Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 08 June 2021

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
  University of Nicosia

- **Town:** Nicosia

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

  In Greek:

  Πληροφορική (3 χρόνια, 180 ECTS, Διδακτορικό)

  In English:

  Computer Science (3 years, 180 ECTS, Doctor of

  Philosophy)

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

- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating

- **Concentrations (if any):**

  In Greek: Concentrations
  In English: Concentrations

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.*

- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, <u>without changing the format of the report</u>:*

    - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
    - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*

- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1 or 300.1.1/2 or 300.1.1/3 or 300.1.1/4).*

- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

INTRODUCTION

We would like to thank the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for their professional and thorough work during the online evaluation of the PhD in Computer Science programme on April 8-9, 2021. We would also like to express our appreciation for the collegial and constructive approach with which they conducted their evaluation.

We would like to note that the report of the committee is ***extremely positive*** with 17 out of 18 quality indicators receiving the rating of "Compliant" (amongst the choices of: Compliant/partially compliant/non-compliant) and one indicator receiving the rating of "partially-compliant".

We welcome the EEC's positive evaluation of our PhD Computer Science programme and the final conclusion which states: ***"Based on the examination and evaluation of the accreditation materials and the remote site visit, the EEC concludes that the required standards are met."***

In the following sections we break down the comments and suggestions of the committee that were made, and we then provide our response regarding the actions taken to address these comments.

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

We appreciate the EEC's assessment of **each quality indicator/criterion** in this area **as "Compliant"** (amongst the choices of: Compliant/partially compliant/non-compliant).

Positive comments made by the EEC:

- *"The study programs are given mostly by permanent personnel and only a few non-permanent teachers support the programmes. All faculty members hold doctoral degrees in the modules they teach."*

- *"The university has a clear process for career advancement through ranking/promotion committees. Pedagogical training and support is available for staff members."*

- *"The university and department have active student performance and wellbeing monitoring and supportive services available. Students' progress given the learning outcomes is continuously monitored with different instruments, such as exams, quizzes, tests, projects, case studies. Students receive proactive and constructive feedback on their progress."*

- *"The Department advocates connecting research activities and findings with education. Students are reported to be active in research projects resulting in articles co-authored with students."*

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD

1.1: *"The PhD program is small and it is highly recommended to increase the number of PhD students for building momentum."*

Response/Action: The program currently hosts eight (8) students plus one student who is accepted but for medical reasons he has not registered yet. One student already presented his viva in March 2021 and at the time of writing he has obtained his PhD degree. The Department is already implementing its vision to attract more students by

employing effective processes for attracting potential candidates. Such processes include the provision of incentives to MSc students so that they follow the research route. The latter encompasses monthly/bi-monthly events and demonstrations of research achievements where current research students provide, in the form of tutorials, their findings. Additionally, we recently established the "Research Student Showcase" (sponsored by the IEEE ComSoc and IEEE Computer Society C16/Region 8) event which provides an opportunity for research students to share their research findings with the public and the wider audience (local students' community), offering a chance to attract the interest of a wider community of postgraduate students for our program. Moreover, we have already initiated a discussion with social partners locally and abroad as well as with research projects' partners, for establishing partially or fully funded by industry PhD placements. Our wide collaboration circle allows to "head-hunt" locally and abroad and organize open days for research towards this direction. Towards the goal of increasing the number of PhD students, we have increased our call for PhD applications to twice a year, adhering to high standards in students' selection, with a yearly acceptance rate of less than 10%.

1.2: *"The PhD program can be supported by encouraging faculty members to acquire externally funded research projects and activities."*

Response/Action: Faculty members of our Department attracted prestigious research high impact projects with total budget 32.5M Euro since 2016 from different funding sources. It is worthy to mention that there are weekly seminars organised by the Office of the Vice Rector for Faculty & Research (VRFR) for providing guidelines on writing research proposals as well as seminars organised by the Research and Innovation Office of the University targeting less experienced faculty. It is indicative that our faculty in Computer Science Department submitted 67 research proposals during the years 2018-2020.

1.3: *"It is also encouraged to connect PhD students with educational activities, for example as Teaching Assistants on courses."*

Response/Action: It is important to mention that four out of eight students (4/8) are currently working in research projects either in part-time or in full time mode. All above cases are financially supported by currently running research EU projects, where students gain applied research experience with their active participation in project's activities. Additionally, students are strongly involved into the respective laboratories' activities by offering lab sessions to undergraduate or MSc students. Moreover, PhD students are gaining teaching experience (through Teaching Assistantships) and are actively involved in the educational process as all PhD students are invited as speakers into specific lectures/classes to present their findings/cutting-edge architectures and technologies. Additionally, PhD students offer laboratory tutorials and assistance to undergraduate and graduate students and convey their experience in their respective fields.

