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ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
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Date: 24/OCT/2018

Doc. 300.1.2

Higher Education Institution's response

- **Higher education institution:**

  Open University of Cyprus

- **Town:** Nicosia

- **Programme of study (Name, ECTS, duration, cycle)**

  In Greek: Μεταπτυχιακό πρόγραμμα σπουδών «ΠΝΥΚΑ: Πολιτική Ιστορία, Θεωρία και Πράξη»
  2 years / 120 ECTS, Distance Learning
  In English: MA "PNYX: Political History, Theory and Practice"

- **Language of instruction: Greek**

- **Programme's status**
  New programme: ☑
  Currently operating: ....

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

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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 and 2016" **[N. 136 (I)/2015 and N. 47(I)/2016].**

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, <u>without changing the format of the report</u>:*

  - *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.*

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

<u>Findings</u>

PNYX is a two-year interdisciplinary Master's Programme in Political History, Theory and Practice. PNYX includes 8 Thematic Units/Modules of 15 ECTS each (that is 120 ETCS in total), which are arranged in four semesters corresponding to four areas of inquiry: Theory (1st semester), History (2nd semester), Technocratic Background in Law and Economics (3rd semester), and Jurisprudence and Rhetoric (4th semester). Each semester consists of two Modules. Students can choose between a thesis and a non-thesis master's degree. To obtain a non-thesis master's degree, students have to successfully complete all 8 Modules of the Master's Programme. To obtain a thesis master's degree, students have to complete a master's thesis of about 12.000-15.000 words (30 ECTS), which is equivalent to two elective and scientifically related Modules of the Master's Programme.

The Programme addresses a wide range of potential audiences: aspiring or practicing politicians, journalists or other publicly engaged individuals dealing professionally with political issues, political communication specialists, and, more importantly, citizens; that is, those citizens wishing to acquire the necessary background for approaching political developments with the maturity and confidence of a qualified potential politician. PNYX also offers to graduates of various Bachelor's degrees the chance to pursue postgraduate studies in a series of interesting specialties (for example, law graduates can specialize in the philosophy of law or international law, graduates of Greek or European Studies can follow Modern History or Social Science Theory, and so forth).

In terms of QA, we should mention that the PNYX is a new MA programme. However, when it starts its operation, its QA procedures will be in line with the QA procedures of the Open University, which supports the organisation of the quality assurance system through appropriate structures, regulations and processes. The procedures followed for **reviewing existing programmes of study** are the following: Where the revision relates to essential elements of the programme of study, for example, the offering of a new academic direction or the abolishment of an existing one, or the changing in the structure of a Programme by designing new or removing existing thematic units (courses), and other elements, the Academic Coordinator of the programme submits a detailed request and a justification report to the relevant School. Depending on the School's opinion, the issue is forwarded to the Studies' Committee of OUC and depending on the evaluation, the matter is forwarded for final approval to the Senate. In terms of the **internal evaluation procedures for OUC's programmes of study,** the policy to be followed is determined by the Internal Quality Committee, set up for the purpose of evaluating (internally and externally) and for assuring the quality of the programmes/services offered by OUC, in accordance with the relevant

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procedures and conditions set forward by the Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education. Within the Unit for International Cooperation, Development and Communication of OUC, operates the Office of Quality Assurance, with a supportive and administrative role with regard to the institutional as well as internal and external evaluation of both the programmes of study and the University services. The internal evaluation (self-evaluation) of curricula is performed by the programmes of studies themselves, using a checklist in the form of a documented assessment report of their educational and research work and services. It will be conducted every three years

and the implementation of the process of internal evaluation of each curriculum will be made by the competent Academic Coordinator and if required by additional external members that form the Internal Evaluation Group of the Programme.

