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Doc. 300.1.1

# External evaluation report

- **Higher education institution:**  
Open University of Cyprus
- **Town:** Nicosia
- **Programme of study (Name, ECTS, duration, cycle)**

**In Greek:** Επικοινωνία και Νέα Δημοσιογραφία  
(90 μονάδες ECTS, 1.5 ακαδημαϊκά έτη)

**In English:** MA Communication and New  
Journalism (90 ECTS, 1.5 years)

- **Language 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

## C. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The assessment of study programmes follows the structure of assessment areas.*
- *At the beginning of each assessment area there is a box presenting:*
  - standards which are relevant to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*
  - some questions that EEC may find useful.*
- *The questions aim at facilitating the understanding of each assessment area and at illustrating the range of topics covered by the standards.*

- Under each assessment area, it is important to provide information regarding the compliance with the requirements. For each assessment area, the report must include the following:

### **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.

- In addition, for each assessment area there are quality indicators (criteria) on a scale from one (1) to ten (10). The scale used is explained below:
  - 1 – 4: Non-compliant
  - 5 or 6: Partially compliant
  - 7 or 8: Substantially compliant
  - 9 or 10: Fully 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.
- **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, the description of the way in which the standards are met (findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations) and the justified scores of the quality indicators (criteria).**
- **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)

### Standards

- *Policy for quality assurance of the program of study:*
  - *has a formal status and is publicly available.*
  - *supports the organization 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 program of study:*
  - *is designed with overall program 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 program*
  - *is reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders*
  
- *Public information (clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible):*
  - *about the program 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 program 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 program'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 program remains current and consistent with developments in society (labor market, digital technologies, etc.), and b) whether the content and objectives of the study program are in accordance with each other?*
- *How is coherence of the study program 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 program?*
- *How does the study program 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 program (where appropriate)?*
- *What are the scope and objectives of the foundation courses in the study program (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 program been compared to other similar study programs when designed, including internationally, and to what purpose? Explain.*
- *Is the graduation rate for the study program analogous to other European programs 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 program (courses/modules taught in a foreign language)?*
- *Is information related to the program of study publicly available?*

### 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.*

## Comments made by the External Evaluation Committee

**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 - i.e. 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 Master's 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 collaborate 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.

## OUC Response

As far as 1.5 & 1.6 goes, since the first operation of the M.A. Programme in the 2011-2012 academic year, 46/210 students have decided to take a Master thesis. We expect this number to increase by highlighting the importance of a more theoretical path as a thesis, but we should also bear in mind that a significant portion of our student population is interested to acquire more technical/practical skills. This is the reason they choose END611 "Creative Strategies in Digital Communication" & END612 "Marketing and Communication: A Content Strategy Approach", for the Communication direction and END613 "Profession: Journalism" and END614 "Digital Storytelling" for the New Journalism direction. Still, the two modules END512 "Understanding Media: The message" and END522 "Understanding the message: The Effects", which as compulsory Thematic Units (Modules) for both academic directions (a. Communication, b. New Journalism) have been radically redesigned to deliver a wide range of methodological tools, both qualitative and quantitative, which would compensate for weaknesses on the methodological training in the previous incarnations of the two modules and would prepare students efficiently for a thesis. This also relates to the Panel's concern mentioned in 1.8.7, that there was a lack of research methods for students who opt for the Master Thesis. Finally, the workload for the two 15ECTS elective courses for both directions (i.e. END611

“Creative Strategies in Digital Communication” & END622 “Communication and Marketing in Practice” for the Communication direction and END613 “Profession: Journalism” and END614” Digital Storytelling” for the New Journalism direction) have been significantly increased (both in terms of bibliography but also of a range of assignments).