1.4: *"We recommend developing a visiting professor program for supporting renewal in the research environment. This instrument could support both incoming and outgoing academic visitors who would then participate in research and teaching activities."*

Response/Action: We would like to note that the program currently hosts 5 Adjunct members (external co-supervisors) from other Universities locally and abroad (from three different countries) experts in their respective domains. There is a clear process for Visiting Professors positions at a University level indicated in the University Charter (Chapter 4, Section 4.8 (d) which can be accessed at https://www.unic.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/charter_june_2015_1.pdf).

1.5: *"A formal internal progress monitoring and assessment process involving academic members not in the supervisory team can be considered to add more robustness to the programme."*

Response/Action: There is an established processes of assessing per semester (DSO/4 form) and every academic year (DSO/5 form) the progress of each PhD student and monitoring their progress. The latter is clearly indicated in the University published guidelines "Roles and Responsibilities of PhD Coordinators /Directors and Supervisors" in section 2.1.1-2.2.1 /pages 3-4. The involvement of academic members who are not in the supervisory team for yearly monitoring PhD students is not in line with the University Doctoral Degree regulations. An integral part for the final assessment of a PhD (final oral examination (viva) for assessing both the written submission and the candidate) is the participation of an external examiner from another University/Research Institution who is invited for this purpose.

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

We appreciate the EEC's assessment of **each quality indicator/criterion** in this area **as "Compliant"** (amongst the choices of: Compliant/partially compliant/non-compliant).

Strengths for PhD / comments made by the EEC:

- *"Students are offered continuous support from academic advisors and counsellors."*

- *"Student and graduate feedback is generally very positive. Academic staff are always available to support the students for specific matters related to the courses and for any matter in general."*

- *"There is evidence of the general high quality of T&L activities and of a friendly environment that facilitates a positive student engagement."*

- *"Overall there is evidence of an excellent job prospect for graduates. The program clearly meet the most important requirements to ensure excellent employability of the graduates."*

- *"The number of students per course is capped to ensure high quality T&L and student experience."*

- *"The department supports co-production of knowledge and the relationship between research and teaching."*

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD

2.1 *"Student feedback needs to be analysed more systematically and a general response should be offered back to the students in terms of a general summary and the plan of action to make improvements."*

Response/Action: Student feedback is highly valued within the department and there are multiple ways by which this is taken into account. More specifically, there are the following official ways by which student feedback is recorded, analysed and offered back to students:

a) The Department of Computer Science Council has three elected student representatives who bring student feedback to the department council meetings and where decisions/plans of actions are taken based on this feedback.

b) The three Department Council student representatives are also chairing the Department's "Student Wellness Committee" which is responsible for providing feedback to the curriculum and liaising with the rest of the students.

c) There is one student member in the Internal Team of Reviewers who evaluate the program 2 years after its accreditation, as per the University regulations regarding the Internal Program Evaluation Process (IPEP).

d) There is one student representative who is a member of the Department Quality Assurance Committee.

e) The Computer Science Department and the Departmental Postgraduate Programs Committee (DPPC) hold every semester Board of Studies meetings where all Department of Computer Science PhD students are invited to attend and to provide feedback to faculty as well as to raise any concerns regarding their programs of study.

Strengths for PhD / comments made by the EEC:

- *"Students are offered continuous support from academic advisors and counsellors."*

- *"Student and graduate feedback is generally very positive. Academic staff are always available to support the students for specific matters related to the courses and for any matter in general."*

- *"There is evidence of the general high quality of T&L activities and of a friendly environment that facilitates a positive student engagement."*

- *"Overall there is evidence of an excellent job prospect for graduates. The program clearly meet the most important requirements to ensure excellent employability of the graduates."*

- *"The number of students per course is capped to ensure high quality T&L and student experience."*

- *"The department supports co-production of knowledge and the relationship between research and teaching."*

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD

2.1 *"Student feedback needs to be analysed more systematically and a general response should be offered back to the students in terms of a general summary and the plan of action to make improvements."*

Response/Action: Student feedback is highly valued within the department and there are multiple ways by which this is taken into account. More specifically, there are the following official ways by which student feedback is recorded, analysed and offered back to students:

a) The Department of Computer Science Council has three elected student representatives who bring student feedback to the department council meetings and where decisions/plans of actions are taken based on this feedback.

b) The three Department Council student representatives are also chairing the Department's "Student Wellness Committee" which is responsible for providing feedback to the curriculum and liaising with the rest of the students.

c) There is one student member in the Internal Team of Reviewers who evaluate the program 2 years after its accreditation, as per the University regulations regarding the Internal Program Evaluation Process (IPEP).

d) There is one student representative who is a member of the Department Quality Assurance Committee.

ΔΙΠΑΕ
CYQAA

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

eqar//// enqa.

e) The Computer Science Department holds every semester Board of Studies meetings where all Department of Computer Science PhD students are invited to provide feedback to faculty and raise any concerns regarding their programs of study.

