Doc. 300.3.1/1

Date: Date.

External Evaluation Report

(Programmatic within the framework of Departmental Evaluation)

- **Higher Education Institution:** EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY CYPRUS

- **Town:** NICOSIA

- **School/Faculty:** School of Humanities, Social & Education Sciences

- **Department:** Education Sciences

- **Programme(s) of study - Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**
Programme 1 – Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)
In Greek:
Νηπιαγωγικά (Πτυχίο)
In English:
 Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)
Language(s) of instruction: Greek

Programme 2 – Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences
In Greek:
Επιστήμες της Αγωγής (ΜΕΤΑΠΤΥΧΙΑΚΟ)
In English:
 Education Sciences (MA)
Language(s) of instruction: Greek & English

Programme 3 – Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy
In Greek:
Επιστήμες της Αγωγής (3 Έτη /180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy)
In English:
 Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS, Doctor of Philosophy
Language(s) of instruction: Greek & English

ΔΙΠΑΕ
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ΦΟΡΕΑΣ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΩΤΕΡΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ
CYPRUS AGENCY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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A.   Introduction

The EEC evaluation took part 16th and 17th November 2020 via digital zoom-meetings.

Because of the covid-19 pandemic the EEC performed the evaluation via digital zoom-meetings and based on written reports and digital visual materials of the premises provided by the Department of Education Sciences, in addition to digitally performed interviews with the staff and students. The EEC were not on site and cannot take responsibility beyond what was presented virtually.

The EEC would like to thank the leadership and academic staff at the University and the Quality Assurance Agency for timely arrangements of the visit via zoom-meetings. We also want to thank for informative, honest and reflective responses from all involved in relation to our inquiries.

B.   External Evaluation Committee (EEC)

Name	Position	University
Frances Press	Chair	Manchester Metropolitan University
Anne-Li Lindgren	Member	Stockholm University
Peter Van Petegem	Member	University of Antwerp
Evrydiki Kolokoudia	Member	University of Cyprus
Name	Position	University
Name	Position	University

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C.   Guidelines on content and structure of the report

1. Study programme and study programme's design and development
(ESG 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9)

Sub-areas

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

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

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*

1.2 Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review

Standards

- *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*
    - *is designed so that the exams' and assignments' content corresponds to the level of the programme and the number of ECTS*
    - *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*

1.3 Public information

Standards

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

1.4 Information management

Standards

- *Information for the effective management of the programme of study is collected, monitored and analysed:*
  - *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*

- *Students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.*

Findings

Findings for Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)

The Department has a clear quality assurance procedure and path for approval of changes for programmes. The PER-strategy ensures a 5-year cycle of programme review with input from external stakeholders, including industry. The PER-strategy ensures academic and collaborative staff, as well as students and external stakeholders, are involved in the design and development of the programme. In addition, regular programme committee meetings include issues of quality assurance. Minor changes in the programme, for instance in response to student feedback, are managed by the course coordinator in dialogue with the programme coordinator.

The programme is consistent with developments in society, particularly with regard to the labour market, digital technology and new perspectives on inclusive education (especially in relation to disability), in the school system. The porgramme's content and objectives align. The programme's leadership, coordinators, academic and collaborative staff have good knowledge of courses and required content. This supports coherence within the programme and also in relation to the postgraduate programmes (MA and PhD). There is open and ongoing communication among coordinators and teaching staff making the teaching staff aware of content and outputs of their colleagues work. Internal evaluation processes focused on developing the programme, as well as the PER-strategy, creates a formal framework minimizing the risk of overlaps.

The Department is responsive to the demands of the labour market. This attracts students and supports graduate employment. Students' employability is evaluated through the PER strategy. The graduates express positive outcomes both regarding their employment and regarding their continuation of studies (from BA-level to MA-level and from MA-level to PhD-level).

Student drop-outs are most common during the start of the programme (first or second semester), Causes of attrition include: that the programme did not meet the individual expectations of students; students could not meet the academic standards expected; and difficulties combining studies with paid work. In response, the Department supports student retention through the provision of academic student advisors and financial aid advisors, however this is not sufficient to prevent all attrition. The latest trend shows that the number of drop-outs has decreased at the same time as the student academic profiles have increased. For a BA student, the time of study to graduate is 4 years to 5.5 years.

