

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 20/7/21

Higher Education Institution's Response

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

In Greek:

Programme Name

In English:

**Master of Arts Degree in Teaching English to
Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), 90 ECTS**

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

In Greek: Concentrations

In English: Concentrations



The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws of 2015 to 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 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) 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 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 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4).*
- *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, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

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.

The committee found the MA TESOL to be an effective, cohesive academic programme, with sub-components of applied linguistics, research methodology and practical teaching methodology.

Strengths

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

- The programme is well-coordinated.
- Students receive good academic support.
- There is clear evidence of procedures that support research, e.g. special funds, a system of sabbaticals, and the supervision of students' research activities.
- The newly established MA in TESOL is an improvement of the earlier successful MA in TEFL.

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.

- Staffing levels are a cause for concern. Having enough permanent staff members should ensure the coherence of the programme, the calculation of workload, etc. See also section 3 below.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas: Sub-area Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant

MA TESOL

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

Response

The Department of English Studies has already submitted its request to the UCY administration regarding two new DEP (permanent staff) positions. This will ensure the coherence of the programme, better distribution of the workload at the Department (taking into consideration that two MA programmes will run in parallel, MA in TAAL and MA in TESOL), support of the students in terms of teaching/learning process and supervision of their MA in TESOL research projects/theses.

2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment

(ESG 1.3)

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.

The committee found the process of teaching and learning to be flexible and student-centred. A set of core courses is sequenced logically and mixed with a small number of elective courses. We found that theory and practice are well-balanced, despite the obvious need for staff specializing in the practical aspects of TESOL.

Strengths

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

- Students are expected to proceed as autonomous learners within their individual programme of studies, specifically by means of the requirement for customized portfolio work.
- Assessment procedures are consistent, appropriate and transparent.
- Feedback from teaching staff on students' submitted work is speedy.
- Relevant regulations and guidelines are available to both students and staff.
- The committee considers the obligatory thesis for all students to be an obvious advantage of this programme.

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.

- Since there is no teaching experience admission requirement, the programme might include a practical teaching component, at least as (part of) an optional course for those students who have not had any experience.

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

Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant

MA TESOL

2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant

Response

The recommendations of the External Evaluation Committee will be taken into consideration and an extra optional course (Teaching Practicum) will be added, specifically for students without any previous teaching experience. In addition, teaching practicum can be part of the portfolio.

3. Teaching staff (ESG 1.5)

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.

- The staff recruitment process is transparent and clear. Highly qualified expert staff have been recruited to teach on this programme.
- Promotion criteria explicitly take three areas of service into consideration: research, teaching and administration. This demonstrates that the University recognises and values good teaching and rewards it.
- Several grants, (international) projects and publications show that staff members are involved in innovation.
- There were links between research publications and teaching, for at least for some members of staff.

Strengths

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

- Staff are dedicated, caring and supportive.
- Students reported that staff respond rapidly to email messages.
- Clear individual areas of expertise are built into the general programmes of study, including the MA in TESOL.

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.

- To ensure that objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme can be obtained and sustained effectively, the Department needs to ensure that it has an adequate number of permanent staff members in the relevant subdisciplines, with an appropriate range in rank.
- The committee would recommend an annual or bi-annual appraisal of all staff by the Department Chair or other senior colleagues.
- The application states that “KE.DI.MA. organizes training seminars for instructors to improve teaching skills”, but it is not clear who these seminars are for (all staff?), and whether attendance is obligatory.
- Teaching staff should regularly engage in professional development courses.

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

Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant

MA TESOL

3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Partially compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant

Response

The Department of English Studies has already submitted its request to the UCY administration regarding two new DEP (permanent staff) positions in the relevant subdisciplines, with an appropriate range in rank. This will

ensure that objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme can be obtained and sustained effectively.

Concerning the External Evaluation Committee's recommendation about the annual or bi-annual appraisal of staff by the Chair or senior colleagues, the Department notes that this can only be implemented if it is formally introduced by the University with the revision of the relevant rules and regulations, that currently do not stipulate such a system. In the meantime, the Department can continue with its unofficial mentoring system that has been largely successful to date. Further, it should be noted that the academic progress of each member of the Department (teaching, research, publications, research grants) is being monitored – with updated CVs and other relevant information regularly posted on the departmental website – and taken into consideration for DEP members' evaluation and promotion purposes.

