical training is regularly organised and effectively supports achievement of planned learning outcomes."

3. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

EEC's RECOMMENDATION: Recruitment of more MA students is highly recommended. However, this is something that cannot be addressed as a problem by the Faculty alone. A programme such as the one under review can easily attract foreign students if

- a) Encourage more Erasmus collaborations and participation in seminars perhaps taught in a foreign language,
- b) Subsidized student housing is provided by the University.
- c) The campus is better connected to the city and
- d) The School of Philosophy acquires its own teaching and administration building.

HEI's RESPONSE: We are in agreement with the EEC. In reference to Erasmus collaborations, we should emphasize the fact that both Departments have signed several Erasmus agreements with universities abroad. Each Department has an Erasmus coordinator, who helps incoming students decide about their schedule of classes and UCY students choose appropriate universities abroad. At the same time, the Erasmus office of the University is very supportive of participants in the Erasmus Programme. Some of our students who have participated in exchange programmes recognise the value of their experience. Unfortunately, most students are hesitant to take advantage of mobility opportunities. See also further below in Conclusions and Remarks (about YUFE and Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree).

EEC's RECOMMENDATION: A more aggressive advertising campaign should be pursued, stressing the interdisciplinary nature of the MA Programme and its substantial contribution to the education of a number of young scholars on how to further advance to Doctoral studies and eventually join the ranks of Academia.

HEI's RESPONSE: The study Programme offers skills that can open different career paths and deserves advertising, even if there are not many academic positions. Some actions we have taken to attract high-calibre students are the following:

1. We actively participate in the event known as "Open Day" organized every year in February by the University of Cyprus (<http://ucy.ac.cy/openday/know-us>), as well as in special events focused on postgraduate studies. In these events our Departments participate with a triptych of the Faculty of Letters as well as a special leaflet of our IPPBS-LE. See attached some of these.
2. We have invited third- and fourth-year undergraduate students, to inform them about our postgraduate-level programmes, while our graduates talk about their experiences.
3. We will soon be in a position to offer an «Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree» in Byzantine Studies with the University of Mainz and other European universities.
4. Unofficial meetings: After every colloquium meeting, postgraduate students are invited to the dinner with the speaker. PhD students are usually more responsive. Further unofficial meetings between PhD students and the teaching staff have also taken place, but on an irregular basis.



In addition to these, the following suggestions were submitted to the Dean of the Faculty of Postgraduate Studies:

- a) in collaboration with the Faculty of Letters, invite high school students who are interested in the humanities to attend presentations of our programmes of study;
- b) target secondary education teachers as prospective postgraduate students (in collaboration with the Ministry of Education);
- c) organise recruiting events at the "House of Cyprus" in Athens and elsewhere, where our current postgraduate students could present their research.

These presentations would provide an ideal medium to showcase the Department's strongest qualities, such as the ideal student-teacher ratio.

- d) Continue to promote the Faculty of Postgraduate Studies' scholarships and, potentially, associate these scholarships with postgraduate teaching (both the scholarship and the possibility of teaching might be appealing to prospective high-calibre students). The Faculty of Postgraduate Studies' scholarships might be limited in number, but they are also some of the most competitive funding packages in our field at an international level. We should clarify that the designation of any teaching responsibilities in connection with the Faculty of Postgraduate Studies' scholarships needs to be approved by that Faculty first, before implementation.

EEC's STATEMENT: 3.2 Teaching staff number and status Partially compliant (with the European Standards and Guidelines)

HEI's RESPONSE: Concerning this statement, we received the following clarification from the Committee:

As far as 3.2 («Teaching Staff number and status»):

The indications are given in this section and more precisely in the «Conclusions and Final Remarks» on pp. 32ff. of the Report.

Namely, i. «Professors on unpaid or sabbatical leave should be replaced with temporary appointments». Byzantine History appears to have been neglected for some time as a result.

ii. A limit to the number of PhD supervisees per academic staff member should be introduced ... and full workload credit should be given to supervisors ...».

The members of the EEC were given the impression that the two coordinators and the Associate Professors were undertaking most of the responsibilities of the Programme and the supervision of postgraduate students.

Concerning the EEC's indications, we would like to note the following:

- I. The issue of the Byzantine History specialist has been solved. The Department of History and Archaeology has appointed an Assistant Professor (Dionysios Stathakopoulos), who will join the Programme in September 2020.