Findings for Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences

The Findings (above) for the BA-programme also apply to the MA-programme.

On average, MA students study for 2 years before graduating. It is unclear how many students leave the programme before graduating. The reasons why they leave is also unclear.

Findings for Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy

The Findings (above) for the BA programme also apply to the Doctor of Philosophy.

On average, PhD students study for 4 to 5.5 years before graduating. Six (6) of 39 PhD students have dropped out, mainly due to health issues and/or being unable to combine education with paid work.

The Department is very well attuned to its need to comply with the demands of the labour market. Responsiveness to the labour market is a means of attracting students.

Strengths

Strengths for Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)
The BA in Early Childhood Education provides an excellent professional and academic experience that prepares students for real-life experience in the workplace. It combines disciplinary knowledge (for example education, music, art) with interdisciplinary approaches to methods of learning, as well as extensive practical experience. The use of the University's specialized Laboratories supports the teaching and development of interdisciplinary approaches.

The programme offers an opportunity for a significant boost in the students' work and teaching skills. Early childhood students are exposed to relevant knowledge with regard to content, qualitative and quantitative research methods, and a variety of teaching strategies. Students are provided with tools to evaluate and reflect upon their own teaching strategies. Students are provided with a solid understanding of the traditions and foundations of early childhood education as well as in-depth knowledge about contemporary challenges and trends in the early childhood field, such as inclusive education, STEAM-education, the importance of play and creativity, and the use of technology.

The BA in Early Childhood Education is an outstanding professional degree that should benefit the professional development of the students and their employability prospects.

Strengths for Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences
The Education Science MA is an outstanding degree that should benefit the professional development of the students as well as their employability prospects. The MA programme's stress on interdisciplinary as well as disciplinary knowledge and research approaches, provides an excellent experience that prepares students for real-life experience in the workplace as well as academic research. The use of the University's specialized laboratories enables interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches to be explored and advanced.

The programme is responsive to the demands of the education profession offering students opportunities to specialize. It provides students the option of graduating with a professional Masters (via coursework) or research oriented Masters (including a thesis). This flexibility is strength in as far as it provides students with options that are responsive to their needs and support their professional growth.

The programme offers an opportunity for a significant boost in the students' research and teaching skills. Education Science students are exposed to relevant and up to date knowledge with regard to content as well as both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Students are provided

with a solid understanding of the traditions and foundations of Education Science as well as in-depth knowledge about contemporary challenges and trends in the field, including inclusive education, STEAM-education, the importance of play and creativity, and the use of technology in early childhood education.

Specific courses designated to contemporary issues enables the MA programme to respond to current developments, new and developing research knowledge, and developments in research methods.

Strengths for Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy
The PhD programme contains the necessary courses to fully prepare candidates, including a further specialisation in qualitative and quantitative research methods. The programme is not overloaded with general 'classic' courses as these are limited to 30 ECTS. The remainder of the programme supports the PhD dissertation, including the preparation, submission and defence of the dissertation proposal, fieldwork and the writing process of the dissertation. The majority of time can be allocated to activities that are linked to the specificities of the research work for the dissertation.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)
Opportunities for student and teacher mobility could be enhanced by the introduction of more courses in English. We suggest a staged strategy. Currently the programme offers English option units. We suggest that this is extended by the introduction of one compulsory English course, and once established, the programme should aim for English courses for a full semester. The introduction of such a strategy should be informed by a SWOT analysis to identify obstacles and resources. This could be included as part of the PER-strategy already in place.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences
The concentration on Inclusive Education has a strong orientation in courses related to disability, however the objectives of the course encompass aspects such as culture, which are less strongly reflected. Given the research strengths of members of the Faculty, a focus upon a wider range of areas for inclusive education could be strengthened within the programme.

Reducing to three concentrations may reduce the teaching burden on staff and support innovations in the remaining programmes. We note, for instance, that the Department intends to offer students the opportunity to undertake an English version of each Masters concentration. This will take time and resources.