KE.DI.MA. organizes training seminars for instructors to improve teaching skills; attendance is not obligatory but encouraged. It should be noted that all our teaching staff regularly engage in professional development courses, attend and present at conferences, workshops, and seminars. This is reflected in their CVs, e.g.:

- Professional Development Course for Academic Staff (University of Cyprus/University of Malta): Designing, Delivering and Evaluating Online Study-Units (11-week course 3/03/2021-18/05/2021) Centre for Teaching and Learning www.ucy.ac.cy/~kedima
- International Linguistic Spring School "Multilingualism in educational contexts: Evidence from research outcomes" 23rd-24th March 2021. Online virtual meeting University of Cologne & Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.
- ERC Starting Grant 2021 Proposal Writing Workshop. Research and Innovation Foundation, Zoom, 09.02.2021 www.research.org.cy
- ROLLING Institute on Argument Structure. (18.01.2021-9.07.2021)
- <https://sites.google.com/view/rollingargumentstructure/rolling-institute-on-argument-structure/program?authuser=0>
- NHLRC Heritage Language Research Institute, June 7-10, 2021, University of North Carolina, USA <https://nhlrc.ucla.edu/nhlrc/event/14722>

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

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.

- The committee found that the student admission process appears to be carefully thought out and appropriately publicised. This involves assessment of applications by the Graduate Programs Committee.
- Student progress is carefully monitored.

Strengths

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

- All students have an Academic Advisor from their own programme, which is very much appreciated by the students.
- There is a good relationship between teaching staff and students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- Whilst we recognise staffing constraints, the Department might consider allowing students more choice in the programme. (Offering more choice also from other tracks, such as teaching literature, might actually reduce the pressure on the delivery of compulsory courses.)
- A Diploma Supplement sample was not available, but as it is obviously required, we assume it exists.

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

Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant

MA TESOL

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

Response

The Department of English Studies will consider the recommendations of the External Evaluation Committee and examine the possibility to offer more electives (optional courses) from other tracks (e.g. teaching literature), which can help to reduce the pressure on the delivery of compulsory courses and solve the issue of staffing constraints.

It should be pointed out that there is a synergy between the two MA programs, the MA in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics (MA in TAAL) and the MA in TESOL, in terms of two compulsory courses: ENG 741 Trends in Applied Linguistics and ENG 742 Research Methodology, which are offered in both programs.

A Diploma Supplement is available.

5. Learning resources and student support (ESG 1.6)

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.

- The committee found that the Department offers students a large number of resources and materials that they can use for their work.
- The University's new library offers online solutions to the students (e.g. electronic books) and ensures them access to online material that is essential for their academic progress. Physical spaces are also available.
- The Department held online courses successfully due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Students expressed satisfaction about the online courses, though they said the experience was not the same as in a face-to-face setting.

Strengths

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

- Students are very satisfied with the support and material that they have at their disposal.
- The infrastructure of the university is state-of-the-art.
- There is a sufficient number of classrooms and labs for courses and other activities (e.g. research, studying, 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.

- Fostering a sense of community for students who are currently studying online during the pandemic is admittedly hard, but perhaps some improvements are possible, e.g. creating opportunities for optional online get-togethers, tea parties, etc.

Please select what is appropriate for each of the following sub-areas: Sub-area **Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant**

MA TESOL

5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant

Response

All members of the Department of English Studies have worked hard during the pandemic in order to build an online community of learning by organizing various optional online events, lecture series and seminars that have served to foster a sense of community for the students. Besides the various online events held as part of our Departmental Forum, numerous seminars and extra-curricular lecture series have also been organised by the Department's Cyprus Acquisition Team (CAT) and the Teaching, Testing and Translation Team (TTTT). Taking the External Evaluation Committee's recommendation on board, the members of the Department will aim to enrich the organization of such events in the future (either online or physically, depending on how the situation with the pandemic evolves).

Below are indicative lists of events organized by the Cyprus Acquisition Team (CAT) and the Teaching, Testing and Translation Team (TTTT) in the academic year 2020-2021:

Cyprus Acquisition Team (CAT):

- Marios Andreou (Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf): "Polysemy in Word Formation," Friday, 25/9/20, 5pm, Microsoft Teams.
- Mina Giannoula, University of Chicago: "Greek preverbs and the formation of complex sentences." Online in Microsoft Teams. Friday, 9/10/20, 4:30pm
- Evangelia Daskalaki (University of Alberta): "Input effects across domains: The case of form and placement of referential expressions," Friday, 30/10/20, 5pm-Microsoft Teams/CAT Lab.
- Svetlana Karpava and Elena Kkese (University of Cyprus and Cyprus University of Technology): "Exploring the Acoustic-Orthographic Interface in L2 English Phonology," Monday, 2/11/20, 5pm - Microsoft Teams/CAT Lab.
- Anika Lloyd-Smith (University of Konstanz): "Perceived accent in heritage bilingualism," The CAT team on Microsoft Teams, Friday, 13/11/20, 4:30pm.
- María Carme Parafita Couto (University of Leiden): "Code-switching at the interface of grammar, cognition, and culture," CAT Lab on Microsoft Teams, Friday, 27/11/20, 4.30pm.
- Petros Karatsareas (University of Westminster): "Negotiating ethnolinguistic heterogeneity in Greek complementary schools in the UK post 2010," CAT Lab on Microsoft Teams, Friday, 4/12/20, 4:30pm.
- Natalia Pavlou (University of Cyprus): "Workshop on Introducing Python for Linguists," CAT Lab on Microsoft Teams, Wednesday, 17/02/2021, 5pm-7:30pm.
- Sarah Buschfeld (TU Dortmund University, Faculty of Cultural Studies) and Claus Weihs (TU Dortmund University, Faculty of Statistics): "Combining Prediction and Interpretation in Decision Trees (PrInDT): Investigating L1 Singapore English," The CAT team on Microsoft Teams, Wednesday, 10/03/2021, 5pm.

