Doc. 300.1.1

Date: 13.12.19

External Evaluation Report

- **Higher Education Institution:
  Open University of Cyprus**

- **Town: Nicosia**

- **School/Faculty (if applicable): Humanities and Social Sciences**

- **Department/ Sector:** Department/Sector

- **Programme of study- Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

  In Greek:

  Programme Name

  In English:

   MA Communication and New Journalism (90 ECTS, 1.5 years)

- **Language(s) of instruction: Greek**

- **Programme's status
  New programme:** No
  Currently operating: Yes

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

B. External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Julian McDougall	Professor	Bournemouth University
Kari Anden-Papadopoulos	Professor	Stockholm University
Bradley Wiggins	Professor	Webster Vienna Private University
Santi Caballe Llobet	Professor	Open University of Catalonia
Stephanie Nicolaou	Student	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University

C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The external evaluation report follows the structure of assessment areas.*

- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
  (a) standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)
  (b) some questions that EEC may find useful.

- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*

- *Under each assessment area there are quality indicators (criteria) to be scored by the EEC on a scale from one (1) to five (5), based on the degree of compliance for the above mentioned quality indicators (criteria). The scale used is explained below:*

1 or 2:   Non-compliant

3:   Partially compliant

4 or 5:   Compliant

- *The EEC must justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.*

- *It is pointed out that, in the case of indicators (criteria) that cannot be applied due to the status of the HEI and/or of the programme of study, N/A (= Not Applicable) should be noted and a detailed explanation should be provided on the HEI's corresponding policy regarding the specific quality indicator.*

- *In addition, for each assessment area it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements. In particular, the following must be included:*

Findings

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

Strengths

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

Areas of improvement and recommendations

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

- ***The parts of the report written in blue font must be erased when drafting the report, so that each assessment area consists of the standards, findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations, the justified scores of the quality indicators (criteria) and the overall compliance for the particular assessment area.***

- ***The report may also address other issues which the EEC finds relevant.***

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

(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.8, 1.9)

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Standards

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

- *The programme of study:*
  - *is designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes*
  - *is designed by involving students and other stakeholders*
  - *benefits from external expertise*
  - *reflects the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (preparation for sustainable employment, personal development, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, the development and maintenance, through teaching, learning and research, of a broad, advanced knowledge base)*
  - *is designed so that it enables smooth student progression*
  - *defines the expected student workload in ECTS*
  - *includes well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate*
  - *is subject to a formal institutional approval process*
  - *results in a qualification that is clearly specified and communicated, and refers to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*
  - *is regularly monitored in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up-to-date*
  - *is periodically reviewed so that it takes into account the changing needs of society, the students' workload, progression and completion, the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students, student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme*
  - *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*

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

You may also consider the following questions:
- *What is the procedure for quality assurance of the programme and who is involved?*
- *What is done to reduce/prevent academic fraud? How does the higher education institution address fraud cases?*
- *Who is involved in the study programme's design and development (launching, changing, internal evaluation) and what is taken into account (strategies, the needs of society, etc.)?*
- *Please evaluate a) whether the study programme remains current and consistent with developments in society (labour market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study programme are in accordance with each other?*
- *Do the content and the delivery of the programme correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *How is coherence of the study programme ensured, i.e., logical sequence and coherence of courses? How are substantial overlaps between courses avoided? How is it ensured that the teaching staff is aware of the content and outputs of their colleagues' work within the same study programme?*
- *How does the study programme support development of the learners' general competencies (including digital literacy, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship, communication and teamwork skills)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of practical training in the study programme (where appropriate)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study programme (where appropriate)? What are the pass rates?*
- *How long does it take a student on average to graduate?*
- *How has the feedback from students, alumni, employers, teaching staff been taken into account? Provide some concrete examples.*
- *Has the study programme been compared to other similar study programmes when designed, including internationally, and to what purpose? Explain.*
- *Is the graduation rate for the study programme analogous to other European programmes with similar content?*
- *How is it ensured that the actual student workload is in accordance with the workload expressed by ECTS?*
- *What is the pass rate per course/semester?*
- *What are the opportunities for international students to participate in the study programme (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the programme of study publicly available?*

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2:	Non-compliant
3:	Partially compliant
4 or 5:	Compliant

	Quality indicators/criteria	1 - 5
1.1	Academic oversight of the programme design is ensured.	5
1.2	The guide and / or the regulations for quality assurance provide the adequate information and data for the support and management of the programme of study for all the years of study.	5
1.3	Internal Quality Assurance processes safeguard the quality and the fulfillment of the programme's purpose, objectives and the achievement of the learning outcomes. Particularly, the following are taken into consideration:	
	1.3.1 The disclosure of the programme's curricula to the students and their implementation by the teaching staff	5
	1.3.2 The programme webpage information and material	5
	1.3.3 The procedures for the fulfillment of undergraduate and postgraduate assignments / practical training	5
	1.3.4 The procedures for the conduct and the format of the examinations and for student assessment	5
	1.3.5 Students' participation procedures for the improvement of the programme and of the educational process	5
1.4	The knowledge (theoretical and/or factual) gained is of the appropriate level to which the programme of study corresponds to, according to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).	5
1.5	The skills (cognitive and practical) obtained are of the appropriate level to which the programme of study corresponds to, according to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).	4
1.6	The responsibility and autonomy (the ability of the learner to apply knowledge and skills autonomously and with responsibility) are of the appropriate level to which the programme of study corresponds to, according to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).	4
1.7	The purpose and objectives of the programme are consistent with the expected learning outcomes and with the mission and the strategy of the institution.	5