Strengths

PNYX is a well- structured and intensive MA Programme, based on an interdisciplinary approach. It has a formal status and is publicly available, while it is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes. Combining elements from the fields of political science, history, social theory, law, economics and international relations, PNYX aims to offer a broad-spectrum, substantial and systematic course of study to every citizen seriously interested in politics. PNYX also offers to graduates of various Bachelor's degrees the chance to pursue postgraduate studies in a series of interesting specialties. Clearly the needs of society, have been taken into account in the study programme design and structure, while given its content it is consistent with developments in society Further, PNYX is a distance- learning academic programme of studies, designed, all the same, for people with heavy professional and family schedules. The role of up-to-date long-distance education technology is catalytic in this respect, inasmuch as this technology helps transcend geographical and time constraints and is aptly combined with the fundamental method of guided self-tutoring. Furthermore, the Programme wishes to offer political education that is not purely academic but dynamically oriented towards a constantly evolving political reality, with the primary purpose of producing politically-informed citizens rather than simply the next generation of political scientists. Its anticipated learning outcomes are consistent with the curriculum design. The programme's structure and design reflects the aims of the MA programme, while it also reflects its interdisciplinary approach and rationale. The courses offered are consistent with the 4 main Areas of the Programme. The quality of the academic team in charge of the MA Programme is high, since they are all highly-skilled and qualified in the key areas of the MA Programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC recommends the MA Programme to seek for a good balance between the regional and national perspective on the one hand and the international context, including insights on different regions (i.e.

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Middle East). Given the interdisciplinary approach adopted, which is highly appreciated, the extent of the topics raised and how broad the MA Programme is in terms of thematics analysed, the EEC encourages the Academic Team to focus on specific insights, parametres and aspects of each sub-section of the modules offered.

OUC Response:

The EEC recommends the MA Programme to seek for a good balance between the regional and national perspective on the one hand and the international context, including insights on different regions (i.e. Middle East). This is a very constructive suggestion that the MA Programme has already taken into account in the analytical Study Guides of the Modules. In the second semester, for instance, the Modules ΠΙΘ521 and ΠΙΘ522 deal with aspects of Greek and Cypriot and European and World history respectively. In the Module ΠΙΘ522 the thematic areas explored include major international conflicts related to the Middle East, such as the Palestinian conflict and the Arab-Israeli wars. Following the recommendations of the EEC, the MA Programme can seek to enrich Modules, such as ΠΙΘ511 (Political and Economic Theory) and ΠΙΘ621 (Law II), with some contemporary Greek contributions in the scientific fields under study. Furthermore, the EEC notices that, given the interdisciplinary approach adopted, which is highly appreciated, the extent of the topics raised and how broad the MA Programme is in terms of thematics analysed, the Academic Team should focus on specific insights, parameters and aspects of each sub-section of the modules offered. This is a very important and useful suggestion that the MA Programme will definitely take into account, focussing every year on specific areas of inquiry that will be more extensively covered. The selection of the thematic areas that will be dealt with in greater detail will be made each time by the Academic Director and the teaching staff of the Module, taken into consideration the effective interconnection of the Master Programme with the current Greek and international political process.

1.8.7: The EEC notes the decision not to have a compulsory dissertation requirement might affect the research orientation of the MA Programme. However, the EEC would like to highlight the fact the Programme is oriented towards a broader audience, providing the foundations for critical thinking in politics. 1.13 is clearly not applicable. 1.14. The MA Programme language is Greek, the audience is aimed to be students mainly from Greece and Cyprus, therefore the EEC assumes that students' command of language is appropriate, yet we recommend the MA Programme Academic Team to clarify to the applicants that a good command of English, given the literature is also required. 1.19 is clearly not applicable. 1.21 is not applicable, since it's a new MA Programme. 1.22 as well as 1.24 are clearly not applicable for a new MA Programme.

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OUC Response:

The EEC further notes that the decision not to have a compulsory dissertation requirement might affect the research orientation of the MA Programme. However, the EEC would like to highlight the fact the Programme is oriented towards a broader audience, providing the foundations for critical thinking in politics. The EEC is absolutely correct in its assessment of the general profile and scope of the MA Programme. The Programme indeed addresses a wider audience, with the aim to promote critical thinking and the quality of public political discourse in Greece and Cyprus. At the same time, through the optional master's thesis the MA Programme gives students the opportunity to pursue a certain degree of research specialization, in combination with a broader theoretical and interdisciplinary education.

Regarding the language of the MA Programme and the teaching process, the recommendation of the EEC that the Academic Team should clarify to the applicants that a good command of English, given the literature is also required, is very useful and is certainly going to be adopted. Enriching each Module's bibliography with qualitative English contributions is also something absolutely compatible with the postgraduate level of education. Open University of Cyprus along with the coordinator of the programme will make sure that the best candidates will be selected as Adjunct Faculty (Tutors) for this programme, as with the rest of the programmes offered by Open University of Cyprus. Candidates for the positions of OUC Tutors, according to paragraph (6) of section 18 of the Open University Law (Law 234 (I) / 2002), hold a Ph.D. degree from recognized Higher Education Institutions.