Teaching, Testing and Translation Team, Department of English Studies, UCY

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/281271006636272>

Microsoft Teams

- Week 1 (21.01.2021, Thursday at 6pm)
Dr Raymond Echitchi, (UNED, Madrid, Spain), "Computer Assisted Language Learning, Automated Correction and Feedback."
- Week 2 (29.01.2021, Friday at 6pm)
Dr Isaak Papadopoulou (Researcher in Applied Linguistics, Center of Greek Education, Greece), "Persuasive Discourse Development in Primary Education: From Theory to Pedagogical Practice."

- Week 3 (04.02.2021, Thursday at 6pm)
Dr Giorgos Georgiou (RUDN University, Moscow, Russia; University of Nicosia, Cyprus), “EFL Teachers’ Cognitions, Challenges, and Practices Regarding the Teaching of Pronunciation in Greek-Cypriot Classrooms.”
- Week 4 (11.02.2021, Thursday at 6pm)
Dr Anik Nandi (Centre for Linguistics, Leiden University, the Netherlands), “Immigrant Heritage Languages in the Post-Brexit United Kingdom: Ideological and Implementational Spaces in Educational Language Policy of Northern Ireland.”
- Week 5 (16.02.2021, Tuesday at 6pm)
Dr Natalia Meir (Bar-Ilan University, Israel), “(Bi)-Directional Cross-Linguistic Influence in Bilingual Child Language Acquisition: Evidence from Production and Comprehension.”
- Week 6 (22.02.2021, Monday at 6pm)
Dr Angeliki Alvanoudi (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece; James Cook University, Australia), “Pragmatic Borrowing in Greek-English Contact in Australia.”
- Week 7 (01.03.2021, Monday at 6pm)
Dr Maria N. Yelenevskaya (Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, Israel), “Linguistic Landscape in Multilingual Cities: Social Interactions in Urban Life.”
- Week 8 (09.03.2021, Tuesday at 6pm)
Dr Neophytos Mitsingas (University of Essex, UK), “Lights! Camera! Action! Using Film and TV as an Interdisciplinary Resource in Language Classrooms.”
- Week 9 (17.03.2021, Wednesday at 6pm)
Dr Cassie Smith-Christmas (National University of Ireland, Galway), “Reading across Languages: Polish Parents’ Efforts in Developing their Children’s Metalinguistic Competencies through Literacy Engagement.”
- Week 10 (22.03.2021, Monday at 6pm)
Dr Eleni Meletiadou (London South Bank University, UK), “Peer Assessment: A Dynamic Learning Tool for the Development of Writing Skills.”
- Week 11 (31.03.2021, Wednesday at 6pm)
Dr Denis Zubalov (National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow), “Language and Multifaceted Nature of Identity: Ethnicity, Gender, Profession.”
- Week 12 (06.04.2021, Tuesday at 6pm)
Dr Josep Soler (Stockholm University, Sweden), “Language ideological debates on English-medium instruction in Estonian higher education. A longitudinal perspective.”
- Week 13 (12.01.2021, Monday at 6pm)
Dr Olga Nenonen (University of Tampere, Finland), “Assessment of Second Language Pronunciation: Testing and Teaching Approaches.”

Further, in November 2020, our students had the opportunity to present their research at an international student conference which was organised by the Linguistics section of the Department:

- 3rd International Cyprus Undergraduate Linguistics Conference (iCULC3), 28-29 November 2020.