English versions of the MA would be attractive to international students and would also support outgoing student mobility. It would also encourage students to be familiar with a greater range of research, much of which is published in English peer reviewed journals. Please also refer to areas of improvement about teaching staff below.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy

The EEC recommend that the programme take measures to increase contact with (English speaking) international research (see area 6 below). See also areas of improvement about teaching staff (area 3) below.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant		
		Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)	Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences	Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy
1.1	Policy for quality assurance	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
1.2	Design, approval, on-going monitoring and review	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
1.3	Public information	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
1.4	Information management	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant

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2. Student – centred learning, teaching and assessment *(ESG 1.3)*

Sub-areas

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

2.1 Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology

Standards

- *The process of teaching and learning supports students' individual and social development.*
- *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.*
- *Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship is promoted.*
- *The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths.*
- *Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints regarding the process of teaching and learning are set.*
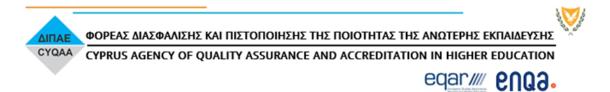
2.2 Practical training

Standards

- *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.*

2.3 Student assessment

Standards

- *Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.*
- *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.*
- *A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*
- *Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.*
- *The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.*

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Findings

Findings for Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)
The department has a formalized and systematic process for input from students. Students have the opportunity to be involved in the development of the content of their studies via regularly performed evaluations and individual feedback to teachers. The level of engagement from the students could, however, be higher. The latest student evaluation had a response rate of 65%, a reasonably high score, which could be extended. Special measures regarding plagiarism, ethics, tolerance, discrimination, conduct are part of the Department's documented strategy. Students have to comply with ethical standards before entering their school experience. There is a formal procedure for how to handle difficult (unethical) situations that might occur and this is clearly communicated to the students. The results of student feedback has been analysed and taken into account in course design and content and in the formalised strategy for Faculty Professional Development (including full-time staff and collaborators on lease).

There is a special focus on staff development regarding the use of digital technology in teaching.

Information related to the programme is publicly available. There are well defined objectives in the programme courses and there are stipulated pass rates. Given the syllabi and course descriptions (including assignments, examinations, learning outcomes and course literature) the workload seems to be in accordance with the ECTS. There are a variety of assessment methods that enable students to engage with and practice diverse skills and meet varying challenges. The learner's general competencies are supported by various forms of written and oral examinations and assignments. These include individual and group work. In order to ensure interconnections between theories and practice the syllabus comprises both academic courses and practice courses (school experience 1-3). There are also assignments and examinations in the academic courses where students are required to use their experience from practice in order to connect theory with practice. The assignments and examinations are combined with clear assessment criteria for practical training. In addition, the academic teachers provide support adjusted to students' individual abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities. This is true for both academic courses and practical training. Student progress is closely monitored and students get supportive feedback throughout their studies. Students are encouraged to become research assistants and thereby become actively involved in research. In fact, there is an atmosphere of respect in the student-teacher relationship that opts for student centered learning and education.

Laboratories and technical equipment are utilised in research and education, including assignments which enables students to develop and enhance digital skills. Staff use new technology to make the teaching more effective.

It is unclear how skills in foreign language are supported. There are opportunities for Greek students to participate but not for students who are not proficient in Greek.

The Department/Programme coordinator receives suggestions from the Ministry of Education about the schools they should collaborate with. They are mainly collaborating with public schools. Academic staff pay regular visits to the schools where the students have their practical training.

The committee did not see samples of student's assessments. We are unable to comment on whether assessments correspond to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), mainly since we lack sufficient information.

Findings for Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences
The Findings (above) for the BA programme also apply to the MA programme.

The MA programme currently provides one course in English which appears to be successful in attracting students.

In the MA programme the student can choose to take courses or write a thesis. The motivation for making the thesis optional is to attract students interested in professional development rather than furthering an academic career. This is both a strength and a weakness. As previously noted, this provides students with a choice about what type of study is most appropriate in their current circumstance. However, from an international and European mobility perspective, it may also restrict the student's career opportunities.

Findings for Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy
The Findings (above) for the BA-programme also apply to the Education Science PhD-programme.

There is no PhD-programme course provided for international students who do not speak Greek (English speaking).