Candidates are assessed according to the following criteria:
- Relevance to the Thematic Unit that they are interested in teaching.
- General teaching experience at a university and specific experience in distance learning over the last five years.
- Availability of the candidate, as evidenced by a signed declaration of duties, and ability to use modern technology.
- Research and writing work over the last five years.
- Professional experience related to the subject areas of the programme.

In any case, excellent command of the English language is safeguarded when selecting suitable candidates as Adjunct Faculty (i.e. Tutors), based on their research / publications work, academic qualifications, teaching experience, etc.

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

<u>Findings</u>

The teaching, learning and students' assessment procedures of the MA programme are fully in line with the distance learning methodology, applied by the OUC.

<u>Strengths</u>

The combination of assignments and written exams per module is a good practice in terms of student assessment. The distance learning methodology is applied in a very modern and sufficiently supported way.

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

The EEC is not fully convinced that the MA Programme provides the students with the best opportunity to proceed in research activities, yet we are fully aware of the fact that the nature of the Programme is a taught MA Programme with an optional thesis. It is mainly an MA Programme providing foundations for developing a critical thinking towards the context of actual politics.

As already stated the EEC is not fully convinced that the MA Programme provides the students with the best opportunity to proceed in research activities, yet we are fully aware of the fact that the nature of the Programme is a taught MA Programme with an optional thesis. It is mainly an MA Programme providing foundations for developing a critical thinking towards the context of actual politics.

OUC Response:

The EEC very appropriately describes the general scope and the intentions of the MA Programme. It is true that the main focus of the Programme is to provide students with the necessary theoretical and methodological background for developing a critical political thinking. On the other hand, the solid research methodology provided in each Module in the course of the students' preparation for their written assignments acquaint them already from the first semester with the established academic processes of scientific research. Thus, all students in the programme will be exposed to the necessary background knowledge regarding research methodologies and practices. It is expected that those students that will opt to undertake research towards a master's thesis will conduct extensive bibliographical research; will identify gaps necessitating further research; will formulate quality research questions; and will perform the research necessary to answer these questions under the guidance and supervision of academic

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experts in the selected research field. The Academic Team of the MA Programme and the facilities and structures of the Open University of Cyprus will certainly try to provide the best possible conditions for the research work necessary for both the semester assignments and the master's theses.

3. Teaching Staff (*ESG 1.5*)
In addition to your response to EEA's comments on the teaching staff:
a. fill in TABLE 1: TEACHING STAFF at the end of this form and
b. send the curriculum vitae of all the program lecturers on the forms posted on the Agency's website as an annex. (Form 500.1.03 for Universities and Form 500.1.04 for Higher Education Institutes)

Findings

The quality of the academic team in charge of the MA Programme is high, since they are all highly-skilled and qualified in the key areas of the MA Programme. Even the tutors to be recruited after an open call are expected to be PhD holders, given the regulations and the practice applied by the OUC.

Strengths

See above.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC makes a specific recommendation to the University to comply with the existing legislative framework on discrimination and gender equality, through a set of explicit policy statements. The EEC recommends the OUC to claim for more posts of full-time permanent academic staff in order to substantially support the operation and the diversified needs of the new MA Programme.

We note that the number of the teaching staff occupied exclusively in the Institution (OUC) is adequate to support the programme of study. However, we note that the Programme will be benefited from additional teaching staff, both full and part-time (permanent and tutors) to cover any aspect of the teaching programme. 3.3., 3.4., 3.5 are not applicable, since it's a new MA Programme.

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OUC Response:

Both recommendations and suggestions of the EEC are extremely useful and welcome. The EEC makes a specific recommendation to the University to comply with the existing legislative framework on discrimination and gender equality, through a set of explicit policy statements. Please note that Open University of Cyprus, like any other public institution, complies fully with national legislation on equality in employment and against any form of discrimination. Moreover, OUC adopts a gender equality policy, and has in place distinct policy against bullying, mobbing, sexual harassment and any other form of discrimination. OUC has also adopted the recent Code of Conduct against Harassment and Sexual Harassment prepared by the Employers and Industrialists Federation and the two largest trade unions in Cyprus, i.e. Pancyprian Federation of Labour and Synomospondia Ergaton Kyprou.