[https://paideia-news.com/synedria/2020/11/22/trito-diethnes-proptyxiako-synedrio-glossologias-kyproy-\(iculc3\)?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter&fbclid=IwAR27kf3dX8wWQw-GMKsS_yQJi12gXLf0E-GVMEkoeMIVqwx6PhFrIAaO0Bk](https://paideia-news.com/synedria/2020/11/22/trito-diethnes-proptyxiako-synedrio-glossologias-kyproy-(iculc3)?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter&fbclid=IwAR27kf3dX8wWQw-GMKsS_yQJi12gXLf0E-GVMEkoeMIVqwx6PhFrIAaO0Bk)

As a number of our students participated and/or were involved in the organization of the conference (that was held online), this gave them the chance to sustain their sense of community amid the pandemic. Given the success of this undergraduate conference in 2020, the Department is currently organizing it again for October 2021:

- iCULC4: Cyprus Undergraduate Linguistics Conference, University of Cyprus, 2-3 October 2021. Online

Members of the Linguistics Section of the Department are also organizing the following events for the academic year 2021-2022 that our students will be encouraged to attend:

- 1st University of Cyprus School in Linguistics (CySSiL), University of Cyprus, 30-31 October 2021.
- BiMiLT21 Conference: New Approaches to Bilingualism and Multilingualism and Language Learning/Teaching, 20-21 November 2021 (<https://bimult.wordpress.com/>).

In addition to the organization of online events, let us note that our students have the chance to meet with their tutors online (during their office hours or upon appointment), and they are informed about different events (conferences, seminars, lectures) world-wide via the Department's Facebook groups:

- **Teaching, Testing and Translation Team, Department of English Studies, UCY**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/281271006636272>

and

- **Cyprus Acquisition Team - CAT Lab**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/cat.lab>

Finally, let us note that the members of the Department have implemented online teaching and computer-mediated communication in their courses and extra-curricular activities. Emphasis is given to the use of open educational resources, crowdsourcing tools, technology-based collaboration-oriented tasks, digital media and social media channels, videos, texts, subscribed broadcasts that can improve learners' language and literacy skills and contribute to their wider participation in social and cultural exchange enhancing their critical digital literacy, intercultural, multilingual and multimodal competence, emphasizing the importance of quality control, assessment and adaptation of online programs and platforms and techniques in technology-based language learning.

Our online sessions have been recorded via Microsoft Teams and are available for the students. The students have access to the materials via Blackboard and Intranet. Blogs, Discussion boards, Forums, Cafes and other



digital tools such as chat, camera, video, blogs, comments, group work, channels and breakout rooms have been used, which facilitated the creation of online community in a user-friendly way. The students have the opportunity to interact more with their peers and the tutor, express their views, exchange ideas, gain new knowledge and experience, increase the level of their digital competence, develop their critical thinking, reflection and analysis skills, especially in the current COVID situation.

6. Additional for doctoral programmes

(ALL ESG)

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.

n/a

Strengths

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

n/a

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.

n/a



7. Eligibility (Joint programme) (ALL ESG)

N/A

B. Conclusions and final remarks

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

The committee was impressed by the programme that it was tasked to evaluate. There is clear evidence of intellectual ambition and rigour.

Staff in the Department of English Studies are well-qualified to teach on the programme: all have studied abroad, have international connections, and are research active. This level of expertise will have a positive impact on the delivery of the MA TESOL programme. The University must address the need for a greater number of staff with expertise in TESOL related areas.

The committee observed a high level of collegiality amongst colleagues in the Department.

Judging by the responses we received from the students we met, satisfaction among current MA students is high.

Student support services are excellent, including for students with special needs. Feedback protocols are good.

The committee did not have the opportunity to look at students' work: assessments, projects, examination papers, essays, etc., so it was impossible to take a view of the academic level of the students' work or of the quality of the feedback given to students. Even though it may not strictly be part of the requirements on this occasion, the Department might consider making some student work available for future evaluations.

UCY's resources (campus, accommodation, library, etc.) are excellent and provide an attractive working and living environment for students.

The committee very much enjoyed its visit to the Department of English Studies and would like to express its gratitude to administrators and faculty for their hard work in compiling the documentation and for answering the committee's questions.

Response

The Department of English Studies would like to thank the External Evaluation Committee for this excellent evaluation of our Department and of the MA in TESOL. We too would like to express our gratitude to the members of the committee for their time and very useful feedback.

As already mentioned regarding the problem of understaffing in TESOL-related areas, the Department has already submitted its request to the UCY administration regarding two new DEP (permanent staff) positions in the area of Linguistics.

Regarding students' works (assessments, projects, examination papers, essays, recorded online sessions and exams), these are readily available and the Department will be happy to provide them for any future evaluation.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Stella Achilleos	Associate Professor, Department Chair	
Sviatlana Karpava	Lecturer in Linguistics, MA in TESOL Coordinator	
Spyros Armostis	Lecturer in Linguistics	
Kleanthes K. Grohmann	Professor of Bilingualism	
Phoevos Panagiotidis	Professor of Theoretical Linguistics	

Date: 20/7/2021