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1.8	The following ensure the achievement of the programme's purpose, objectives and the learning outcomes:	
	1.8.1 The number of courses	5
	1.8.2 The programme's content	4
	1.8.3 The methods of assessment	5
	1.8.4 The teaching material	4
	1.8.5 The equipment	5
	1.8.6 The balance between theory and practice	4
	1.8.7 The research orientation of the programme	3
	1.8.8 The quality of students' assignments	5
1.9	The expected learning outcomes of the programme are known to the students and to the members of the teaching staff.	5
1.10	The teaching and learning process is adequate and effective for the achievement of the expected learning outcomes.	5
1.11	The content of the programme's courses reflects the latest achievements / developments in science, arts, research and technology.	5
1.12	New research results are embodied in the content of the programme of study.	5
1.13	The content of foundation courses is designed to prepare the students for the first year of their chosen undergraduate degree.	Choose mark
1.14	Students' command of the language of instruction is appropriate.	5
1.15	The programme of study is structured in a consistent manner and in sequence, so that concepts operating as preconditions precede the teaching of other, more complex and cognitively more demanding, concepts.	3
1.16	The learning outcomes and the content of the courses are consistent.	5
1.17	The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is applied and there is correspondence between credits, workload and expected learning outcomes per course and per semester.	4
1.18	The higher education qualification awarded to the students corresponds to the purpose, objectives and the learning outcomes of the programme.	5

1.19	The higher education qualification and the programme of study conform to the provisions for registration to their corresponding professional and vocational bodies for the purpose of exercising a particular profession.	5
1.20	The programme's management in regard to its design, its approval, its monitoring and its review, is in place.	5
1.21	The programme's collaborations with other institutions provide added value and are compared positively with corresponding collaborations of other departments / programmes of study in Europe and internationally.	5
1.22	Procedures are applied so that the programme conforms to the scientific and professional activities of the graduates.	5
1.23	The admission requirements are appropriate.	5
1.24	Sufficient information relating to the programme of study is posted publicly.	5
1.25	The teaching methodology is suitable for teaching in higher education.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

1.5 & 1.6 (4) The panel have some concerns because the majority of students appear to take electives rather than the optional thesis and it is unclear how the options are presented. It appears that students are choosing electives over the thesis for reasons of time pressures (combining studies with full time employment) in addition to choosing not to pursue the research direction. The course design should allow for part time working students to take a thesis. In relation to ECTS, the time commitment should be identical. The panel also recommend that the team review the advice and guidance to increase the take-up of the thesis, or consider a project alternative so that students have the option of a more developed application of knowledge in a practical context, equally weighted to a thesis (ie a double module).

1.8.2 (4) The panel have some concerns about the title of the award not necessarily reflecting the modules taken – ie it is possible to graduate with an MA with New Journalism in the title after only taking one journalism focussed module. However, the reasons for this in the regional context were explained, but it remains the case that internationally, it would be expected that MA qualifications with journalism in the title would contain more substantive course content relating to the profession.

1.8.4 (4) We recommend updating the currency of the courses and literature/bibliography in general, as some of the reading lists are out of date.

1.8.6 (4) See above, the panel suggest the team consider a practical alternative to the thesis, so that students opting not to follow a research direction have the opportunity for a more substantial practical orientation / application of knowledge with parity of demand and scope. It is common on MA programmes for students to have the option of an academic thesis or a project with a professional context. The panel suggest that the team consider this as it is unusual for a Masters programme to be completed only through single modules with no thesis or project.

1.8.7 (3) The panel are concerned that there is a lack of research methods training for students who opt for the thesis. We were informed about an option to take a course of this nature from another programme but the documentation provided does not demonstrate a research skills trajectory within the programme itself. This may be a factor in the low take-up of the thesis.

1.15 (3) The panel agree that the course team should review the relationship between each module and the sequence of the stated learning outcomes. The broader social science modules should come before the study of contemporary journalism and communication and this does not appear to be the case in terms of the phasing of the programme. Furthermore, it is not sufficiently clear how the broader social science modules relate directly to the learning outcomes of this specific programme, given that they are shared with other programmes. The panel advise the team to include a more explicit focus on communication and journalism within the shared modules to balance the generic approach with a more targeted application to the academic and professional context.