The EEC further recommends the OUC to claim for more posts of full-time permanent academic staff in order to substantially support the operation and the diversified needs of the new MA Programme. As mentioned during the onsite visit, OUC has requested full-time permanent academic staff positions for all the new programmes of study to be offered. These new faculty positions are included in the university's budget for the 2020 financial year pending approval by the House of Representatives. Evidently, the operation and the interdisciplinary character of the new MA Programme can be significantly supported by a full-time permanent academic staff. This is something that the OUC indeed intends to claim for. As far as Adjunct Faculty (i.e. Tutors) are concerned, Open University of Cyprus, as already mentioned, announces an Open Call for Applications for all programmes of study offered, and for all their Thematic Units. This will be the case for the new MA Programme as soon as it is accredited by CYQAA.

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4. Students (*ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7*)

Findings

This is a new MA Programme, under approval, so the information the EEC got, through the onsite visit, came from students from other OUC programmes. However, the admission procedures as well as all the other procedures related to students are in line with the relevant procedures followed by the OUC. That was clear in both the application and the onsite visit.

Strengths

The ways to activate students, the existing productive and fruitful relationship between the academic staff and the students, the constant contact as well as the fact that the MA Programme addresses a wide range of potential audiences are among the strengths.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The EEC encourages the OUC to examine the possibility of providing resources- financing partially some of the students' association activities and initiatives.

OUC Response:

The EEC encourages the OUC to examine the possibility of providing resources- financing partially some of the students' association activities and initiatives. This is a very useful suggestion, since especially the students' association of the Bachelor Programme "Studies in Hellenic Culture" is an extremely active community of students, organizing cultural activities in a very frequent basis. So, the OUC will definitively take into account the recommendation of the EEC when preparing the University's budget, which is partially state funded, for the coming years. It should be noted that OUC also seeks to amend its legislation so that a University Students' Association can be established as for the time being only some programmes have their own students & alumni associations.

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5. Resources (*ESG 1.6*)

Findings

From the documentation and the site visit we learned that the university has adequate and readily available resources that are required for a distance teaching university, considering that students are not working on campus but at various locations, like their home or work. Because the UOC is a distance teaching university, the resources for the delivery of teaching and learning are described in chapter 6 – additional for distance learning programs. So, the scores for the quality indictors could not be given because they are not existent in distance education or available in a complete different capacity. Most of these resources are digitally available and accessible in contrast to a regular university, i.e. instead of physical classrooms there are virtual classrooms. Also all information about the resources are available online. We discussed financial aids with the students, and they want to have better possibilities to spread their enrolment payments in time. We discussed the library facilities. They are limited, but students can access all the other, larger university libraries in Cyprus and Greece. The governance of the university, with a senate responsible for the academic affairs in which deans and representative teaching staff is involved, secures that the teaching staff is involved in decisions regarding programs and courses.

Strengths

All the necessary resources are available, maintained, promoted and accessible to staff and students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Given the quality and accessibility of the libraries in Cyprus and Greece we are wondering whether there is a need for the very limited library of the UOC itself. It could be advisable to search collaboration with a bigger university library to make the required online and physical journals, books and other resources available through them.

5.2. The EEC recognizes that the OUC "physical" Library may not provide all the resources necessary to support the programme. However, the EEC is satisfied that students have access to a range of materials from diverse sources to support the study programme. 5.4. is not applicable.

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OUC Response:

Given the quality and accessibility of the libraries in Cyprus and Greece the EEC is wondering whether there is a need for the very limited library of the OUC itself. EEC suggests to search collaboration with a bigger university library to make the required online and physical journals, books and other resources available through them. As any other University, Open University of Cyprus decided to establish its own Library. Evidently, given that OUC is a distance teaching university, OUC Library is a hybrid one, with main emphasis on its electronic resources and with 24x7x365 access to learning resources. OUC also collaborates with OSDEL (https://www.osdel.gr/) to digitize educational material, and especially mandatory bibliography of its programmes of study.

For the time being, OUC Library has a small physical library with books and periodicals that students, tutors and external users can borrow. As mentioned in our application form, Open University of Cyprus is collaborating with all other academic libraries of the island, as well as with the libraries of foreign universities, mainly in Greece, and our students have the opportunity to borrow books/periodicals/other resources via these collaborations. Open University of Cyprus is also collaborating with the Library of the University of Cyprus, and in the very near future OUC's Library will move to the Learning Resource Centre UCY Library "Stelios Ioannou" (http://library.ucy.ac.cy/en).