2.2 *"The department offers a non mandatory orientation week and following the meeting with the students the EEC has found that not all students were aware of the formal complaints and appeals procedure reflecting the need for improved communication with concerns students better communication is required to ensure students are aware of the policies i.e. complaints and appeals process some courses can be improved."*

Response/Action: The Department provides multiple ways by which the students become aware of the policies, including the complains and appeals process as follows:

1) Each student can access online the PhD Student Handbook which contains all the relevant information along with the regulations and procedures related to the PhD in Computer Science program.

2) Each student has access to the Academic Policies booklet, which is available online and introduced to the student in the Student Handbook described above.

3) There is a demo presentation, organized by the Chair of the Departmental Postgraduate Programs Committee (DPPC) during their admission to the program, for the "Lifecycle of a PhD" where PhD students are invited to attend and be informed of the formal procedures that are followed during a PhD.

4) In addition, the Department organizes every semester Board of Studies meetings where students are given the opportunity to raise concerns and discuss with their faculty.

5) Finally, the Department Head and the Chair of the Departmental Postgraduate Programs Committee (DPPC) provide all the necessary advice to students, describing the policies and regulations and guiding them in case of complaints and appeals.

We will continue to use all these multiple ways to keep our students informed and aware of the relevant policies.

3. **Teaching staff**
(ESG 1.5)

We appreciate the EEC's assessment with 2 out of 3 quality indicators/criteria in this area as **"Compliant" (amongst the choices of: Compliant/partially compliant/non-compliant).** The "partially compliant" assessment of criterion "3.1 Teaching staff recruitment and development" is clarified in this section (3.1).

Strengths for PhD/positive comments made by the EEC:

- *"The recruitment and selection procedure has been described in a robust manner and it is fair and clear."*

- *"There are clear criteria for different teaching ranks (professor, associate professor etc) and clear guidelines for progression and promotion."*

- *"The CVs of existing staff demonstrate very good evidence of appointed academic staff having prior and relevant teaching and research experience in higher education institutions and are members of professional organizations."*

- *"Research expertise and publication records are relevant and consistent to the programmes of study."*

- *"As a whole the teaching staff is highly commended by the students."*

- *"There are 8 PhD students having great support from their supervisory teams. Students commented highly of the networking opportunities."*

- *"Staff expertise and relevance to the programme of study."*

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD/Constructive feedback by the EEC:

3.1: *"The EEC recommends the development of systematic central support with regards to staff induction and staff development."*

Response/Action: Training sessions have been already established during the previous years for both PhD students and supervisors. These include PhD related seminars on a weekly basis

nonefor Research Skills Development of the faculty members and students, and additionally training sessions announced and organised by the office of Office of the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research (VRFR) are offered. Additionally, the University Senate and Council have recently approved a new policy proposed by the VRFR for the creation of *Faculty Training and Development Unit* whose role is to:

a) Draft the university's plan and strategy on faculty training and development
b) Identify faculty training and development needs necessary for fulfilling their job requirements
c) Make available to faculty relevant training and development opportunities that can be linked to educational research and development, curriculum leadership, and educational scholarship
d) Coordinate the training and development practices offered by the various training centres/units and evaluate their impacts on the careers of the participants and the institutional environment.

The new Unit brings under its umbrella, through a coordinating role, existing Units such as the PSU (Pedagogical Support Unit), the ePSU (e-Learning Pedagogical Support Unit), the TELC (Technology Enhanced Learning Centre), the DL-LMS (Distance Learning - Learning Management Systems Unit) and the RIO (Research and Innovation Office).

It should be noted that the faculty members teaching in the programme have undergone a 12-week 36-hour training and development Seminar on "Teaching and Learning Theory and Practice," consisting of twelve 3-hour workshops. The faculty have been awarded the Teaching and Learning Theory and Practice Certificate for the successful completion of the workshop series. The workshops cover a variety of areas such as, designing effective learning environments with 21st century skills and competencies in mind, critical and creative thinking, adult education, project and problem-based learning, inclusion of students with diverse needs, designing online courses using interactive and collaborative multimedia tools, effective use of e-learning and other educational resources etc.

In addition, there is a Research Skills Development Programme in which various workshops/webinars are developed by the office of the VRFR to promote research and support mentoring to new faculty and PhD students.

Regarding staff induction, the University's Department of Human Resources organizes a faculty induction week, every year, at the beginning of September. The induction week includes presentations on the various academic policies and administration procedures which are delivered by the Academic Affairs and Human Resource offices respectively, as well as presentations from the following: Research and Innovation Office, Library, Health and Safety, Erasmus, Student Affairs, amongst others. In addition, a comprehensive Faculty Manual is given to all faculty, which provides them with information about the University, its policies and procedures, and any other information they will need during their employment.

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

We appreciate the EEC's assessment of **each quality indicator/criterion** in this area **as "Compliant"** (amongst the choices of: Compliant/partially compliant/non-compliant).