As far as 1.8.2 goes, we must clarify that students are engaged with issues of the two directions (Journalism and Communication) from the very beginning: the introductory and compulsory to both directions modules (END511 “Contemporary World: The Political Condition”, END512 “Understanding Media: The message”, END513 “Contemporary Approaches to Communication and Journalism”, END521 “Contemporary World: The Social Condition“, END522 “Understanding the message: The Effects”) examine issues of Journalism and Communication in the scope of the different social sciences, while we emphatically clarify the different topics of assessments based on the specialization they have chosen. Moreover, END523 “Strategic Communication”, compulsory for students opting for the Communication direction and END524 “The challenges of new Journalism”, compulsory for the New Journalism direction are systematic introductions to their specialization. All these modules introduce students and cultivate their interest on the specialization they have chosen and prepare them for the remaining two advanced courses in their specialization/academic direction or for the advance research of an MA thesis.

As far as 1.8.4 and 2.9 and in compliance with 1.17, we have strengthened and updated literature/bibliography. All changes are indicated with track changes in the descriptions (Annex 2 of the application form) of the various Modules and are attached to this response. Regarding old reading lists, they have been updated with more current sources for all modules, with special attention to substantial additions of English bibliography for the 15ECTS elective modules of the two directions. Additionally, more substantial activities and assignments have been proposed, which would increase significantly students’ workload to justify the 15 ECTS. Please note that additional educational activities are incorporated in the Study Guides prepared in Greek for all modules, given that this is a Greek-taught M.A. Programme.

As far as 1.8.7. goes, the students are introduced to research methods from the first Thematic Unit of the first semester in END511. The learning unit “Introduction to Academic Research” of the said Module focuses on the basic tools for academic research and writing, including bibliography. In addition, the third learning unit of END511 “Critical Thinking” focuses on informal logic and argumentation that enriches further students’ research skills. Students are also taught how and where to search for academic references, which sources are academic, and how to distinguish between reliable and unreliable research articles and material. These elements prepare students to conduct a thorough “research and dissertation”, a crucial section for any research project.

In the same philosophy, the first learning unit of module END512 focuses on “Research methodology”, where students are introduced in processes of operationalization of a theory, which is how a theory can be used to construct research tools, e.g. code sheets and causal relations. This leads to the “interpretation” of the results, where students are asked to interpret the findings based on the



literature review, they have already conducted. This approach, the “operationalization” of every theory taught, runs through the next two learning units (6.2 and 6.3) of END512 where students are asked to operationalize the theories taught and to interpret their results. In the next learning unit (6.4) students are introduced to more qualitative research tools (Content Analysis, Thematic Analysis and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis) and to basic quantitative statistical tests (x2) in order to enrich their research capabilities. All the above methodological tools are crucial for both directions (New Journalism and Communication) with the ambition that students that complete END511 and END512 will have a sound knowledge of the crucial parts of a dissertation or any research project: The process of writing a solid literature review, the formulation of research questions or hypotheses, the methodological tools, the results and the interpretation of these results based on the literature review.

As far as 1.15 goes and in response to the comments, regarding possible overlaps between modules, which we accept and we thank you for:

In response to “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” that the panel commented, we clarify that the social sciences thematic units/ modules are not just social sciences modules but modules connected directly to the Journalism and Communication fields. In other words, how the social sciences affect the function of Journalism and Communication. We also emphatically clarify the different topics of assessments based on the specialization they have chosen.

In response to the comments regarding possible overlaps between modules END513 and END512, all content related to Rhetoric and Persuasion has been removed from END513, and will only be covered in END512. Accordingly, learning unit 6.2. of END513 has been renamed as “The function of frames in Communication and Journalism”, focusing exclusively on framing theory and going into more depth into this vast topic of research. Necessary adjustments have been made in all the components of the module’s description (learning outcomes, description, bibliographical sources, etc) as you can see from the annexes.

In response to the comments regarding possible overlaps between modules END513 and learning unit 6.2 of END511 with regards to the unit about journalistic Ethics, there was a modification of learning units in END513. More specifically, learning unit 6.5. was removed and replaced by a new learning unit titled “New Media Effects: theoretical conceptualizations and empirical findings”, the content of which is directly related to the entire course and its learning outcomes, and further enhances them. This module has been fully developed along all of its components, including annotated bibliography and exercises.