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6. Additional for distance learning programmes *(ALL ESG)*

Findings

The OUC is a public university in Cyprus dedicated to open and distance education at the undergraduate and graduate level. It is a rather young open university (OU), established in 2002 and serving its first student cohorts in 2006-2007. With a state budget of 6 M euro the institution has found its way to provide open distance education to ˜4000 students with a limited permanent academic (25) and administrative (85) staff and about 250 temporary employed tutors.

In summary it is found that:

- The university has been successful in providing degrees through its distance learning system (around 6000 graduates up until now).
- The university works with modular courses in a semester system that can be studied within the context of a degree program or as a single course for lifelong learners.
- The university has a unified digital learning environment (eClass) that is composed of the different components that are required to deliver high quality distance education. Required is at the minimum components for the presentation of multimedia resources and the synchronous and asynchronous interaction between students and between students and teachers. The core component (Moodle) of eClass is open source. Additions like LAMS are new and not used yet. But the fact that there is a new component means that the learning environment is developing.
- Besides eClass other communication media like telephone, email and even face-to-face contact are used to communicate with students and tutors.
- Teachers are supported, through the OUC Educational Methodology & Educational Material Lab, to develop educational materials for their online courses and helps them to solve pedagogical design issues during course development.
- The university maintains its own data centre (with the required security and redundancy).
- The university puts effort in the selection and training of tutors that are able to teach at a distance, using the infrastructure of the OUC.
- For the final examinations (that are required to have a physical presence of the student, the OUC has exam centres in Cyprus, Greece and other places.

Strengths

- The university is able to deliver an impressive number of courses and programs with a limited number of permanent staff members and within a budget of 6 M state funding (12.4 M in total).

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Besides the delivery of education there are many other activities required to perform as a university, like research, (inter-)national collaborations, acquiring project funding, etc.

- The university is working on innovative solutions to enrich the digital learning environment through its recently established OUC Educational Methodology & Educational Material Lab.
- The university uses a single, well maintained digital learning environment that is used for all its online education.
- Students are very positive about the social interaction that is organized, partly by themselves. In this way they do not feel isolated, like in some other distance teaching institutions. Also the teaching staff is very approachable to help them.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Many OU's around the world provide flexible education that serves the needs of lifelong, adult learners with their specific needs, and as a consequence they struggle with the same issue, like student retention, costs and quality of the (rapidly changing) digital learning environment and the complexity of course development, student support and assessment. One of these
- issues is also the pedagogical model that the university applies for all its education to secure effective online learning. During the visit we discussed this, and the staff recognized its importance, however there is not yet a systematic written model that is applied throughout its educational offering. We recommend developing and applying such a model that is grounded in educational research and evaluations to secure its effectiveness.
- During the presentations we have seen videos in Blackboard Collaborate that were of poor video and audio quality and with a length of 4 hours. There are three improvements to make based on this experience and later discussions: 1. Besides the training of tutors how to use these tools in optimal quality, this should also be controlled better, in advance, to prevent a waist of student and tutor time. 2. As discussed later with the administrative staff, they told us that presentations should not be made through blackboard collaborate but through the video platform to prevent these issues. They know this, but are not able to intervene because the tutors are 'free' to make these choices themselves. It would be advised to find a solution for this governance issue. 3. The duration of the online session is too long. Better would be to restrict sessions to 1 hour preferably and a maximum of 1.5 hour.
- We would strongly advise to create test procedures for courses and programs that are newly developed or revised before they go online for students and tutors. Online courses are increasingly complex in nature, not only technically (are all videos, tables, photos, etc. accessible on all computers and mobiles?), but also logically (can people find their way through the resources: where to begin? Where am I? How can I find…, etc.). Such a test should therefore be a team effort with different kinds of expertise involved.

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OUC Response:

Open University of Cyprus has more than 13 years of experience and expertise in developing and offering high quality distance learning programmes. We do believe that with the newly established Educational Material & Educational Methodology Lab and with the state-of-the-art eLearning Platform (eClass) OUC has developed, our methods and eLearning tools will be further improved. Although there is not yet a systematic written pedagogical model, all programmes of study follow a comprehensive educational methodology suitable for open and distance learning, which is based on the principles of adult learning. In any case, OUC will articulate its pedagogical model to a coherent methodology of teaching and learning, grounded in educational research that will be constantly evaluated to secure its effectiveness.