1.17 (4) Electives have 15 ECTS but teaching hours are only 2-3 hours compared to compulsory courses which have 10 ECTS and 2 hours. The panel consider this a disproportionate increase of 50% for one more hour. We suggest this is discussed, perhaps at a broader institutional level.

Findings: the panel were provided with comprehensive documentation about this continuing programme. We understand the rationale from the site visit for the reduction in ECTS to 90 from 120 regarding competitiveness in the market.

Strengths: The commitment of the course team and their academic and pedagogic profiles are all impressive and the distance learning methodology is suitable, with training and support for this mode of delivery. The students we met were very positive about assignments, feedback and the collaborative learning environment. During the site visit, the panel were made aware of the important role this programme is playing in the regional context and therefore why the language of instruction is Greek, despite the limitations this presents in recruitment and in the currency of some of the literature available to students. It is clear that there is a need for a Greek language programme of this nature and that this is one of a small number of courses available. The Programme leader's passion for this programme was evident and she was reflective and open to recommendations, so the panel discussion was productive. We were impressed by the community engagement of the programme and the ability of the team to collaborative cohesively despite the lack of physical connection.

Areas of improvement and recommendations: see above. We have phrased the justification of scores in relation to deficiencies as recommendations.

Provide information on:

1. **Employability records**

The majority of students are employed so N/A. We have no information on the career enhancement of students as a result of achieving this qualification.

2. **Pass rate per course/semester**

We asked for retention statistics and were satisfied with the response but we understand that there is no precise data available.

3. **The correspondence of exams' and assignments' content to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS**

No concerns in this regard.

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

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

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

Please tick one of the following for:

Study programme and study programme's design and development

| *Non-Compliant* | ☐ | *Partially Compliant* | ☐ | *Compliant* | ☒ |

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2. Teaching, learning and student assessment

(ESG 1.3)

<u>*Standards*</u>

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development and respects their needs.*
- *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, considers different modes of delivery, where appropriate, uses a variety of pedagogical methods and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- *Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.*
- *The implementation of student-centered learning and teaching encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher.*
- *Teaching methods, tools and material used in teaching are modern, effective, support the use of modern educational technologies and are regularly updated.*
- *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- *The organisation and the content of practical training, if applicable, support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *Assessment is appropriate, transparent, objective and supports the development of the learner.*
- *The criteria for and method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.*
- *Assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.*
- *Assessment, where possible, is carried out by more than one examiner.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is it monitored that the teaching staff base their teaching and assessment methods on objectives and intended learning outcomes? Provide samples of examination papers (if available).*
- *How are students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities taken into consideration when conducting educational activities?*
- *How is the development of students' general competencies (including digital skills) supported in educational activities?*
- *How is it ensured that innovative teaching methods, learning environments and learning aids that support learning are diverse and used in educational activities?*
- *Is the teaching staff using new technology in order to make the teaching process more effective?*
- *How is it ensured that theory and practice are interconnected in teaching and learning?*

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- *How is practical training organised (finding practical training positions, guidelines for practical training, supervision, reporting, feedback, etc.)? What role does practical training have in achieving the objectives of the study programme? What is student feedback on the content and arrangement of practical training?*
- *Are students actively involved in research? How is student involvement in research set up?*
- *How is supervision of student research papers (seminar papers, projects, theses, etc.) organised?*
- *Do students' assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)?*
- *What is the proportion and role of independent work by students in the learning process? How is independent work defined within a subject, how is it supervised and assessed, what are the conditions for independent work?*
- *How are the assessment methods chosen and to what extent do students get supportive feedback on their academic progress during their studies?*
- *How is the objectivity and relevance of student assessment ensured (assessment of the degree of achievement of the intended learning outcomes)?*
- *Are people outside of the HEI involved in the assessment of learning outcomes (including during the defense of theses)?*

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

> 1 or 2:   Non-compliant
>
> 3:   Partially compliant
>
> 4 or 5:   Compliant

	Quality indicators/criteria	1 - 5
2.1	The actual/expected number of students in each class allows for constructive teaching and communication.	5
2.2	The actual/expected number of students in each class compares positively to the current international standards and/or practices.	5
2.3	There is an adequate policy for regular and effective communication with students.	5
2.4	The methodology implemented in each course leads to the achievement of the course's purpose and objectives and those of the individual modules.	5

2.5	Constructive formative assessment for learning and feedback are regularly provided to the students.	5
2.6	The assessment system and criteria regarding student course performance are clear, adequate, and known to the students.	5
2.7	Educational activities which encourage students' active participation in the learning process are implemented.	5
2.8	Teaching incorporates the use of modern educational technologies that are consistent with international standards, including a platform for the electronic support of learning.	5
2.9	Teaching materials (books, manuals, journals, databases, and teaching notes) meet the requirements set by the methodology of the programme's individual courses and are updated regularly.	3
2.10	It is ensured that teaching and learning are continuously enriched by research.	5
2.11	The programme promotes students' research skills and inquiry learning.	4
2.12	Students are adequately trained in the research process.	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

2.9 (3) The panel recommend a thorough review and revision of reading lists to include more current sources. Whilst we understand the need to prioritise Greek language translation for the cohort, there are still areas where the reading lists are not sufficiently current for such a rapidly changing area of study and professional application.