In response to the comments regarding possible overlaps between modules END522 and END513: In END522, Learning Unit 6.4, more emphasis has been given to processes of influence rather than the effects. Therefore, this Learning Unit has been renamed to "Power and Influence of the Media" highlighting the perceived power of the Media and how this changes over time as well as the

sociopsychological processes of influence. This emphasis raises awareness to the question "can the media influence people?" as seen in the book of Marchant (2004) in the compulsory bibliography. In addition, this emphasis provides more "space" to END513 to concentrate more on the theories, their origins and theoretical evolution regarding the effects of the Media. Therefore, students that take END513 in the first semester will be familiar with the theories regarding the effects of the Media and in the second semester they will deepen their knowledge regarding the influence of the Media and how the perceived power of the Media is constructed. At the same time, it remains a crucial factor for facilitating the processes of influence.

In response to the comments regarding possible overlaps between modules END523 (Strategic Communication), END611, and END612 we decided to re-organize the Thematic Units / Modules as such:

END523 remains the main introductory course on Communication Strategy incorporating basic theories and steps on the planning and implementation of a communications strategy, having removed all content related to Press Office Management. All content related to the operation of a Press Office and the writing of press releases has been removed from learning unit 6.4, since it will be covered in the END612 with its more hands-on, skill-based focus.

END611 and END612 will focus on a more applied skills based approach, training the students on specific tools. Specifically, END611 remains the same, having reshaped learning unit 4 (Social Media Communication) to Social Media Management.

At last, we propose to rename END612 from "Communication and Marketing in Practice" to "Marketing and Communication: A Content Strategy Approach", reconstructing the individual learning units as such:

1. Introduction to marketing communication
2. Introduction to Branding
3. Value Proposition and Marketing Strategies
4. Copywriting for traditional and digital media
5. Online advertising
6. Online Press Office: production and dissemination of offline/online/multimedia press releases
7. Implementation of a content strategy marketing campaign

Both required and optional readings have been adjusted to the new thematic directions, with a clear focus on the applied aspects of content strategy, content production and copyrighting, as well as assignments and activities.

Concerning END524, END 613 & END614 (Journalism) we have examined very carefully the relationship between each module/Thematic Unit and it is our conviction that our programme offers

a smooth passage from the theories taught in previous modules to contemporary journalism and at the end to the targeted application.

More specifically in END524 we insist in critical thinking as well as getting the notions of how to express oneself. The first three units give the student ample space to “think” about journalism: what is journalism today in Europe, how do we navigate through the post-truth era, how do we obtain information, how do we evaluate it. The module is completed by the study of writing which is the base for every journalist.

In END613 we insist on two skills that are indispensable to every journalist: how to report correctly and how to conduct an interview. Both of them are examined from a critically point of view before passing on to actual training. As an example of the skills taught up to here and in order for the students to familiarize themselves with different specialties in journalism we chose travel journalism as an example coupling it with nation branding so as to show a clear case of how journalism and communication overlap (or fight each other). The student will then acquire skills about presenting the content he/she has produced using modern off and online tools that make the first step to the digitalization of content which will follow in END614. Finally the students familiarize themselves with the notion and the essentials of entrepreneurship which is a major development in how journalists are working today and is closely linked to the study of journalism in Europe made in END524.

Finally, we felt that END614, which is an optional module should go deeper in what was learnt earlier but also offer new paths of knowledge. This is why it is the most technical of all, offering more ways of training, especially in digital tools. The student will acquire skills in dealing with sound, still images and video and will study all the steps of content digitalization. He/she will also acquire the basics of data journalism and finally will be asked to follow and create a full journalist project applied on the creation of a webpage as well as the online tools and social media tools that accompany it.

It goes without saying that the remarks made to us were extremely useful in clarifying the above as well as adjusting the literature proposed not only for update reasons and for adjusting the content to 15 ECTS but also to ensure a smooth passage from one end to another and from one individual Thematic Unit / Module to another. Thus, assignments and activities are even more complexed in the Modules of 15 ECTS, while there is also more literature in general and more literature in English.

As far as 1.17 goes, we have discussed and increased teaching and studying hours for both Communication and Journalism elective modules. So now, we have equilibrated 15 ECTS for all four modules (check modules’ description in the revised application in English).