As far as During the presentations we have seen videos in Blackboard Collaborate that were of poor video and audio quality and with a length of 4 hours. There are three improvements to make based on this experience and later discussions: 1. Besides the training of tutors how to use these tools in optimal quality, this should also be controlled better, in advance, to prevent a waist of student and tutor time. 2. As discussed later with the administrative staff, they told us that presentations should not be made through blackboard collaborate but through the video platform to prevent these issues. They know this, but are not able to intervene because the tutors are 'free' to make these choices themselves. It would be advised to find a solution for this governance issue. 3. The duration of the online session is too long. Better would be to restrict sessions to 1 hour preferably and a maximum of 1.5 hour.

Regarding the Blackboard Collaborate platform, the comments of the EEC on the video and audio quality are certainly justified, although the vast majority of videos are of high quality and are checked by each programme's Academic Coordinator and Coordinators of Thematic Units. When poor quality tele-lectures are recorded, Academic Coordinators check with the respective Tutors to investigate any problematic situations. The EEC further states that the duration of the online sessions is too long. According to the EEC, it would be better to restrict sessions to 1 hour preferably and a maximum of 1.5 hour. Indeed, for most of the OUC Programmes this is the case: short weekly tele-lectures or lectures every fortnight. Besides the training of tutors how to use OUC's eLearning tools in optimal quality, special emphasis will be given on proper use of the most suitable tool for any given case. Regarding the MA Programme PNYX, the Academic Team has already discussed the possibility of organizing eight (tele)meetings of 2 hours pro semester. In this case, the 4-

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hour duration of the more traditional Group Advisory Meetings will be avoided and the overall duration of the teaching sessions will be more student-friendly.

As far as the last recommendation of the EEC is concerned, i.e. "We would strongly advise to create test procedures for courses and programs that are newly developed or revised before they go online for students and tutors.", please note that prior to the offering of any new programme, all Thematic Units and course materials are prepared on the University's eLearning Platform and everything is tested before the officinal commencement of the academic semester in early September. Thus, if there are any issues, the programme's Academic Team with the support of the University's competent administrative units resolve them, before students have access on the Platform.

7. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Not applicable, as this concerns a new Master's degree programme.

8. Additional for joint programmes (ALL ESG)

Not applicable, as this does not concern a joint programme.

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B. Conclusions and final remarks

The EEC has agreed to support the application for this new MA Programme, entitled PNYX. Some of the concerns raised by the questionnaire stem from the fact that this is distance learning programme offered by the OUC. We are satisfied by the academic, teaching- learning, administrative, student welfare and IT resources of this MA Programme. Our partial recommendations are analyzed and justified in the chapters above. The MA Programme fully corresponds to the EQF relevant standards and level descriptors.

OUC Response:

In closing, Open University of Cyprus and the Academic Team of the MA Programme "PNYX: Political History, Theory and Practice" would like to thank the EEC for the very positive reception of the general philosophy, the aims and intentions of this new programme. The remarks, suggestions and recommendations of the EEC were very constructive and thoughtful, significantly supporting our efforts to shape the new programme in the best possible way. All concerns of the EEC (e.g. regarding the balance between the national perspective and the international context, the research orientation of the programme, the important role of the English literature, the hiring of full-time permanent academic staff, the financing of student association's activities, the update of the IT applications and platforms, the duration of the teaching sessions) are definitively going to be taken into account by both the Academic Team of the new MA Programme and the OUC in general. They are highly important suggestions and remarks, crucially enriching the OUC's teaching approach and process. We look forward to a positive decision by CYQAA regarding the accreditation of the programme, as per the recommendation of the EEC.

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C. Higher Education Institution representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Professor Sokratis Katsikas	Rector	
Professor Yannis Manolopoulos	Vice-Rector, Chair of the University's Quality Assurance Committee	
Associate Professor Antonis Petrides	Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences	
Associate Professor Georgios Deligiannakis	Academic Coordinator of the newly-established MA "PNYX: Political History, Theory and Practice"	
Erato Ioanna Sarri	Coordinator of the University's Quality Assurance Office	

Date: ....24/x/2019....

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