Strengths

Strengths for Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)
In the section for findings above several strengths are listed: student-centered learning; respectful teacher-students relations; the integration of theory and practice through practical training in schools and use of the different laboratories at the university; and the use of new digital technologies.

Strengths for Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences
In the section of findings above several strengths are listed that apply also to the MA programme.

Strengths for Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy
In addition to the strengths listed above the PhD-programme has a firm structure for supervision, assignments, examination and assessments.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)
We suggest the BA programme enhance the opportunities for international students to participate and hence increase opportunities for student mobility (in relation to both incoming and outgoing students), through the staged introduction of more subjects and courses in English.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences

Reduce the four concentrations to three concentrations. As previously stated, reducing to three concentrations may reduce the teaching burden on staff and support innovations in the remaining programmes, for example extending offerings in English. The EEC suggests that if the Departments pursues this option the following factors could be considered: 1) ensuring that staff research profiles sufficiently match and support the Masters offerings; 2) student enrolments; and 3) attractiveness to international as well as domestic markets.

Develop compulsory courses in English.

Communications regarding the MA programme need to ensure that a clear distinction is made between the more research-oriented track (including the writing of a Masters thesis) or the content-oriented track (with extra elective courses from the concentration, or alternatively electives from another concentration) and that students are fully informed of the consequences of their choices.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy

The EEC recommend that the program take measures to increase the contact with (English speaking) international research (see section 6 below).

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant		
		Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)	_Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences_	_Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy_
2.1	Process of teaching and learning and student-centred teaching methodology	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
2.2	Practical training	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
2.3	Student assessment	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant

3. Teaching staff *(ESG 1.5)*

Sub-areas

    3.1. Teaching staff recruitment and development
    3.2. Teaching staff number and status
    3.3. Synergies of teaching and research

3.1. Teaching staff recruitment and development

Standards

- *Institutions ensure the competence of their teaching staff.*
- *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 is regularly engaged in professional and teaching-skills training and development.*
- *Promotion of the teaching staff takes into account the quality of their teaching, their research activity, the development of their teaching skills and their mobility.*
- *Innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies is encouraged.*
- *Conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching are followed.*
- *Recognised visiting teaching staff participates in teaching the study programme.*

3.2. Teaching staff number and status

Standards

- *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to support the programme of study.*
- *The teaching staff status (rank, full/part time) is appropriate to offer a quality programme of study.*
- *Visiting staff number does not exceed the number of the permanent staff.*

3.3. Synergies of teaching and research

Standards

- *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).*
- *Scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research is encouraged.*
- *The teaching staff publications are within the discipline.*

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> - *Teaching staff studies and publications are closely related to the programme's courses.*
> - *The allocation of teaching hours compared to the time for research activity is appropriate.*

Findings

Findings for Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)

The teachers in the programme are included in the Faculty Professional Development Programme with resources allocated for furthering teacher competence. There is also a strong orientation scheme for new teachers. Faculty Professional Development includes full-time academic staff and scientific collaborators on lease. The programme includes annual follow-ups about individual teacher's teaching skills, requirements for further education and other possible improvements. There is also a goal set for 2023 about furthering all staff's digital teaching. Student evaluation of teaching occurs every semester. However, it is unclear how the evaluations are considered in the Professional Development Programme.

A strategy has been implemented to enable those teaching on the programme to engage more fully with research. Overall, staff seem to find the strategy transparent and fair. If more teaching is needed more scientific collaborators are contracted.

The full-time staff are involved in research relevant to the teaching they perform. Staff regularly publish in national and international journals, reports and attend conferences. They are also successful in attracting external funding for developing research and teaching. The Department involves collaborating teachers from other Departments in Cyprus and abroad. It has recently launched a programme for visiting professors, mainly from abroad (due to covid-19 this has not yet resulted in any visits).

There are eleven (11) full-time academic staff in the Department and approximately thirty seven (37) scientific collaborators (special scientists on lease) (this varies depending on when in a semester and the workload for the full-time academic staff). In addition, teachers from other departments contribute to teaching where applicable. A majority of the full-time teachers have a PhD degree. Full professors have the least time for teaching and research since the administrative tasks take a good deal of time. Associate professors and assistant professors are assigned relatively more teaching and research.