- II. We thank the Committee for both suggestions, but we should note that there is no University regulation concerning the number of the supervisees or any credit for supervisors. Nevertheless, the Programme's Postgraduate Committee will ensure that the upper limit suggested by the Committee is not exceeded and that the instructors partake in the supervision of postgraduate students. Regarding Committee's impression that "Professors and Assistant Professors are not as actively involved as the two coordinators and Associate Professors", we would like to note that the reason that the administrative load has primarily been on the shoulders of the two coordinators and Associate Professors is two-fold: our full professors have been on leave or serving as Dean of the Faculty of Letters (and yet participating when needed) and we try to allow our Assistant Professors to focus more on earning tenure. All faculty members have a very cordial relationship with one another and share all responsibilities and duties.

ΣΟΦ



4. Students

(ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

EEC's RECOMMENDATION: A rather high rate of attrition (at least according to the statistics provided by the coordinators), which should be addressed.

HEI's RESPONSE: The number of students who leave the Programme without completing it is very low. From 2007, when the Programme was inaugurated, until June 2020, only five Master students and four PhD students dropped out. Moreover, non-completion factors have been personal and financial rather than academic.

EEC's RECOMMENDATION: An interview of the candidates before the final list of the successful ones would be highly recommended.

HEI's RESPONSE: According to the Postgraduate Studies Rules §6.5.3(iii), a personal interview is not mandatory, but it is for the Department to decide if one will take place or not:

(See http://www.ucy.ac.cy/graduateschool/documents/Kanones/RULES_METAPTIXIAKIS_FOITISIS_ENGLISH1.pdf)

We have already been interviewing candidates whose CVs raise questions, but we agree that a personal interview with all candidates is more fitting and we will proceed to implement this. The Programme's website reflects already this change: See <http://www.ucy.ac.cy/byz/en/master/admission-master> and <http://www.ucy.ac.cy/byz/en/phd/admission-phd>

5. Resources

(ESG 1.6)

Findings

EEC's RECOMMENDATION: the qualified administrative staff needs to be further strengthened.

HEI's RESPONSE: We fully agree that the administrative staff needs to be strengthened. Currently, only one secretary is appointed for each Department, and neither secretary receives any benefits for her services to the Programme, while the teaching staff is inevitably burdened with administrative work. We have already submitted requests for additional administrative support to the University Administration.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

EEC's RECOMMENDATION: A wider digital resources collection regarding the disciplines of the Programme is recommended.

HEI's RESPONSE: The University Library collections are constantly enriched with both printed and digital resources recommended by the academic staff of the two Departments. To this end, the Departments of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies and of History and Archaeology have an annual budget of 5.000 and 8.282 euros respectively. Digital resources usually come in packages and are available upon agreement between UCY and the publishers/distributors. Nevertheless, expensive resources without a critical mass of users are not a top-priority investment for the Library.

EEC's RECOMMENDATION: IT infrastructure could be further improved.

HEI's RESPONSE: IT infrastructure is regularly updated or replaced.

EEC's RECOMMENDATION: Mobility of the students within Cyprus and European countries can be improved.

HEI's RESPONSE: The students are strongly encouraged to spend time in European universities as ERASMUS students or to conduct research in European archives and libraries ([see table 1](#)). To this end, full scholarships or bursaries and grants are offered by the University or the Department. The Faculty of Postgraduate Studies has recently established partial and full scholarships for MA students (Praxandros scholarships), which allow them to undertake research trips abroad.

(See <https://www.ucy.ac.cy/graduateschool/en/postgraduate-studies/scholarships>)

One MA student (Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies) of the Programme has already received a full Praxandros scholarship.



EEC's RECOMMENDATION: Review and updating of the web links in the research tools section so that it becomes more functional and more user friendly for the students is recommended.

HEI's RESPONSE: The research tools on the Programme's website were updated in June 2020. The University is already working to change the structure of all Departmental websites. Our secretaries have been notified that they will undergo training in order to be able to implement all the changes. Based on this new initiative, we hope that, by the end of the year, the Departments' new webpages will be ready.

ΣΟΦΑ



6. Additional for distance learning programmes (ALL ESG)

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7. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Areas of improvement and recommendations

EEC's RECOMMENDATION: In order to facilitate the progress of the PhD students, their comprehensive examination needs to be placed at an earlier stage of the Programme; the first academic year of the Programme is highly recommended for this. We also think that the interview has to be an integral and compulsory part of the selection procedure of proposals for the Programme. For additional suggestions see the conclusion and final remarks section (D) below.