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

### Standards

- *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?*
- *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 program? 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.) organized?*
- 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)?*

### 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.*

## Comments made by the External Evaluation Committee

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 14 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.

## OUC Response

As far as 2.9 and in compliance with 1.17 and 1.8.4, reading lists have been strengthened and updated for all modules (Please refer to the attached revised Module Descriptions, Annex 2 of the revised application form). There is now a preponderance of literature in English. This definitely makes studying more difficult for our students, that are attending a Greek-taught M.A. Programme, but we believe there is still a good proportion of Greek literature.

For example, certain additions of updated sources have been made in both END513 and END523: In END513 (and besides the new learning unit of Media Effects):

- A recent (2020) bibliographical source regarding “narrative effects” was added in learning unit 6.3, and an older one was transferred to the optional reading list.
- All bibliographical sources of the 6.5. learning unit are recent, having been published between 2016-2020.

In END523, the following three bibliographical sources were added (replacing other less recent sources):

- Allagui, I., & Breslow, H. (2016). Social media for public relations: Lessons from four effective cases. *Public Relations Review*, 42(1), 20–30.
- Holtz-Bacha, C. (2017). Content Effects: Political Campaign Communication. *The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects*, 1–9.
- Grunig, J. E. (2009). Paradigms of global public relations in an age of digitalisation. *PRism* 6(2): [http://praxis.massey.ac.nz/prism\\_on-line\\_journ.html](http://praxis.massey.ac.nz/prism_on-line_journ.html)

Reading lists have been strengthened and updated for all modules respectively.

As far as 2.11 & 2.12 goes, concerning the fact that students do not opt for a Master Thesis, please refer to our response in Section 1. “Study Programme and Study Programme’s Design and Development”.

### 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)?

#### 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.

## Comments made by the External Evaluation Committee

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.

## OUC Response

We appreciate all comments made by the EEC, and especially for the fact that the panel was entirely satisfied with the profiles and expertise of the teaching team. Please note that based on the Law governing the operation of Open University of Cyprus, Visiting Professors is not an option. Moreover, Open University of Cyprus only employs 24 Faculty members now, and as mentioned in our application form for accreditation, we work with Adjunct Faculty in all our programs of study. This is the case for the M.A. Programme in "Communication and New Journalism", as the Academic Coordinator, Associate Professor Sofia Iordanidou, is the only faculty member in the relevant fields.

We also appreciate the fact that the EEC considers the procedure for appointing adjunct faculty and the relevant selection criteria to be robust in terms of pedagogic, professional and research experience required.



#### 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 programs, learning resources and student support available, career paths of graduates, is collected, monitored and analyzed.*
- *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 program? 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 program? 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 program, 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 program and outside of it?*
- *How is the HEI evaluating the success of its graduates in the labor market? What is the feedback from graduates of the study program 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?*

### 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.*

## Comments made by the External Evaluation Committee

**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.

## OUC Response

We are happy to see that the students who met with the EEC were very positive about the educational aspects of the programme, as well as their employability prospects and adequate use of the degree they have / they will receive. It is one of the key characteristics of this M.A. in "Communication and New Journalism" the fact that it puts theory into practice and that it provides forum for its students and graduates to advance further, beyond their studies, through internships, involvement in research

projects, and participation in local and international conferences in cooperation with the Advanced Media Institute, which is linked to the M.A. Programme.

Moreover, the fact that all students that met the Panel were happy with the academic and administrative support provided by Open University of Cyprus during their studies.

As far as the recommendation made by the EEC on data availability on student achievement and retention profiling, please note that all Tutors have access to the grades of their student cohorts, while the Academic Coordinator has an overall view of students' achievements. As far as retention profiling is concerned, please note that students' progress is closely monitored by all Tutors and if Tutors spot weaknesses or problematic situations, they refer the situation / the student to the Academic Coordinator for additional advice and support. Yet, as any other open and distance university, drop-out rates are not minimal, especially in the first semesters. As students progress, success and retention rates are increasing.