Findings for Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences

The Findings for the Early Childhood Education programme (above) also apply to the Education Science programme.

Findings for Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy

The Findings for the Early Childhood Education programme (above) also apply to the PhD programme.

Strengths

Strengths for Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)
In the findings section (above) several strengths are listed: a mechanism for keeping track of teacher's time for teaching and research, which also serves to secure the quality of the teachers research (publishing and apply for external funding) and teaching alike; and funding for further development of teaching skills (both individual and general needs are taken into account). The system is transparent and expectations are communicated with the teachers. In addition, the teaching staff appear to be collaborative and jointly focused on the quality of teaching.

Strengths for Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences
In the section of findings above several strengths are listed that apply also to the MA.

Strengths for Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy
In the section of findings above several strengths are listed that apply also to the PhD.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)
The EEC has suggested an improved international profile, through implementing courses in English that can attract international students and improve student mobility. The academic full-time staff appear to have the experience and competence to do this. An issue may be a lack of time. A suggestion from the EEC is that more full-time academic staff are appointed, or scientific collaborators are leased, in order to make time for the experienced academic staff to work toward this development.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences
The EEC has the same suggestion for the MA programme as for the BA programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy
The EEC has the same suggestion for the PhD-programme as for the MA and BA programme.

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

Sub-area	Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant		
	Early Childhood Education	Education Sciences (18	Education Sciences (3 Years /180

		(4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)	*months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences*	*ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy*
3.1	Teaching staff recruitment and development	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
3.2	Teaching staff number and status	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
3.3	Synergies of teaching and research	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant

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

Sub-areas

> **4.1. Student admission, processes and criteria**
> **4.2. Student progression**
> **4.3. Student recognition**
> **4.4. Student certification**

4.1 Student admission, processes and criteria

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student admission are in place.*
- *Access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner.*

4.2 Student progression

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student progression are in place.*
- *Processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression, are in place.*

4.3 Student recognition

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student recognition are in place.*
- *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.*
- *Appropriate recognition procedures are in place that rely on:*
    - *institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention*
    - *cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

4.4 Student certification

Standards

- *Pre-defined and published regulations regarding student certification are in place.*
- *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.*

Findings

Findings for Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)
The admission requirements for this programme are appropriate: the applicants must have completed secondary school education. In case that the applicant already holds a BA-degree, previous courses can be recognized if they show parity with the courses of the undergraduate program, up to ½ of the total credits of the program.

It is unclear whether a procedure for the recognition for work experience is in place as an alternative for the transfer of ECTS points.

Findings for Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences
The admission requirements for this programme are appropriate: the applicants must have completed a recognized BA degree or its equivalent. Proficiency in English must be proved by means of evidence that undergraduate instruction and coursework has been done on English, TOEFL results with > 550 points (or 213 for computer-based testing), or a IELTS of 6.5 of English GCSE O level with a score C or above.

Credits can be transferred up to 30 ECTS.

Staff report that work experience is taken into account, however, it is unclear whether *a procedure* for the recognition for work experience is at place.

Findings for Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy
Three criteria for student admission are formulated, including qualifications relevant to the program (e.g. prior research experience and academic publications), a strong academic background and excellent knowledge of the language in which the program is offered. The PhD program is only offered in Greek, which means that the candidates must have excellent knowledge of Greek (next to a second language, e.g. English). The latter criterion is in contrast with the ambition of the department to increase their international profile (see also below, area 6).

Strengths

Strengths for Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)
The programme enables the provision of individual support, close monitoring of the student's progress and frequent advising meeting between the students and the program coordinators

There are opportunities for financial support for students through various schemes and their employment in running research projects.

Strengths for Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences
The programme foresees the provision of individual support, close monitoring of students' progress and frequent advising meetings between the students and the program coordinators. There are opportunities for financial support for students through various schemes their employment in running research projects.

Strengths for Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy
The programme foresees the provision of individual support, close monitoring of the students' progress and frequent advising meetings between the students and the program coordinators. There are opportunities for financial support for students through their employment in running research projects.