HEI's RESPONSE: We agree that the comprehensive examination should be completed at a very early stage, but the Programme is obliged to follow the Faculty of Postgraduate Studies' regulations, which stipulate that students cannot take the exam before their third semester. We have now been informed that this particular regulation is being changed, however, and it will soon be possible for students to take the exam at any time between the first and the sixth semester (Senate approval of the revised Postgraduate Studies Rules is pending). Our intention is to ask our students to take the examination within the first year of their studies as soon as the change is implemented.

As we mentioned above, we agree with making the personal interview a mandatory step in the student selection process.

ΕΠΙΣΗΜΟΤΗΤΑ



8. Additional for joint programmes (ALL ESG)

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B. Conclusions and final remarks

In conclusion, we would like to express our appreciation to all Committee members for their positive assessment as well as their constructive comments. In addition to our responses above, we wish to address the committee's concluding remarks.

EEC's REMARK: Further thought should be given to internationalising the Programme, either by offering instruction in Modern Greek to incoming international students or by offering some courses in languages other than Greek.

HEI's RESPONSE: To this end, the teaching staff are willing to teach courses in Greek, English, French, or German, depending on the language skills of the students participating at the MA level. The supervision and composition of MA theses and PhD dissertations are already conducted in these languages. However, Italian and Russian are not included in the languages of the Programme, as the EEC by mistake noted in their Report (p. 1).

Moreover, the Programme's teaching staff participate in the YUFE alliance, offering postgraduate seminars in Greek, English, French, and German. We are currently in the process of applying for an Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree with the University of Mainz and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

Additionally, the School of Modern Greek of the University of Cyprus offers instruction in Modern Greek to international students (see <http://www.ucy.ac.cy/mogr/en/>).

EEC's REMARK: The PhD follows organically the Master, but further thought could be given to ensure smooth transition, e.g. with regard to the comprehensive examination or the inclusion of clearly research-led teaching at Master's level (it might be worthwhile considering replacing a few of the survey-style courses currently on offer with more specialised courses focusing on single events, texts, objects in far more detail, in order to teach research skills, rather than striving to cover the whole of the Byzantine period).

HEI's RESPONSE: We have already addressed the issues concerning the comprehensive examination at the PhD level and the introduction of specialized courses at the MA level.

All seminars are research orientated in terms of both content and teaching. The seminars may appear to be of a general and survey-like nature in the descriptions, but in fact these descriptions represent thematic units, which allow each member of the academic staff who teaches the course in question to approach the general topic from a different perspective each time according to his or her research interests. The first two or more sessions of a seminar are dedicated to useful thematic, methodological, and bibliographical introductions. We are fully confident that our students acquire all the methodological tools required for the composition of an MA thesis and for a smooth transition to the PhD level. We sometimes recommend that PhD candidates who join our PhD Programme from other MA programmes take some of our MA seminars in order to ensure that they possess all the necessary methodological skills.

EEC's REMARK: The EEC was informed that most students tend to use their full eight years to complete their doctorate: this is too long by international standards, but clearly related to lack of resources – necessitating research and library trips abroad – and lack of funding – forcing students to work while pursuing their studies. UCY would need to tackle and solve both these aspects in order to achieve its strategic goals – we emphasise that this is not an issue that the academic staff running IPPBS&LE could solve by themselves. Top-notch international cooperation is in place, and should be further expanded.

HEI's RESPONSE: We fully agree with the Committee that the lack of funding forces some of our students to work. Naturally, this prolongs their studies. The Faculty of Postgraduate Studies has recently established partial and full scholarships for doctoral students, which allow them to fully dedicate themselves to their research. (See “Evagoras” scholarships: <http://www.ucy.ac.cy/graduateschool/en/postgraduate-studies/scholarships>). Two doctoral students (Department of History and Archaeology) of the Programme have already received full Evagoras scholarships. At the same time, the students may receive grants and partial scholarships from their Departments or other foundations (e.g. Leventis Foundation, Sylvia Ioannou Foundation, Paphos Municipality, etc.; see table 2). Some students are offered part time work as Research Associates in the research programmes of the Programme's teaching staff (see table 3) or as Special Scientists employed to teach undergraduate courses (see table 4).

On the other hand, some students already have professional careers before joining the PhD programme and they require the full eight-year period. Moreover, their careers are personally satisfying and important for their intellectual development, rendering them more mature and better prepared for the demands of a PhD. Concerning top-notch international cooperation, we believe that our participation in the YUFE alliance and our forthcoming Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree will further solidify our strong international outlook.

EEC's REMARK: Though the overall assessment is quite positive the EEC would like to highlight the following suggestions which might further strengthen the postgraduate Programme: It is essential that UCY supports Humanities and the Faculty of Letters by planning a special building within the university campus to house all three Departments and their postgraduate Programmes.