2.11 & 2.12 (4) As stated in section 1, the panel have some concerns because the majority of students appear to take electives rather than the optional thesis and it is unclear how the options are presented. It appears that students are choosing electives over the thesis for reasons of time pressures (combining studies with full time employment) in addition to choosing not to pursue the research direction. The course design should allow for part time working students to take a thesis. In relation to ECTS, the time commitment should be identical. The panel also recommend that the team review the advice and guidance to increase the take-up of the thesis, or consider a project alternative so that students have the option of a more developed application of knowledge in a practical context, equally weighted to a thesis (ie a double module). The panel are also concerned that there is a lack of research methods training for students who opt for the thesis. We were informed about an option to take a course of this nature from another programme but the documentation provided does not demonstrate a research skills trajectory within the programme itself. This may be a factor in the low take-up of the thesis.

Findings: during the site visit the teaching team and e-learning team gave detailed presentations about the pedagogic, assessment and e-learning elements of programme delivery. As stated above, students were

very positive about the collaborative learning environment, assignments and feedback. Whilst some panel members were surprised and to an extent concerned about the use of exams in a physical location for a largely online programme, it was explained during the visit that this is standard and mandatory and the students we met were positive about the experience.

Strengths: the panel were satisfied with the quality of teaching and learning, assessment and feedback and the level of formative, individual attention to students, with student numbers at a level that enables more personalised learning, detailed feedback and support.

Areas of improvement and recommendation: see above. We have phrased the justification of scores in relation to deficiencies as recommendations.

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

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

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

Please tick one of the following for:

Teaching, learning and student assessment

| Non-Compliant | ☐ | Partially Compliant | ☐ | Compliant | ☒ |

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3. Teaching Staff

(ESG 1.5)

Standards

- *Fair, transparent and clear processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff are set up.*
- *Teaching staff qualifications are adequate to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the HEI and with partners outside (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other HEIs in Cyprus or abroad).*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*
- *The teaching staff is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Assessment of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2:	Non-compliant
3:	Partially compliant
4 or 5:	Compliant

	Quality indicators/criteria	1 - 5
3.1	The number of full-time teaching staff, occupied exclusively at the institution, and their fields of expertise, adequately support the programme of study.	3
3.2	The members of teaching staff for each course have the relevant formal and fundamental qualifications for teaching the course, including the following:	
	3.2.1 Subject specialisation	5
	3.2.2 Research and Publications within the discipline	5
	3.2.3 Experience / training in teaching in higher education	5
3.3	The programme attracts visiting professors of recognized academic standing.	Choose mark
3.4	The specialisations of visiting professors adequately support the programme of study.	Choose mark
3.5	Special teaching staff and special scientists have the necessary qualifications, adequate work experience and specialisation to teach a limited number of courses in the programme of study.	5
3.6	In the programme of study, the ratio of the number of courses taught by full-time staff, occupied exclusively at the institution, to the number of courses taught by part-time staff, ensures the quality of the programme of study.	3
3.7	The ratio of the number of students to the total number of teaching staff supports and safeguards the programme's quality.	5
3.8	The teaching load allows for the conduct of research and contribution to society.	5
3.9	The programme's coordinator has the qualifications and experience to coordinate the programme of study.	5
3.10	The results of the teaching staff's research activity are published in international journals with the peer-reviewing system, in international conferences, conference minutes, publications etc.	5
3.11	The teaching staff is provided with adequate training opportunities in teaching methods, adult education and new technologies.	5
3.12	Feedback processes for teaching staff in regard to the evaluation of their teaching work, by the students, are satisfactory.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Provide information on the following:

In every programme of study the special teaching staff should not exceed 30% of the permanent teaching staff.

3.1 and 3.6 (3) The panel consider the staffing to be outside of compliance with the above statement with regard to special / permanent teaching staff.

Findings: in reviewing the preparatory material and during the site visit, the panel were entirely satisfied with the profiles and expertise of the teaching team. Visiting Professors do not appear to be included in delivery.

Strengths: The external networks and partnerships are strong. See section 2 re student numbers and ratio to staff – this is a strength. Teaching staff's profiles are impressive and the criteria for appointment are robust, in terms of pedagogic, professional and research experience required. The support for teaching through e-learning is comprehensive. The Programme Coordinator's profile and industry experience ensures a high level of professional relevance and academic rigour.

Areas of improvement and recommendations: see above, our only recommendation is to review the staffing against the criteria above.