Strengths for PhD/positive comments made by the EEC:

- *"The EEC felt that the admissions procedure contains robust and credible plans for the recruitment of students."*

- *"There are clear plans supporting student progression and achievement of student outcomes."*

- *"Academic advisors and tutors are available to support and monitor student progression and achievement. Monitor Reviewing Indicators about progression at both course and programme levels are analyzed and monitored through programme coordinators review meetings on an annual basis."*

- *"Range of entry requirements to support various educational backgrounds."*

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD/Constructive feedback by the EEC:

4.1: *"Lack of a risk assessment plan for low student intake. The EEC recommends the development of an action plan leading to an increasing number of students over the next two-three years. "*

Response/Action: The under-reaccreditation PhD in Computer Science program has the potential of attracting many more students. The following action plan is established to further increase the number of students. More specifically, the action plan includes:

1) Yearly participation in the Computer Science Student Conference in Greece where faculty and alumni deliver workshops in cutting-edge research areas. The Department has already participated in the last two conferences (the 10th and 11th).

2) Organizing hackathons and other competitions that promote the Computer Science field. For example, our Department co-organizes yearly the Logipaignion game development competition and open to students (both high-school as well as University students through different tracks). Our University through our Department is also serving as hub every year in the Google hashcode competition. Our Department plans to further organize some hackathon competitions on hot topics such as Cyber Security.

3) Delivery of webinars by faculty with active participation from current students and alumni. The webinars are live-streamed on youtube and are open to all. These webinars take many forms: a) They present the Department and its programs, b) they can talk about Computer Science/Data Science jobs and career prospects, c) they present a particular subject or project with participation from students (current and past). This past year, the Department has delivered 4 such webinars. Two of these webinars involved students: One seminar on hacking was delivered by an MSc CS Alumni and the other seminar on Data Science was delivered by two current BSc CS students along with their professor, who presented their term project on the Data Science course. More webinars are planned in the next couple of years.

4) We also plan to offer a number of scholarships per program. The University is already offering scholarships based on merit and financial needs. We plan to request an additional number for the next 2-3 years, especially in view of possible financial problems that may have arisen to a number of families affected by the pandemic.

5) Sponsoring local competitions that promote the PhD program. The University was a sponsor for the 4th Cyprus Cyber Security Challenge (CCSC) organized by the Cyprus Computer Society in April 2021.

In addition, specifically for the PhD, a set of actions to increase the student intake has been clearly addressed above in point 1.1.

5. Learning resources and student support
(ESG 1.6)

We appreciate the EEC's assessment of **each quality indicator/criterion** in this area **as "Compliant"** (amongst the choices of: Compliant/partially compliant/non-compliant).

Positive comments made by the EEC:

- "The programs have excellent support from the university IT services, for example cloud services. The library facilities meet the expectations and the library services include access to IEEE and ACM digital resources. Off campus access is available through OpenAthens and a proxy server. "
- "Student to teacher ratio is excellent. Students enjoy a very good presence by the teachers."

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD/Constructive feedback by the EEC:

5.1 *"The computer laboratories appear adequate for the teaching purposes; however, the extent of availability of the infrastructure to Computer Science courses was ambiguous. The department is recommended to clarify which of the laboratories are open to taught students."*

Response/Action: The following is the list of computer laboratories used and open to taught students:

- Four main labs used in most programming courses: B101, B111, B113 and A20. These are regularly updated and upgraded to meet the needs of the students.
- Dedicated Computer Science laboratory for use by the Department's students only: B110. This CS lab is equipped with iMacs and PCs as well as the MoSys Lab infrastructure described below (point 5.2).
- Dedicated Virtual Reality Lab: This lab is a state-of-the-art virtual, augmented and mixed reality technologies' facility. It includes two independent immersive VR installations and facilities for teaching including 16 high-end workstations.

In addition, MATLAB is available to students (and faculty) to use from home, since there is a University-wide license, allowing all UNic students to download and install the latest

version (including all packages, such as Machine learning and AI) on their own personal computers.

5.2 "*The mobile computing and the Internet of Things infrastructure could be more comprehensive for state of the art research activities.*"

Response/Action: We acknowledge the Committee's comments on enriching further the infrastructure of our laboratories. Our labs are equipped with various scientific instruments, tools and resources in order to extend and validate our research in our fields of interest. Research projects enrich the infrastructure for taught courses in the Mobile Computing and the Internet of Things, whereas the MoSys Lab hosts a number of mobile devices ranging from tablets and wearables (smart programmable watches to smart programmable insoles) as well as different general purpose and Ambient Assisted Living sensors (ie. Motes supporting wireless communication protocols such as Telos B Green and Blue 802.15.4 Motes, MultiTech Conduit 300 Series IoT Programmable Gateway (MTCDT3AC Series) and Libelium PS485 modbus for Raspberry PI with Libelium RGI to Arduino as well as Waspmode 3G sim card module). Additionally, our laboratories host prototypes developed using Sensing hardware (ie. Crossbow MDA 100CB, Crossbow Accelerometers, MICA2dot sensor Motes (nesC interface) with control board (nesC interface), Crossbow MIB520CB and Dust Sensor) and Wireless Power Transfer and Monitoring Toolkits (educational). Our laboratories are equipped with different configurable testbed platforms such as Motes' intefaces with enabled Foscam FI9831P IPCam with Proprietary architecture OS (3 nodes) and 3 Galaxy Tab (versions S2, S4, S6) with sensor programmable modules with Station interface (Android OS).