HEI's RESPONSE: We fully support the construction of a building for the Faculty of Letters.

EEC's REMARK: All policies and procedures should be communicated to staff and students clearly, preferably in the form of an IPPBS&LE handbook.

HEI's RESPONSE: All relevant information may be found online on the Programme's website as well as in the Postgraduate Studies Rules. The University of Cyprus discourages the issuing of printed material.

EEC's REMARK: Professors on unpaid or sabbatical leave should be replaced with temporary appointments.

HEI's RESPONSE: This is done when there is need. Absences due to one-semester sabbatical leaves do not cause much disruption to the Programme's schedule, since there is more than one faculty available for each discipline and only one seminar per discipline is offered each semester. Long unpaid leaves, however, have caused problems in the past and we thoroughly agree with the recommendation.

EEC's REMARK: The participation of both Master's and PhD students in university exchanges through the Erasmus+ programme is strongly recommended.

HEI's RESPONSE: The students are constantly encouraged to spend time in European universities as ERASMUS students or to conduct research in European archives and libraries (see table 1). To this end, full scholarships or grants are given by the University or the Department (see table 2).

EEC's REMARK: Students' participation in the Programme and in the quality assurance process is strongly recommended.

HEI's RESPONSE: In this regard, the Centre for Teaching & Learning of UCY is very supportive and has developed a system of evaluation of teaching at the undergraduate and postgraduate level. MA students participate in the Programme's evaluation every semester as they have to answer each course's Evaluation Questionnaire prepared by the Centre of Teaching and Learning; doctoral students are exempted (see: <https://www.ucy.ac.cy/ctl/en/activities/for-students/evaluation-questionnaires>). Moreover, all instructors of the Programme take the time to have unofficial discussions with the students in order to get feedback about matters of planning and management of teaching. The coordinators are willing to organise annual meetings with the students, encouraging them to address the strengths and weaknesses of the programme. This feedback may lead to further improvements of the programme.

EEC's REMARK: Strict rules should prevent students from plagiarism.

HEI's RESPONSE: The Programme meticulously observes the strict regulations of the University of Cyprus concerning plagiarism. According to the Rules, plagiarism is deemed a serious disciplinary offense and has severe penalties. It can lead to a student's suspension from the University for a period of one or two semesters or even to his/her expulsion and removal from the Student Register (see Πειθαρχικοί κανόνες φοιτητών §4, and Παράρτημα Ι: <http://ucy.ac.cy/legislation/volumeb/5.1.4.3.htm>). Moreover, the instructors are provided with Turnitin, a useful tool for detecting plagiarism.

EEC's REMARKS: Especially with regard to the Master's level:

- Encourage promising postgraduate students to select the dissertation pathway rather than the three additional seminars to achieve their Master's degrees.



- Attract foreign students to join the postgraduate Programme by offering reasonable accommodation within the campus and a summer school for learning Modern Greek.
- The postgraduate Programme should perhaps consider adding in parenthesis the speciality on the Master's degree (i.e. Byzantine Philology, Byzantine History, Byzantine Archaeology, or Mediaeval History).

HEI's RESPONSE: We agree with the EEC's first two suggestions. To be more precise:

- Promising MA students are encouraged by their professors to write an MA Thesis. To this end, both Departments offer them financial support for research trips, so that they can conduct research for their MA theses.
- The Academic Affairs and Student Welfare Service is supportive of foreign students (<http://ucy.ac.cy/fmweb/en/general-information>). Currently, the University is building new dormitories for undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- Concerning the addition of the specialty on the Master's degree, the Faculty of Postgraduate Studies informed us that this would be possible only if the Master's programme had different tracks of study ("directions"), but this is not the case. See Postgraduate studies Rules, §1.6: *"An academic qualification is awarded following the successful completion of studies in a specific course/direction, on the basis of a specific study programme set by a Department or Departments and with the approval of the competent bodies"*
(See http://www.ucy.ac.cy/graduateschool/documents/Kanones/RULES_METAPTIXIAKIS_FOITISIS_ENGLISH1.pdf).
Introducing "directions" of study (Byzantine/Medieval, Philology/History/Archaeology/Art History) would in fact defeat the Programme's interdisciplinary purpose.

EEC's REMARK: The Committee would like to reiterate that it is strongly supportive of the PhD Programme, which is for the great benefit of the two collaborating departments and the postgraduate programmes of UCY. However, we would like to use this section to highlight our key suggestions for the improvement of the programme: The provision of a taught methodology course is essential.