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

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

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

Please tick one of the following for:

Teaching Staff

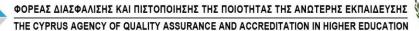| Non-Compliant | ☐ | Partially Compliant | ☐ | Compliant | ☒ |

4. Students

(ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7)

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission, progression, recognition and certification are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*
- *Information on students, like key performance indicators, profile of the student population, student progression, success and drop-out rates, students' satisfaction with their programmes, learning resources and student support available, career paths of graduates, is collected, monitored and analysed.*
- *Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.*
- *Students receive certification explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.*
- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population (such as mature, part-time, employed and international students, as well as students with disabilities).*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Students are involved in evaluating the teaching staff.*
- *Students' mobility is encouraged and supported.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *What are the admission requirements for the study programme? How is the students' prior preparation/education assessed (including the level of international students, for example)?*
- *What are the objectives for the students' academic progress, counselling, mobility, etc., as set by the HEI? How have these objectives been achieved within the given study programme? What indicators are used to assess the fulfilment or degree of achievement of these objectives?*
- *What are the reasons for dropping out (voluntary withdrawal)? What has been done to reduce the number of such students?*
- *How is student learning within the standard period of study supported (student counselling, flexibility of the study programme, etc.)?*
- *How students' special needs are considered (different capabilities, different levels of academic preparation, special needs due to physical disabilities, etc.)? How/to what extent can students themselves design the content of their studies? What are students' options within the study programme and outside of it?*

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- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study programme on their employment and/or continuation of studies?*
- *How is student mobility being supported?*
- *Evaluate student feedback on support services. Based on student feedback, which support services (including information flow, counselling) need further development?*
- *How is the procedure of recognition for prior learning and work experience ensured, including recognition of study results acquired at foreign higher education institutions?*

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

1 or 2:	Non-compliant
3:	Partially compliant
4 or 5:	Compliant

	Quality indicators/criteria	1 - 5
4.1	The student admission requirements for the programme of study are based on specific regulations and suitable criteria that are favourably compared to international practices.	5
4.2	The award of the higher education qualification is accompanied by the diploma supplement which is in line with European and international standards.	5
4.3	The programme's evaluation mechanism, by the students, is effective.	5
4.4	Students' participation in exchange programmes is compared favourably to similar programmes across Europe.	5
4.5	There is a student welfare service that supports students in regard to academic, personal problems and difficulties.	5
4.6	Statutory mechanisms, for the support of students and the communication with the teaching staff, are effective.	5
4.7	Mentoring of each student is provided and the number of students per each permanent teaching member is adequate.	5
4.8	Flexible options / adaptable to the personal needs or to the needs of students with special needs, are provided.	5

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4.9	Students are satisfied with their learning experiences.	5

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Findings: The panel's understanding from the preparatory material was enhanced by the detailed presentations given during the site visit and the meeting with students. However, there was a lack of data available for some aspects (see below).

Strengths: The students who met with the panel were very positive about their learning experiences, relevance of assignments, the employability enhancement the programme has enabled and both professional application of knowledge and progression to doctoral study and research publications and presentation at international conferences. We, therefore, were impressed with the student perceptions of the quality of both programme directions. In both cases the importance of the programme in the regional context was highly evident.

Areas of improvement and recommendation: whilst this does not relate to the scores given above, the panel were not clear about the performance data available to the course team, for example achievement and retention profiling. We recommend a review of the data available for programme quality monitoring.

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

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

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

Please circle one of the following for:

Students

Non-Compliant ☐   **Partially Compliant** ☐   **Compliant** ☒

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5. Resources

(ESG 1.6)

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, financial, physical and human support resources*) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
  * Physical resources: premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, etc.
  Human support resources: tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose and students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Teaching staff is involved in the management of financial resources regarding the programme of study.*

You may also consider the following questions:

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

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

      1 or 2:   Non-compliant

      3:        Partially compliant

      4 or 5:   Compliant

	Quality indicators/criteria	1 - 5
5.1	Adequate and modern learning resources are available to the students.	5
5.2	The library includes the latest books and material that support the programme.	4
5.3	The library loan system facilitates students' studies.	5
5.4	The laboratories adequately support the programme.	5
5.5	Student welfare services are of high quality.	5
5.6	Statutory administrative mechanisms for monitoring and supporting students are sufficient.	5
5.7	Suitable books and reputable journals support the programme of study.	3
5.8	An internal communication platform supports the programme of study.	5
5.9	The equipment used in teaching and learning (laboratory and electronic equipment, consumables etc.) are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate.	5
5.10	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are adequate and accessible to students.	4
5.11	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) are updated regularly with the most recent publications.	3

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

5.2 & 5.10 (4) See below, on the assumption that since the reading lists are out of date, the library might need to be updated/expanded.

5.7 & 5.11 (3) As stated in earlier sections, the panel recommend a thorough review and revision of reading lists to include more current sources. Whilst we understand the need to prioritise Greek language translation for the cohort, there are still areas where the reading lists are not sufficiently current for such a rapidly changing area of study and professional application.

Findings: the panel were happy with the preparatory information provided and the meeting with staff with regard to library, internal communication and administrative support for the programme but given the distance learning mode of delivery, it was recognised that these functions are distinct from on campus programmes.