Scholarships are offered for doctoral students through teacher organisations.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)
Develop a procedure to recognize competencies that students have acquired elsewhere, e.g. in non-formal education settings and in the labour market.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences
Develop a procedure to recognize competencies that students have acquired elsewhere, e.g. in non-formal education settings and in labour market.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy
See below, area 6.

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

Sub-area	**Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant**		
	Early Childhood Education (4	*Education Sciences (18 months/90*	*Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30,*

		Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)	ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences	Doctor of Philosophy
4.1	Student admission, processes and criteria	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
4.2	Student progression	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
4.3	Student recognition	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
4.4	Student certification	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant

5. Learning resources and student support *(ESG 1.6)*

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **5.1. Teaching and Learning resources**
> **5.2. Physical resources**
> **5.3. Human support resources**
> **5.4. Student support**

5.1 Teaching and Learning resources

Standards

- *Adequate and readily accessible teaching and learning resources (teaching and learning environments, materials, aids and equipment) are provided to students and support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.*
- *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- *All resources are fit for purpose.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources.*

5.2 Physical resources

Standards

- *Physical resources, i.e. premises, libraries, study facilities, IT infrastructure, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *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.*

5.3 Human support resources

Standards

- *Human support resources, i.e. tutors/mentors, counsellors, other advisers, qualified administrative staff, are adequate to support the study programme.*
- *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.*

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5.4 Student support

Standards

- *Student support is provided covering the needs of a diverse student population, such as mature, part-time, employed and international students and students with special needs.*
- *Students are informed about the services available to them.*
- *Student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing student support.*
- *Students' mobility within and across higher education systems is encouraged and supported.*

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Findings

Findings for Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)
Due to the online format of the review, without a physical visit on campus, the EEC is limited in its capacity to evaluate the teaching and learning resources and the physical resources. The committee was given access to promotional videos which showcase the university facilities, including labs and classrooms, but this is not the same as a physical visit.

During the meetings with the staff or the students, no problems or complaints were expressed in general regarding these standards. On the contrary, the staff were proud of the available equipment. Students have access to the labs for their coursework, which are located in the same building as where their teaching takes place.

It was reported that some students experience difficulties obtaining digital access to the library facilities, despite the efforts from the library staff. It seems that (some of) the students are not familiar with VPN to access the library from home. Given the current pandemic this should be further addressed, given the dependency of the students on the access of online material is a substantial contemporary requirement.

No data were available as to the extent students from the programmes under review make use of the library services for the courses offered in this Department. There is no specialisation in the library staff in relation to the different fields of study at the university.

An orientation programme is provided to allow new students to improve their study skills. Students can rely on a personal support and advice from the Student Advising Centre. Administrative staff seem competent to provide student support.

The ECE simulation lab seems to be a promising learning environment for the students. This lab is not only used for micro teaching lessons or as a demonstration site, but also allows students to develop and critically reflect on the constructions of adequate corners as learning environments in ECE.

The university as a Microsoft Innovation Centre but it is not clear whether this is used for activities related to the programs under review.

At the level of the university, a career centre concentrates on providing links with the labour market, that leads to an employment rate of 87% of the students, six months after their graduation.

It is interesting to notice that there are a number of means the students can obtain financial support.

Findings for Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences
See Above.

Findings for Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy
See above.

Strengths

Strengths for Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)
All labs for the programme are within the same premises with easy access for the students during their courses. All labs have been renovated during the past ten years. Next to the education activities for the students, the labs are also used for events for a broader audience from the society.

The ECE simulation lab seems to be a promising learning environment for the students. This lab is not only used for micro teaching lessons or as a demonstration site, but also allows students to develop and critically reflect on the constructions of adequate corners as learning environments in ECE.

Student supporting services are in place and seem to function adequately.

Strengths for Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences
See above.

Strengths for Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy
See above.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)
Ensure students have easy access to the digital resources of the library (and other learning environments). The information seems to be available but for one reason or another this does not reach all students in ways that ensure their access.

More detailed user information on the library services and how they are used could inform and deliver evidence, relevant to the further development of the library policies.