## 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 program.*  
\* 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 program 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?*

### 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.*

## Comments made by the External Evaluation Committee

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.

## OUC Response

As we explained in detail in section 1, we implemented the Committee's feedback with major reconstruction and enrichment of the bibliography on all the modules but in particular the modules that are credited with 15 ECTS.

It has been one of our major tasks during the revision. There is however, a major drawback namely that there is of course new literature coming out continually but as far as skills in journalism are concerned we do not always have an enormous choice if we want to choose the best and most comprehensive of literature. For example, the Data Journalism Handbook, a joint project of the European Journalism Centre and the Open Knowledge Foundation launched in 2011, remains to this day an excellent choice and is freely accessible on the internet, translated in Greek also. There was no way to go around that. In any case, mandatory and supplementary bibliography for all Thematic Units of the M.A. Programme is revised and updated, as deemed necessary, by the end of each academic year, following recommendations from the Tutors and in consultation with the Programme's Academic Coordinator.

This said, we tried to do our best updating everything that could be updated, including 2019 literature and at the same time expanding literature to meet the standards of 15 ECTS Modules. A representative example of this is in END613, Reporting without Frontiers where on one hand we kept the 5 original literature references (even though it dates from 1997, Carol Rich's book is one of the best) but on the other we incorporated no less than 13 new references dating from 2014 to 2020.

This has been an excellent exercise for us also in order to finally decide how to frame the knowledge we would like to pass to our students with the most suitable for this task educational resources available.

## 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 program compatible with distance learning delivery?*

- *How do the program, 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 program?*

### 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.*

## Comments made by the External Evaluation Committee

6.5 (4) The University did not show, even if envisaged, any information system to automatically monitor student performance, and the indications provided during the interviews to supervise the learning process 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 foreseen 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 e-Class 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 platform, 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 e-Class 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 dropout 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. 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 dropout issues while providing correction measures and automatic guiding (from intelligent tutoring systems) when required.

## OUC Response

As far as 6.9 and 6.20 goes, that concern bibliography, we did a major enrichment of the bibliographies of the 15 ECTS modules. Please refer to our previous responses.

As far as 6.17 goes, a clear formative feedback process from the tutor has been added to self-assessment activities in all study guides. Instructions are given to the tutors to provide feedback not only to the assignments but also to the self-assessments activities Please note that all Self-Assessment Exercises are mentioned in the Study Guides of all Modules, but only one was provided in English, as the newly proposed M.A. Programme will be offered in Greek. Moreover, all self-



assessment exercises will be available for students on the eLearning Platform of Open University of Cyprus. Furthermore, based on OUC Internal Regulations for Studies and Duties & Responsibilities of Adjunct Faculty, all Tutors need to provide students with detailed feedback on their written assignments, providing annotated word files, and not just merely grade students' assignments. As far as 6.5 quality criterion is concerned, and the Panel's recommendation for Learning Analytics to monitor students' progress, please note that academic monitoring of students' performance is the responsibility of all academics, including OUC Faculty and OUC Adjunct Faculty members. The University's eLearning Platform allows tutors to monitor and supervise students' learning process in a timely manner, through their participation in web lectures, the use of the forum, the self-assessment exercises provided, and the graded educational activities and written assignments that are submitted online and are marked and returned to students with detailed feedback from their Tutors. Learning Analytics are to some extent supported by the University's eLearning Platform, which is based on Moodle.

At this moment, Tutors and Academic Coordinators have access to various statistics and tools to support effective monitoring of the students' progress, such as statistics of the use of eClass by students (logins, time spend on the Platform, downloading and views of videos/telelectures), as well as alerts on submission of written assignments, self-assessment exercises, downloading of mandatory and elective bibliography, etc. Academic Coordinators also have access to these statistics, so as to safeguard high quality teaching and high quality support to all students. The University's Educational Material & Educational Methodology Lab, and the University's eClass team will also work to incorporate additional LA tools, such as to provide feedback to teaching staff on the effectiveness of their teaching practices and teaching plans and design.