Strengths: see findings. The communication platform and support provided by the Laboratory of Educational Material and Methodology are impressive.

Areas for improvement and recommendations: see above, reading lists must be reviewed and updated.

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

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

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

Please circle one of the following for:

Resources

Non-Compliant	☐	*Partially Compliant*	☐	*Compliant*	☒

6. Additional for distance learning programmes

(ALL ESG)

Standards

- ***The distance learning methodology is appropriate for the particular programme of study.***
- *A pedagogical planning unit for distance learning, which is responsible for the support of the distance learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance to international standards, is established.*
- *Feedback processes for students in relation to written assignments are set.*
- *A specific plan is developed to ensure student interactions with each other, with the teaching staff, and the study material.*
- *Teacher training programmes focusing on interaction and the specificities of distance learning are offered.*
- *A complete assessment framework is designed, focusing on distance learning methodology, including clearly defined evaluation criteria for student assignments and the final examination.*
- *Expected teleconferences for presentations, discussion and question-answer sessions, and guidance are set.*
- *A study guide for each course, fully aligned with distance learning methodology and the need for student interaction with the material is developed. The study guide should include, for each course week / module, the following:*
  - *Clearly defined objectives and expected learning outcomes of the programme, of the modules and activities in an organised and coherent manner*
  - *Presentation of course material, on a weekly basis, in a variety of ways and means (e.g. printed material, electronic material, teleconferencing, multimedia)*
  - *Weekly outline of set activities and exercises and clear instructions for creating posts, discussion, and feedback*
  - *Self-assessment exercises and self-correction guide*
  - *Bibliographic references and suggestions for further study*
  - *Number of assignments/papers and their topics, along with instructions and additional study material*
  - *Synopsis*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Is the nature of the programme compatible with distance learning delivery?*
- *How do the programme, the material, the facilities, and the guidelines safeguard the interaction between students, students and teaching staff, students and the material?*
- *How many students upload their work and discuss it in the platform during the semester?*
- *Are the academics qualified to teach in the distance learning programme?*

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

    1 or 2:   Non-compliant

    3:          Partially compliant

    4 or 5:   Compliant

	Quality indicators/criteria	1 - 5
6.1	The pedagogical planning unit for distance learning supports the distance learning unit and addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment.	5
6.2	The institution safeguards the interaction:	
	6.2.1 Among students	5
	6.2.2 Between students and teaching staff	5
	6.2.3 Between students and study guides/material of study	5
6.3	The process and the conditions for the recruitment of teaching staff ensure that candidates have the necessary skills and experience for distance learning education.	5
6.4	Training, guidance and support are provided to the teaching staff through appropriate procedures.	5
6.5	Student performance monitoring mechanisms are satisfactory.	4
6.6	Adequate mentoring by the teaching staff is provided to students through established procedures.	5
6.7	The unimpeded distance learning communication between the teaching staff and the students is ensured.	5
6.8	Assessment consistency is ensured.	5
6.9	Teaching materials (books, manuals, scientific journals, databases) comply with the requirements provided by the distance learning education methodology and are updated regularly.	4
6.10	The programme of study has the appropriate and adequate infrastructure for the support of distance learning.	5
6.11	The supporting infrastructures are easily accessible.	5

6.12	Students are informed and trained with regards to the available educational infrastructure.	5
6.13	Procedures for systematic control and improvement of the supportive services are set.	5
6.14	Infrastructure for distance education is comparable to corresponding university infrastructure in the European Union and internationally.	5
6.15	Electronic library services are provided according to international practice in order to support the needs of the students and the teaching staff.	5
6.16	The students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary electronic sources of information, relevant to the programme, the level, and the method of teaching.	5
6.17	Students' weekly assignments are appropriate for the level of the programme.	4
6.18	Feedback on students' assignments is regular through concrete and published procedures.	5
6.19	The quality of students' final exams is ensured and evidenced.	5
6.20	The teaching e-learning material has been sufficiently enriched with electronic sources, updated research publications and other electronic learning resources that support students' work and learning.	4

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

6.5 (4) The University did not show, even if envisaged, any information system to automatically monitor student perfomance, and the indications provided during the interviews to supervise the learning proces in general were manually based.

6.9 (4) The panel recommend a thorough revision of reading list to include more current sources and seminal works.

6.17 (4) According to the study guides provided and the interviews conducted, it is not foresen weekly assignments, at least formal assignments, as the level of self-assessment lacks of formal assessment and formative feedback from the tutor.

6.20 (4) See above, as the currency of reading lists impacts upon the currency of the e-learning material.

Findings –

The nature of the programme is compatible with distance learning delivery and the methodology provided is appropriate for the particular programme of study.