6. Additional for doctoral programmes
   (ALL ESG)

We appreciate the EEC's assessment of **each quality indicator/criterion** in this area **as "Compliant"** (amongst the choices of: Compliant/partially compliant/non-compliant).

Positive comments made by the EEC:

- *"There is good evidence of engagement with industry within the programme, which is a particularly important aspect."*
- *"Clear admission requirements and flexible process provides the opportunity to tailor the research project to the applicant interests as well as to the supervisor expertise."*

Areas of improvement and recommendations for PhD/Constructive feedback by the EEC:

6.1: *"A formal internal progress monitoring and assessment process involving academic members not in the supervisory team can be considered to add more robustness to the programme."*

Response/Action: Our response to this has been provided in section 1.5 above.

7. Eligibility (Joint programme)
(ALL ESG)

Not applicable.

B. Conclusions and final remarks

We would like to thank the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for their professional and thorough work during the online evaluation of the PhD in Computer Science on April 8-9, 2021. We would also like to express our appreciation for the collegial and constructive approach with which they conducted their evaluation.

We welcome the EEC's positive evaluation of our PhD Computer Science program and the final conclusion which states: ***"Based on the examination and evaluation of the accreditation materials and the remote site visit, the EEC concludes that the required standards are met."***

We would like to address some further remarks made by the EEC in the "Conclusions and final remarks" (section D):

1) EEC remark: *"The computer laboratories appear adequate for the teaching purposes; however, the extent of availability of the infrastructure to Computer Science courses was ambiguous. The department is recommended to clarify which of the laboratories are open to taught students."*

   Response/Action: This remark was raised in Section 5 and our response is given in point 5.1 above.

2) EEC remark: "*The mobile computing and the Internet of Things infrastructure could be more comprehensive for state of the art research activities."*

   Response/Action: This remark was raised in Section 5 and our response is given in point 5.2 above.

3) EEC remark: "*A formal internal progress monitoring and assessment process involving academic members not in the supervisory team can be considered to add more robustness to the programme. Lack of a structured and annually produced monitoring*

report pertaining to student progression, attainment and other key performance indicators relating to the studies.".

Response/Action: This remark was raised in Section 1 and our response is given in point 1.5 above.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name	Position	Signature
Dr George Gregoriou	Dean School of Sciences and Engineering	
Prof Athena Stassopoulou	Head - Department of Computer Science	
Prof Constandinos Mavromoustakis	Quality Assurance and Program Coordinator	

Date: 08 June 2021

Department of Computer Science University of Nicosia

ANNEXES

This document accompanies the response document 300.3.2 (Higher Education Institution's response - PhD in Computer Science) submitted by the University of Nicosia to the CYQAA

ANNEX 1

DSO/4 – Semester Student Supervision Record Sheet

Student Details	Student ID Number	
	First Name	
	Surname	

Registration Details	Programme of Study	
	Department	
	School	

Meeting Details	Semester: Date:
	Place:
	Name of Supervisor(s) Present at the Meeting:

Progress Since Last Meeting	

Agenda Items and Discussion/ Decisions	Agenda item 1:
	Agenda item 2:
	Agenda item 3:
	Agenda item 4:
	Agenda item 5:
	If there are additional agenda items, use the space below:

Agreed Action/ Time Plan (to take place until next meeting)	

Student	**Name:**	**Date:**
	Signature:	

Supervisor(s) Approval (those present at the meeting)	**Name(s):**				**Date:**
	Signature(s):				

GUIDANCE NOTES

1. This form should be completed at least once every semester by the student and supervisor(s) present at the meeting.
2. The Programme Coordinator/Director is responsible to oversee the completion of this form and send it to the Office of the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research and all other relevant stakeholders.
3. A copy of this form must be kept by all supervisors, the Programme Coordinator/Director and the Office of the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research.

DSO/5 – Annual Student Progress Report

Student Details	Student ID Number	
	First Name	
	Surname	

Registration Details	Programme of Study	
	Department	
	School	

Academic Year	

			YES	NO
Supervisory Team Approval	1	Have regular supervisory meetings taken place?		
	2	Have research and training needs been discussed?		
	3	Have research and training targets been set for the coming year?		
	4	Has the student attended any University/Department training and development sessions during this academic year?		
	5	Have all supervisors reviewed the Student Supervision Record Sheets (DSO/4) for this academic year?		
	6	Is the progress of the research satisfactory?		
	7	Has the Final Research Proposal been approved (DSO/6a)? (*)		
	8	Has the approved Final Research Proposal received clearance from the Ethics Committee (DSO/6b)? (*)		
	9	Are all supervisors in agreement that the student is allowed to continue in the next academic year?		