Although the library team is small, it might be useful for specific members of the team to be given remits to support particular Departments. This suggestion is not to override shared responsibility for the overall functions of the library, but to link staff to Departments in ways they can monitor and support the best use of resources appropriate to programmes.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences
The Findings for the Early Childhood Education programme (above) also apply to the Education Science programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations for Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy
The Findings for the Early Childhood Education programme (above) also apply to the PhD programme.

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

Sub-area		Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant		
		Early Childhood Education (4 Years/240 ECTS, 8/30, Bachelor of Arts)	*Education Sciences (18 months/90 ECTS, 3/30, Master of Arts in Education Sciences*	*Education Sciences (3 Years /180 ECTS,6/30, Doctor of Philosophy*
5.1	Teaching and Learning resources	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
5.2	Physical resources	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
5.3	Human support resources	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
5.4	Student support	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant

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6. Additional for doctoral programmes *(ALL ESG)*

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **6.1. Selection criteria and requirements**
> **6.2. Proposal and dissertation**
> **6.3. Supervision and committees**

6.1 Selection criteria and requirements

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*

6.2 Proposal and dissertation

Standards

- *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 process of submitting the dissertation to the university library is set.*

6.3 Supervision and committees

Standards

- *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.*

Findings

A requirement for PhD candidates is that they must have excellent knowledge of Greek. Currently, the program is only taught in Greek (in contrast to the MA programme where courses are moving to an English offering). This limits the influx of international students and the international research culture of the programme.

This contradicts the Department's desire to make their programmes more international (other schools from the European University offer their courses in English and they succeed to attract international students). Courses taught in English, would attract students from abroad, and increase in the Greek speaking students' proficiency level in English. PhD students could improve their speaking and presentation skills in English during their courses in preparation of the participation to international conferences.

At the moment, the programme only invites speakers from abroad occasionally. In order to foster internationalisation and to enlarge the critical mass, collaborations could be sought with other universities, e.g., from the Utrecht Network, in which the EUC participates. Exchanges can be promoted. This could even lead to joint PhD programmes which would fully embed the PhD programme in the international research community.

Currently the dissertation can only be written in Greek, which seriously limits its international outreach. A strong stimulus to write the thesis in English should be considered.

If the candidate is a holder of only a BA degree, (s)he has to attend 60 ECTS courses at MA-level. Once these are successfully completed, the student can attend the PhD programme. There are no specific regulations to recognize competencies students acquire from the labour market. This could have a stimulating effect for some profiles.

The current format of the dissertation is a monograph. There is no provision for a compilation dissertation/thesis by publication (a dissertation based on articles that the candidate has submitted/published to an international journal). The EEC considers that this limits the doctoral students in at least three ways: 1) extra time is needed to write journal articles on top of their monograph in order for students to develop an academic track record; 2) access to students' work from the international community is limited; 3) students' opportunities to get a position as a postdoc in the international research community are limited.

The programme foresees the support for students to develop their teaching skills. Though not always immediately relevant for the research, this focus broadens the set of competencies of PhD candidates and can be an advantage in their future career. There is no formalised attention to the preparation of the candidates in their transition to the labour market.

The standard duration and theoretical length of the program is three years (180 ECTS), but in practice nobody succeeds to complete the program within this timeframe. The students are informed about maximum duration (6 years + 2 years in certain circumstances) and their progress is monitored.

There is no time allocated to supervisors to guide their doctoral students, but the supervisors receive a financial stimulus.

There is no policy regarding authorship of publications based on the work of the PhD students. Guidelines or principles would benefit both the doctoral students and their supervisors and prevent disputes and unethical behaviour. We concur with the view that not everything can be translated into rules, but the formulation of a number of guiding principles would be helpful. These guidelines could be included in the framework regarding research ethics and scientific integrity.

The documentation nor the presentation regarding the PhD-programme, referred to the Centre of Excellence in Research & Innovation in the Social Sciences, the Arts and the Humanities. This Centre of Excellence might hold opportunities for doctoral students that could be utilised in the future.

The students expressed a desire to establish a strong(er) community and network of PhD students to share experiences regarding research methodologies, statistical packages, the publication process and so on.

Strengths

With regard to the standards, all formal requirements seem to be fulfilled.

It is positive that the programme pays attention to skills that broadens the students' competencies, e.g. to develop teaching skills for tertiary education and communication skills.