The university's eClass system supports online teaching, learning and administrative processes. The platform specifically provides synchronous and asynchronous tools to support the interaction needs of students with the tutors, the other students

and with the materials. The platform also provides e-assessment procedures through quizzes with automatic feedback in order to assess students' knowledge. The provision of more complex forms of e-assessment to assess competences was not shown. In addition, mobile access to the platfrom, even if provided, was not proved whether specific pedagogical methods were applied that leverage the unique capabilities of mobile devices for teaching and learning. Finally, a learning analytics component was mentioned to be included in eClass though it was not shown in detail what data is managed and reported to the different stakeholders.

The university has a unit responsible for designing, creating, implementing and evaluating study materials. This unit addresses the requirements for study materials, interactive activities and formative assessment in accordance with state-of-the-art technological advances and own research activities. A proof of concept of advanced materials based on VR and IoT developed by the unit was demonstrated during the on-site visit.

The panel were not clear on how the recommended study time in the study guides was calculated as these are not consistent in the study guides for modules with equal credits.

Strengths:

The proposed thematic units have a weekly study guide that includes relevant information: synopsis, aims, anticipated results, reviewed literature, and self-evaluation exercises. These weekly self-assessment exercises, though enriched by peers' and tutor's feedback, would be improved through the introduction of tutor assessments and formative feedback.

Formative assessment and the corresponding formative feedback to students are provided by teachers through compulsory assignments (twice per semester) plus in live (generally online) meetings. The panel recommend the formative feedback from assignments is provided more regularly, personalized, and in a timely fashion.

The panel recommends the University to consider and eventually incorporate state-of-the-art teaching innovations based on artificial intelligence technologies in order to automatically monitor student to detect just-in-time performance and early drop-out issues while providing correction measures and automatic guiding (from intelligent tutoring systems) when required.

Areas for improvement and recommendations:

The proposed thematic units have a weekly study guide that includes relevant information: synopsis, aims, anticipated results, reviewed literature, and self-evaluation exercises. These weekly self-assessment exercises, though enriched by peers' and tutor's feedback, would be improved through the introduction of tutor assessments and formative feedback.

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

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

Please tick one of the following for:

Additional for distance learning programmes

| **Non-Compliant** | ☐ | **Partially Compliant** | ☐ | **Compliant** | ☒ |

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7. Additional for doctoral programmes

(ALL ESG)

Standards

- *Specific criteria that the potential students need to meet for admission in the programme, as well as how the selection procedures are made, are defined.*
- *The following requirements of the doctoral degree programme are analysed and published:*
  - o *the stages of completion*
  - o *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
  - o *the examinations*
  - o *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
  - o *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*
- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
  - o *the chapters that are contained*
  - o *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
  - o *the minimum word limit*
  - o *the binding, the cover page and the prologue pages, including the pages supporting the authenticity, originality and importance of the dissertation, as well as the reference to the committee for the final evaluation*
- *There is a plagiarism check system. Information is provided on the detection of plagiarism and the consequences in case of such misconduct.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the advisory committee (to whom the doctoral student submits the research proposal) are determined.*
- *The composition, the procedure and the criteria for the formation of the examining committee (to whom the doctoral student defends his/her dissertation), are determined.*
- *The duties of the supervisor-chairperson and the other members of the advisory committee towards the student are determined and include:*
  - o *regular meetings*
  - o *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
  - o *support for writing research papers*
  - o *participation in conferences*
- *The number of doctoral students that each chairperson supervises at the same time are determined.*
- *The process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *How is the scientific quality of the PhD thesis ensured?*
- *Is there a link between the doctoral programmes of study and the society? What is the value of the obtained degree outside academia and in the labour market?*
- *Can you please provide us with some dissertation samples?*

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

      1 or 2:   Non-compliant

      3:         Partially compliant

      4 or 5:   Compliant

	Quality indicators/criteria	1 - 5
7.1	The provision of quality doctoral studies is ensured through doctoral studies regulations, which are publicly available.	Choose mark
7.2	The structure and the content of a doctoral programme of study ensure the quality provision of doctoral studies.	Choose mark
7.3	The doctoral studies' supervisors have the necessary academic qualifications and experience for the supervision of the specific dissertations.	Choose mark
7.4	The number of doctoral students, under the supervision of a member of the teaching staff, enables continuous and effective feedback to the students and it complies with the European and international standards.	Choose mark
7.5	The research interests of academic advisors and supervisors adequately cover the thematic areas of research conducted by the doctoral students of the programme.	Choose mark
7.6	Research equipment, laboratories, workshops and existing bibliographic material support the programme of study.	Choose mark
7.7	The quality of the doctoral theses of the programme in this field is in line with international standards.	Choose mark
7.8	Doctoral candidates have publications in scientific journals and/ or participate in international conferences.	Choose mark
7.9	The institution has mechanisms and funds to support writing and attending conferences of doctoral candidates.	Choose mark
7.10	The candidates demonstrate skills in designing and in conducting productive self-directed research.	Choose mark
7.11	Candidates are aware of the ethical implications of their research and of their responsibilities as scientists.	Choose mark
7.12	Suitable procedures of monitoring and periodic assessment of students' research progress are set.	Choose mark