Comments

		Name:	Date:
	Main Supervisor	Signature:	
	Second Supervisor	Name:	Date:
		Signature:	
	Third Supervisor	Name:	Date:
		Signature:	

DPPC Approval	The DPPC reviewed the DSO/4 and DSO/5 documents and confirms that: a. The student is allowed to proceed b. A decision is deferred until a later meeting, at which time the student will be requested to provide further evidence of progress, as specified by the DPCC in a separate report c. The student's studies be discontinued		
	DPPC Chair (on behalf of the DPPC)	Name:	Date:
		Signature:	

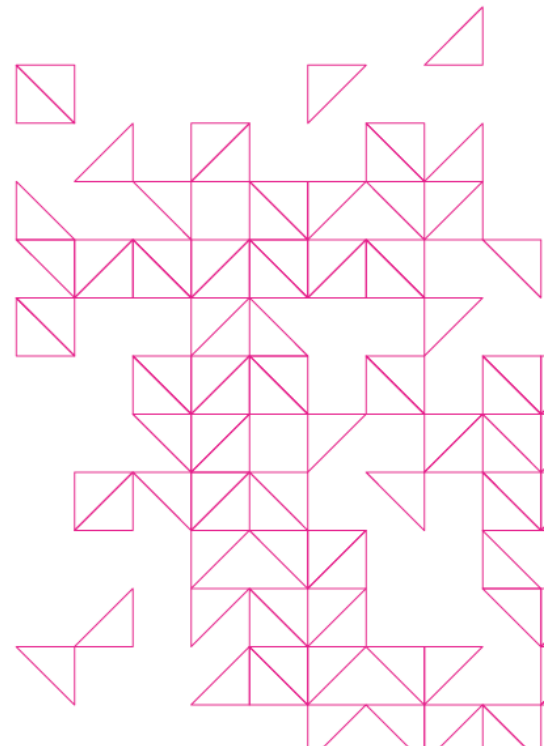| **Vice Rector for Faculty & Research Approval**	Name:	Date:
	Signature:	

GUIDANCE NOTES

1. The Final Research Proposal (evaluated through DSO/6a) is submitted by the student to the supervisory team and DPPC for approval, normally within the first 18 months of his/her study. The Ethics Committee Clearance of the Final Research Proposal (DSO/6b) should also be granted thereafter. (*)

2. This form (DSO/5) must be returned to the Office of the Vice Rector for Faculty & Research by no later than 30th September of each calendar year. It must be submitted along with at least two Semester Student Supervision Record Sheets (DSO/4) of the previous academic year.

3. The DPPC Chair signs this form on behalf of the DPPC following the approval of all DPPC members.

4. The Programme Coordinator/Director is responsible to oversee the completion of this form and send it to the Office of the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research.

5. The Vice Rector for Faculty and Research will sign it and forward the duly signed form back to the Programme Coordinator/Director who will inform all relevant stakeholders.

6. A copy of this form must be kept by all supervisors, the Programme Coordinator/Director and the Office of the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research.

Roles and Responsibilities

of PhD Coordinators/Directors and Supervisors

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

This Guide outlines the roles and responsibilities of the PhD Coordinators/Directors and Supervisors. This Guide should be read in conjunction with the Code of Practice and Regulations for Doctoral Programmes which was approved by the PhD Board and the Senate. For any guidance, support or questions, you may contact the Office of the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research who is responsible for providing strategic leadership and guidance on the administration of all PhD Programmes and student matters.

2. Respective roles and responsibilities

2.1. PhD Programme Coordinators/Directors

It is the responsibility of the PhD Programme Coordinator/Director to ensure that Supervisors have the relevant support and resources to undertake effective supervision.

2.1.1. PhD Coordinators/Directors are responsible for:

- overseeing the recruitment of doctoral students and ensuring that the University's admissions policy and process is followed timely for all matters
- ensuring that all students have a Main supervisor who is a current full-time faculty member of the University of Nicosia, and two additional Supervisors. All Supervisors are appointed by the Department Postgraduate Programme Committee (DPPC).
- safeguarding that Supervisors are not overloaded with supervisory responsibilities and that the Department is not exceeding its maximum limit. According to the Code of Practice and Regulations for Doctoral Programmes, a Main Supervisor cannot supervise at any time more than five (5) students.
- ensuring the orientation of new research students is effectively implemented
- developing appropriate research training for faculty and students
- ensuring that Supervisors are monitoring the students' progress effectively
- overseeing effectively the timely completion of all DSO forms (see Appendix 1) and forwarding them to the Office of the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research and all other relevant stakeholders
- ensuring that accurate records of applicants and students are kept
- acting as an advocate for doctoral students in the department
- being familiar and ensuring compliance with all University policies and regulations, including the Code of Practice and Regulations for Doctoral Programmes, DSO forms and the Guidelines for Doctoral Programmes of Studies (CY.Q.A.A)
- maintaining quality assurance mechanisms and ensuring that faculty perform their supervision duties competently
- organising and attending the DPPC meetings
- representing the Programme in UNIC's PhD Board meetings
- dealing with disciplinary matters in collaboration with the DPPC and the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research according to the Internal Regulations of the University of Nicosia
- encouraging periodic induction and social events at a Programme and/or Departmental and/or School level
- creating and regularly updating the PhD Programme Handbook.