Areas of improvement and recommendations
English is the lingua franca of the international research community. To foster the internationalisation of the research community (more specifically for the PhD students) English should become the standard for the courses taught during the PhD programme and the requirement for candidates to master Greek at mother tongue level should be reconsidered. PhD students should be *stimulated* (if not obliged) to write their work in English. The international outreach of the students' work (and the work of the department) is limited when Greek is chosen as language of written and oral communication. International exchange (both incoming and outgoing) should become the standard at this level of studies, both for students and supervisors. Utilisation of (existing) international networks can support this suggestion (e.g. the Utrecht Network).

Consider the establishment of a policy to recognize competencies that are acquired in non-formal contexts (e.g. the labour market) before students enter the PhD programme, also for students that only hold a BA degree.

Make it possible for students to choose to submit a dissertation as a monograph OR a compilation/thesis by publication (submitted/published journal articles connected through an exigesis). This practice would increase the visibility of the students' work for the international research community at an earlier stage of their career. Guidelines can be developed regarding the standards required for each option and the Department can look to the practises of other universities. Of course, the final approval of the students' work remains in the hands of the adjudication committee.

During the panel meeting, the supervisors made clear that there are monthly meetings with the PhD-students. However, time for supervision is not formally provided for supervisors. This might lead to time being weighted toward competing activities and not to the supervision of the students - a danger that should be avoided. Therefore, the EEC suggest that measures may be necessary to further guarantee an adequate supervision process.

We propose that the Department develop a policy or guidelines regarding authorship of the students' work. This could be included in the research ethics framework. The Department could seek examples from other universities, or published guidance such as the Vancouver Protocol.

Develop a strong(er) community and network of PhD students to share their experiences regarding amongst others research methodologies, statistical packages, and the publication process.

The Centre of Excellence in Research & Innovation in the Social Sciences, the Arts and the Humanities seems to cover many opportunities to establish a strong research culture and expertise sharing. The EEC suggests that the group of supervisors reflect on these opportunities and use these as much as possible, to foster the research community of PhD students.

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

Sub-areas		*Non-compliant/ Partially Compliant/Compliant*
6.1	Selection criteria and requirements	Compliant
6.2	Proposal and dissertation	Compliant
6.3	Supervision and committees	Compliant

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D.   Conclusions and final remarks

It is the EEC's conclusion that all the programs evaluated are of very good quality providing adequate academic and professional training with an interdisciplinary approach. They meet the formal criteria and in several aspects exceed them.

The suggestions for improvement mainly concern the issue of internationalisation: to create courses in English to increase the possibilities for teacher and student mobility (incoming and outgoing). The EEC recommends that all programmes provide at least one comprehensive course in English, followed at a later stage by a full semester of English courses for each programme. For the PhD-programme the EEC have suggested several steps that can be taken to increase the international profile in addition to providing English courses (see suggestions in section 6 above).

According to the EEC, the academic staff have the experience and expertise to implement such a shift towards increased internationalisation. The Faculty Professional Development program could also support such a shift.

The EEC also suggest that the four concentrations in the MA program could be reduced to three. This would make the program more focused in addition to creating some space in the teachers' schedules to engage in English courses.

As mentioned above, there is no policy regarding authorship of publications based on the work of the PhD students. Guidelines or principles would benefit both the doctoral students and their supervisors and prevent disputes or unethical behaviour. These guidelines could be included in the framework regarding research ethics and scientific integrity.

As mentioned above, make it possible for students to choose to submit a dissertation as a monograph OR a compilation/thesis by publication (published journal articles connected through an exigesis). This practice would increase the visibility of the students' work for the international research community at an earlier stage of their career. Guidelines can be developed regarding the standards required for each option and the Department can look to the practises of other universities. Of course, the final approval of the students' work remains in the hands of the adjudication committee.

Finally, the EEC would like to thank the Departmental staff for their presentations and thoughtful and open engagement with our observations and questions.

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E.   Signatures of the EEC

Name	Signature
Frances Press	
Anne-Li Lindgren	
Peter Van Petegem	
Evrydiki Kolokoudia	
Click to enter Name	
Click to enter Name	

Date: November 20th, 2020