HEI's RESPONSE: We believe that the PhD students who have graduated from our Master's Programme (research track) have already been introduced to the methodological tools required at the PhD level. We sometimes recommend that PhD candidates who join our PhD Programme from other MA programmes take some of the MA seminars in order to ensure that they possess all the necessary methodological skills. The comprehensive examination as well as the preparation and defense of the research proposal, under the supervisor's guidance, also serve this purpose.

EEC's REMARK: The comprehensive examination should come no later than the end of the first year of studies as otherwise the writing of the thesis starts later and extends for longer than desirable; along these lines the duration of the average PhD must be reduced: eight years is far too long by international standards (see our comments on funding and resources above).



HEI's RESPONSE: As we have already mentioned, we agree that the comprehensive examination should be completed at a very early stage, and our intention is to ask our students to take the examination within the first year of their studies as soon as the pertinent change in the regulations is implemented.

However, a maximum duration of eight years for the completion of the PhD is provided by the regulations of the Faculty of Postgraduate Studies, by which the Programme has to abide.

EEC's REMARK: A limit to the number of PhD supervisees per academic staff member should be introduced – a number between 5–8 appears reasonable – and full workload credit should be given to supervisors by reducing their administrative obligations in other respects.

HEI's RESPONSE: We agree, but this is a decision that must be made by the University authorities for all Faculties. As we have already mentioned, the Programme's Postgraduate Committee ensures that the workload related to supervision is shared among faculty and takes the students' research interests into consideration.

EEC's REMARK: The supervisor should not be a member of the examining committee of the thesis due to the conflict of interests and the probability to influence the members of the examining committee; if the supervisor's presence is required during the examination s/he could attend as an observer.

HEI's RESPONSE: We are obliged to abide by the Faculty of Postgraduate Studies' regulations, which clearly stipulate that the supervisor must be a member of the examining committee. In our experience, the supervisor's knowledge of the candidate can prove helpful in clarifying certain things for the other members of the committee (rather than in influencing them), where this is deemed necessary. Besides, the participation of supervisors in the examining committees is a rather common practice in many top-ranked universities.

EEC's REMARK: The possible outcome of the examination process should include the possibility of resubmission subject to major or minor corrections and amendments within a precise timeframe of completion.

HEI's RESPONSE: This is already provided by the regulations of the Faculty of Postgraduate Studies and observed by the Programme.

EEC's REMARK: The adoption of a clear upper word limit for the doctoral dissertation is required. The figure of 100,000 words, including footnotes, would be a good basis for this and in line with international practice (in fact, word limits might also be considered for Master's dissertations and regular coursework).

HEI's RESPONSE: We agree to set a minimum limit of 80,000 words and a maximum limit of 120,000 words (footnotes and bibliography included) for the PhD dissertation, which, however, with the supervisor's approval

could be adjusted to the particularities of each case, taking into consideration appendices, editions of texts, pictures, tables, etc. See Programme's website: <http://www.ucy.ac.cy/byz/en/phd/academic-requirements-phd>

EEC's REMARK: The provision of office space and computer equipment and other digital facilities for PhD students is strongly recommended.

HEI's RESPONSE: We agree. The new library building provides such spaces but not precisely for PhD students. The eventual construction of a Faculty of Letters could offer a solution to this problem.

EEC's REMARK: The provision for modest financial support to every PhD student, through scholarships and bursaries to pursue research in special libraries or museums, or to purchase materials necessary for his/her research, or even to attend conferences is also encouraged.

HEI's RESPONSE: Both Departments already give students grants for research trips or conference participation (see table.2).

EEC's REMARK: The speciality of the PhD student ought to be given precisely in the degree (i.e. Byzantine philology, Byzantine History, Byzantine Archaeology, Mediaeval History).

HEI's RESPONSE: We agree with this suggestion. We will submit a recommendation to the Faculty of Postgraduate Studies and to the University Senate.



C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Martin Hristov	Professor in Byzantine philology	
Chris Schabert	Professor in Medieval History	
Savvas Papadimitriou	Associate Professor in Byzantine philology	
Eugenia Panariou	Associate Professor in Byzantine philology	
Kostas Makridakis	Associate Professor in the History of the Latin-Ruled Greek World	
Michael O'Riordan	Associate Professor in the History of Western Art	
Eugenia Panariou	Associate Professor in Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art and Archaeology	
Eugenia Panariou	Associate Professor in Byzantine Archaeology and Art	
Eugenia Panariou	Assistant Professor in Early European History	Modern

Date: / /