Furthermore, literature in all modules has been balanced. In other words, same amount of learning load (literature, videos, interactive material) has been applied in all modules of 10 ECTS and same amount of learning load (literature, videos, interactive material) has been applied in all modules of 15 ECTS (please refer to the study guides).

## 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:*
  - *the stages of completion*
  - *the minimum and maximum time of completing the programme*
  - *the examinations*
  - *the procedures for supporting and accepting the student's proposal*
  - *the criteria for obtaining the Ph.D. degree*
- *Specific and clear guidelines for the writing of the proposal and the dissertation are set regarding:*
  - *the chapters that are contained*
  - *the system used for the presentation of each chapter, sub-chapters and bibliography*
  - *the minimum word limit*
  - *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:*
  - *regular meetings*
  - *reports per semester and feedback from supervisors*
  - *support for writing research papers*
  - *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?*

### 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.*

## 8. Additional for joint programmes (ALL ESG)

### Standards

- *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:*
  - *Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme*
  - *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*
  - *Admission and selection procedures for students*
  - *Mobility of students and teaching staff*
  - *Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures*
  - *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 program 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.*

### 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.*

## **D. Conclusions and final remarks**

*Summary of the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations for each assessment area. Please provide constructive conclusions and final remarks which may form the basis upon which improvements of the quality of the program of study under review may be achieved.*

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.

### **OUC Response**

We are grateful for the helpful feedback of the panel and for highlighting issues of improvement on which we worked thoroughly. We decided we wanted to work on both scores (3 and 4) since our responses here highlight how important your feedback was to the further improvement and

expansion of our programme and clarify some issues of disagreement. The new incarnation of the programme next year would provide even further to our students due to your suggestions.

To sum up, we strongly believe that the recommendations of the Committee were taken into consideration and we submit the revised Greek-taught existing postgraduate programme “Communication and New Journalism” to the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education to be approved. We look forward to a positive decision by CYQAA regarding the accreditation of a programme that is offered since the 2011-2012 academic year, which is now updated and revised to meet the needs of students and the relevant labour market, as per the recommendation of the EEC.

#### E. Higher Education Institution academic 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 Sofia Iordanidou	Academic Coordinator of the existing MA “Communication and New Journalism”	
Erato Ioanna Sarri	Coordinator of the University's Quality Assurance Office	

Date: ..... 16/03/2020 .....



NEW Programme's of Studies Structure M.A. COMMUNICATION AND NEW JOURNALISM						
Thematic Unit	Semester	Mandatory / Elective	Prerequisite T. U.	Co-requisite T. U.	Workload	
					Hours	ECTS
<b>COMMON TO ALL ACADEMIC DIRECTIONS</b>						
ENΔ511	1	Mandatory			250-300	10
ENΔ512	1	Mandatory			250-300	10
ENΔ513	1	Mandatory			250-300	10
ENΔ521	2	Mandatory	ENΔ511		250-300	10
ENΔ522	2	Mandatory	ENΔ512		250-300	10
ENΔ701A	3	Elective	ENΔ511, ENΔ512, ENΔ513		375-450	15
ENΔ701B	3	Elective	ENΔ511, ENΔ512, ENΔ513	ENΔ701A	375-450	15
<b>Direction: Communication</b>						
ENΔ523	2	Mandatory	ENΔ513		250-300	10
ENΔ611	3	Elective	ENΔ511, ENΔ512, ENΔ513, ENΔ521, ENΔ522, ENΔ523		375-450	15
ENΔ612	3	Elective	ENΔ511, ENΔ512, ENΔ513, ENΔ521, ENΔ522, ENΔ523	ENΔ611	375-450	15
<b>Direction: New Journalism</b>						
ENΔ524	2	Mandatory	ENΔ513		250-300	10
ENΔ613	3	Elective	ENΔ511, ENΔ512, ENΔ513, ENΔ521, ENΔ522, ENΔ524		375-450	15
ENΔ614	3	Elective	ENΔ511, ENΔ512, ENΔ513, ENΔ521, ENΔ522, ENΔ524	ENΔ613	375-450	15
<b>Total</b>					<b>2250-2700</b>	<b>90</b>