2.2. PhD Programme Supervisors

2.2.1. Knowledge of regulations, policies and procedures

Effective student supervision requires a knowledge and understanding of the University's requirements and expectations. To this end, supervisors should:

- be knowledgeable of the University's Code of Practice and Regulations and use it as a guide to decision-making and behaviour as they interact with doctorate students
- be familiar with the DSO forms (see Appendix 1)
- be familiar with the support services available to students at the University.

2.2.2. Appointment of Supervisors

The Supervisory Team is a three-member committee appointed by the Department Postgraduate Programmes Committee (DPPC). The DPPC, in consultation with the Doctoral Programme Coordinator/Director, first appoints the student's Main Supervisor, hereafter referred to as the Main Supervisor, and then the other two supervisors following the recommendation of the Main Supervisor.

At least one member of the Supervisory Team must have: 1) the rank of Professor or Associate Professor and 2) must have supervised a Doctoral student to completion. Any member of the team without supervisory experience is encouraged to attend a training workshop on Doctoral Degree supervision.

The committee is chaired by the Main Supervisor. The Main Supervisor and at least one other member of the committee are faculty members of the Department or School. The other member of the committee may be a faculty member from another School or another University/Research Institute. A Main Supervisor cannot supervise at any time more than five (5) students. The second and third supervisors can be brought onto the team to contribute their expertise in their discipline or specific research techniques. The input of the second and third supervisors is valuable. It might be because the two supervisors cover different aspects of the same research problem and so can give different suggestions to cope with problems, or they may favour slightly different research methods and emphasis in the investigation.

2.2.3. Meetings/consultation

Supervisors should expect to meet their PhD students sufficiently often to ensure progress is being achieved. An explicit agreement concerning the frequency and duration of supervisory meetings should be made at the beginning of each academic year. Normally we would expect supervisory meetings to take place at regular intervals.

A record of dates of meetings, decisions taken and work submitted (this will include the date of submission and the date of response) will be kept by the Main Supervisor, the Doctoral Programme Coordinator/Director and the Office of the Vice Rector for Faculty & Research (Forms: DSO/4, DSO/5, and DSO/7). These records need to be considered and discussed during the Annual Progress Meeting of the doctoral student. It is also recommended that students should keep their own records too.

Supervisory meetings may be held with any member of the Supervisory Team, as long as the Main Supervisor is informed of such meetings at all times.

The supervisory team and the student must establish at an early stage a clear understanding as to the responsibilities of the supervisory team, the relation of these to the responsibilities of the student, and the supervisory team's role in relation to the preparation and development of the student's work.

It is also important that regular meetings of the Supervisory Team and clear communication between members can ensure that all supervisors are aware of the student's direction and progress, giving them opportunities to raise concerns and take action early.

2.2.4. Supervisory Team Responsibilities

The supervisory team is responsible for:

- helping the student feel at home in a Department or School, and in the University
- approving the student's final research proposal
- providing general guidance on such matters as the nature of research; academic standards; planning; literature and other sources; methods and techniques
- assisting the student in navigating through official procedures, and ensuring that deadlines are met
- maintaining regular (and frequent) formal contact with the student; where the student has not been in contact with the Supervisory Team for some time, it is the Supervisory Team's responsibility to make contact with the student
- keeping proper records of all the meetings held between the doctoral student and the Supervisory Team
- being accessible to give the student informal and formal advice
- obtaining progress reports and other written work, and promptly providing constructive criticism
- arranging any training which the student requires, including research and personal skills
- ensuring that the student is aware of when s/he is making inadequate progress or other impediments to the successful completion of research within the required duration
- ensuring that the student enrolls with the University on a semester basis
- ensuring that the student makes a positive contribution through his/her work within the University and through the choice of area of study, research methods and analysis, to promoting diversity and equal opportunities within the University and the community

According to Blaxter et al. (1998), the main roles of the Supervisors.

Director	determining topic and method, providing ideas
Facilitator	providing access to resources or expertise, arranging field-work
Advisor	helping to resolve technical problems, suggesting alternatives
Teacher	teaching research techniques
Guide	suggesting timetable for writing up, giving feedback on progress, identifying critical path for data collection
Critic	commenting on design of enquiry, of draft chapters, of interpretations or data
Freedom giver	authorising student to make decisions, supporting student's ideas
Supporter	giving encouragement, showing interest, discussing student's ideas
Friend	extending interest and concern to non-academic aspects of student's life
Manager	checking progress regularly, monitoring study, giving systematic feedback, planning work
Mentor	being someone the doctoral student can count on for advice in the professional and academic spheres pertaining to their research
Listener	being receptive to student feedback