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7.13	There is a clear policy on authorship and intellectual property.	Choose mark

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

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

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

Please tick one of the following for:

Additional for doctoral programmes

Non-Compliant ☐   *Partially Compliant* ☐   *Compliant* ☐

8. Additional for joint programmes

(ALL ESG)

<u>*Standards*</u>

- *The joint programme is offered in accordance with legal frameworks of the relevant national higher education systems.*
- *The partner universities apply joint internal quality assurance processes.*
- *The joint programme is offered jointly, involving all cooperating universities in the design, delivery and further development of the programme.*
- *The terms and conditions of the joint programme are laid down in a cooperation agreement. The agreement in particular covers the following issues:*
  - o *Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme*
  - o *Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation, including funding, sharing of costs and income, resources for mobility of staff and students*
  - o *Admission and selection procedures for students*
  - o *Mobility of students and teaching staff*
  - o *Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures*
  - o *Handling of different semester periods, if existent*
- *Aims and learning outcomes are clearly stated, including a joint syllabus, language policy, as well as an account of the intended added value of the programme.*
- *Study counselling and mobility plans are efficient and take into account the needs of different kinds of students.*

You may also consider the following questions:

- *Does the joint study programme conform to the requirements of a study programme offered at the specific level?*
- *Is there a system that assures the quality of joint provision and guarantees that the aims of the programme are met?*
- *Do the mechanisms for ensuring the quality of the joint study programme take into consideration the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)? Are they adopted by all the universities involved?*
- *Is the division of responsibilities in ensuring quality clearly defined among the partner universities?*
- *Is relevant information about the programme, e.g. admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures, well documented and published by taking into account the specific needs of students?*
- *What is the added value of the programme of study?*
- *Is there a sustainable funding strategy among the partner universities? Explain.*

Mark from 1 to 5 the degree of compliance for each quality indicator/criterion

  1 or 2:   Non-compliant

  3:          Partially compliant

  4 or 5:   Compliant

	Quality indicators/criteria	1 - 5
8.1	The joint study programme promotes the fulfilment of the mission and achievement of the goals of the partner universities.	Choose mark
8.2	The joint study programme has been developed by all the partner universities, which are also involved in its further development.	Choose mark
8.3	The partner universities have defined the responsibility of the parties in the common agreement.	Choose mark
8.4	The joint study programme conforms to the requirements and directions of national and international legislation.	Choose mark
8.5	The joint study programme is based on the needs of the target group and of the labour market.	Choose mark
8.6	Students are provided with advisory and support systems concerning learning and teaching at the partner universities.	Choose mark
8.7	The cooperation contract sets out the procedure for resolving disputes concerning the execution of the joint study programme, which ensures the protection of the rights of students and teaching staff.	Choose mark
8.8	The partner universities have agreed on how to seek feedback from students regarding the organisation and process of their study.	Choose mark
8.9	The partner universities ensure the economic sustainability of the joint study programme.	Choose mark
8.10	The degree awarded is justified by:	
	8.10.1 The learning outcomes	Choose mark
	8.10.2 The collaboration between/among the institutions delivering the programme	Choose mark
8.11	The jointness of the programme development is effective.	Choose mark

8.12	The students' mobility between/among the collaborative institutions provide students with rewarding experiences that facilitate employability in Europe.	Choose mark

Justify the numerical scores provided for the quality indicators (criteria) by specifying (if any) the deficiencies.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

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

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

Please tick one of the following for:

Additional for joint programmes

Non-Compliant	☐	*Partially Compliant*	☐	*Compliant*	☐

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Conclusions and final remarks

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

The panel is grateful for the discussions with the University's and Faculty's leadership during the site visit on 12 December 2019. This is a continuing programme and the main adjustment relates to a reduction in ECTS credits.

The panel have made several recommendations pertaining to the status of the thesis as optional combined with the lack of a practical alternative, currency of literature on the reading lists, phasing of programme content and the direction of generic social science modules towards the academic and professional contexts of communications and new journalism. The panel also question the viability of the programme title being awarded at MA level to students who only take one module with an explicit journalism focus.

Our understanding is that the physical retreat is an important element of this hybrid / blended model and this gives teaching staff an essential opportunity to meet and reflect on the programme. However, the panel are unclear about the overall engagement by students with these events. We therefore recommend the team do whatever is possible to encourage the highest possible attendance by students at the retreats.

With regard to the EQF criteria and parity with external benchmarks for Masters courses, the recommendations made in relation to these points are mainly for reflection on the part of the programme team (those scored as 4). The points made in relation to scores of 3 are more significant and require amendments. The panel does not consider it an obstacle to approval if the coordinator chooses to review the points scored at 4 without amendments, but we do expect actions with regard to scores of 3.

D. Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Julian McDougall	
Kari Anden-Papadopoulos	
Bradley Wiggins	
Santi Caballe Llobet	
Stephanie Nicolaou	

Date: 13.12.19