2.2.5. Additional Tips for Supervisors

- Assist the student with the selection and planning of a suitable and manageable research topic.
- Be enthusiastic about the project, and able and willing to be actively involved in it.
- Share his/her knowledge, experience and network with the student in order to advance the project.
- Encourage students to participate in induction days (Research Methods Lecture Series, Library Training, Facilities availability, Preparation of Time plan and setting of milestones).
- Have regular and –when necessary – emergency meetings with the student.
- Provide both positive and negative feedback about work and progress of the PhD student.
- Review manuscripts, abstracts and other work in progress within a reasonable period of time.
- Keep track of the progress of the research project.
- Recommend necessary courses and relevant conferences for the student to attend.
- Provide/offer balance between independence and guidance for each student.
- Ensure that students always abide by relevant ethics codes.
- Have a personalised approach. Personality plays a role in supervision. What works for one student may not work for another.
- Aid the student to develop into an independent scientist.

3. Conclusion

PhD Coordinators/Directors as well as Supervisors play an instrumental role in securing the smooth operation of the programme as well as in safeguarding the quality of the Doctoral studies.

This Guide has outlined the roles and responsibilities of the PhD Coordinators/Directors and Supervisors and has emphasised the fact that it should be read in conjunction with the Code of Practice and Regulations for Doctoral Programmes.

For any guidance, support or questions, please contact the Office of the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research.

Appendix 1

NOTES FOR COMPLETION OF DSO FORMS

- DSO/1 – Registration Form: This is the initial student registration form. It must be completed in the first semester of studies. Students should present this form to an academic advisor for registration.

- DSO/2 – Request for Changing Supervisor(s): This is the form to request a change in the current supervisory arrangements.

- DSO/3 – Request for Interruption of Studies: This is the form by which the student can request temporary interruption of his/her studies.

- DSO/4 – Semester Student Supervision Record Sheet: This form is used to record the student's progress and should be completed at least once every semester.

- DSO/5 – Annual Student Progress Report: This form is the Annual Student Progress Report and should be completed no later than the 30th of September of each calendar year. It must be submitted along with at least two Semester Student Supervision Record Sheets (DSO/4) of the previous academic year.

- DSO/6a – Final Research Proposal Approval Form: This is the Final Research Proposal approval form and should be submitted for approval by the student, normally within the first 18 months of his/her study.

- DSO6b – Ethics Committee Clearance of the Final Research Proposal: This form concerns the approval of the Final Research Proposal, following the clearance report by the Ethics Committee.

- DSO/7 – Thesis Completion Form/Application for Thesis Defence: This form is submitted by the student confirming that s/he has completed the writing up of the thesis and requesting to proceed with the defence (viva). It also includes confirmation from the library and finance office that the student has no pending obligations with them.

- DSO/8 – Thesis Defence Preparation and Appointment of the Examination Committee: This checklist serves as a verification for the completion of the steps required prior to the student's Thesis Defence (viva).

- DSO/9 – VIVA Examiners Evaluation Report: This form should be completed by the Examination Committee at the end of the viva outlining the detailed comments and requested changes (if any) that need to be addressed by the student before being awarded the degree title. The same form should be used in cases when a second viva is required.

- DSO/10 – Confirmation of Changes Submission: This form should be completed by the Examination Committee (after they have checked the revised Thesis) to confirm that all their recommended changes have been addressed satisfactorily by the student.

- DSO/11 – Recommendation for Awarding the PhD Degree Title: This form is used by the Dean of the School to recommend to the VRFR to award the student's degree title.

- DSO/12 – Final Thesis Submission Cover Sheet: This form is for the submission of the Final Thesis (two hard copies and one electronic version) to the Office of the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research.

- Competing and signing the forms. To ease the process, all the forms are PDF editable.

Note: *The forms are available from the Office of the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research.*

Appendix 2

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

a. [Framework for Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area](#)
b. [European Qualifications Framework (EQF)](#)
c. [Bologna Seminar on Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society](#)
d. [Research Supervisors Bibliography-Third Edition_The UKCGE Research Supervisors Network Resource.](#)
e. [How to write a PhD, Imperial College](#)
f. [Guidelines for Doctoral Programmes of Studies (CYQAA)](#)
g. [Career advice: how to supervise a PhD student for the first time](#)
h. [Developing your PhD's academic career](#)
i. [Research Supervision at UCL](#)
j. [10 ingredients for a successful supervisor/PhD student relationship](#)
k. [Of monsters and mentors: PhD disasters and how to avoid them](#)

Videos

a. [Who wants Einstein? Supervision of PhD students # Part 1 - The good example](#)
b. [Who wants Einstein? Supervision of PhD students # Part 2 - Disagreements are OK](#)
c. [Who wants Einstein? Supervision of PhD students # Part 3 - The new PhD education](#)
d. [7 Steps to a Positive Relationship with your PhD Supervisor](#)
e. [What makes for an effective PhD Supervisor?](#)
f. [10 Reasons to be a doctoral supervisor](#)