

Doc. 300.1.2

Date: 05 June 2020

Higher Education Institution's Response

- **Higher Education Institution:**
Cyprus Police Academy

- **Town:** Nicosia

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

In Greek:

Ανώτερο Δίπλωμα στην Εκπαίδευση Δοκίμων Πυροσβεστών (3 έτη /192 ECTS)

In English:

Higher Diploma in Training for Fire Service Recruits (3years/192 ECTS)

- **Language(s) of instruction:** Greek
- **Programme's status:** Currently Operating

The present document has been prepared within the framework of the authority and competencies of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education, according to the provisions of the “Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws of 2015 to 2019” [N. 136 (I)/2015 to N. 35(I)/2019].

A. Guidelines on content and structure of the report

- *The Higher Education Institution (HEI) based on the External Evaluation Committee's (EEC's) evaluation report (Doc.300.1.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the programme of study in each assessment area.*
- *In particular, under each assessment area, the HEI must respond on, without changing the format of the report:*
 - *the findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC*
 - *the deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)*
 - *the conclusions and final remarks noted by the EEC*
- *The HEI's response must follow below the EEC's comments, which must be copied from the external evaluation report (Doc. 300.1.1).*
- *In case of annexes, those should be attached and sent on a separate document.*

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

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

The panel felt that the common first year of Police Academy Officers and Fire Fighters gives them a unique advantage of cooperation and communication in case of an emergency.

The programme of study is largely well structured and fit for purpose.

The programme is well managed and supported by CPA processes, both administrative and quality assurance.

Strengths

The quality of study programmes design and development is based on European Standards and Strengths followed by more advanced European Fire Academies.

There is a mix of theoretical and practical input with an academic flavour. This prepares students for both the vocational requirements of the job role and for future learning.

The syllabus covers appropriate content, and is well structured, mostly clearly identifying the discrete elements (with one or two exceptions)

Regarding the exceptions as noted above, a total of six modules have been revised according to the recommendations of the Committee. In particular, the modules "Fire Safety Inspections I", "Fire Safety Inspections II" and "Fire Safety Inspections III" have been revised, regarding both the content and the learning outcomes. In addition, the titles of "Fire Service Legislation and Regulations I" and "Fire Service Legislation and Regulations II" have also been modified. At the same time, the requirement for the completion of a research project has been included in the course description of "Natural & environmental disasters". Amended modules are attached as ANNEX I.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

There should be more contemporary methods of assessment and consideration could be given to include some elective contemporary courses such as gender and fire personnel as well as response to new threats and terrorism. This would add to the currency element of the programme, without detracting from the functional vocational knowledge and skills elements.

The CPA has taken into consideration the recommendations of the Committee regarding the use of more contemporary methods of assessment, besides written examinations.

For this purpose, CPA Director's Order 3/12 (ANNEX II) which addresses the evaluation of Fire Recruits has been modified as follows:

- a. The percentage of marks allocated to practical examinations, as opposed to theoretical examinations, has increased from 22.6% to 24% of the overall score for each semester (modules on firefighting)
- b. The percentage of marks allocated to Discipline, has increased from 1% to 2% for each semester, so that soft skills are evaluated, such as the ability to cooperate well with others, effective classroom participation, being positive, and taking initiative. These skills will be evaluated throughout the duration of semesters by trainers, as well as by the Officer in Charge of Discipline, who are in contact with students on a daily basis.
- c. The evaluation for the 'Natural and Environmental Disasters' module in Semester E has changed; it will be assessed through the completion of a research assignment.

Moreover, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Committee, the CPA has added to the practical examination, the evaluation of skills such as group work - cooperation - communication skills, problem solving, the management of emotions, task management etc. (ANNEX IIα).

It should be noted that the practical examination in the training of Fire Service Recruits (according to point (a) above) is carried out on the basis of specific incidents / scenarios which test the application of knowledge within specific time limits. Besides, during the practical examination, recruits evaluate and apply knowledge, since they have to assess the conditions and the facts of the incident and state the actions that they would carry out, how, when, what kind of equipment they would use and who they would cooperate with, to bring the management of the incident to an end. At the end of the examination, a briefing session is carried out and recruits are able to make suggestions regarding other possible new practices. During the practical examination recruits are evaluated by a three-member committee made up of members of the CPA and/or the Fire Service (a basic precondition is that the trainer teaching the specific subject is not a member of the committee).

In addition, it is noted that, during the Practical Training with a portfolio, which is completed and assessed, recruits are required to keep a diary for recording anything regarding their practical training, encouraging reflection and professional development which is based, to a large extent, on the active involvement of students in their own learning. Upon the completion of the practical training, recruits are required to write a 500-word self assessment report, guided by specific questions (What have I learned? What would I do differently if I had the opportunity? What else do I have to learn in relation to Firefighting duties? What would make the handling of such duties better / easier / more effective? Other).

Also, the CPA has noted the recommendations of the Committee and has begun the process of modifying the type of tasks used in examinations, so that they include the application, analysis and evaluation of the knowledge of recruits through the use of scenarios, assignments, case studies, court decisions etc. An example of a revised examination paper is attached as ANNEX IIβ.

With regards to the recommendation of the Committee on the inclusion of elective contemporary modules, the CPA reached an agreement with the University of Cyprus, by which to replace the module 'Passive and Active Fire Safety Systems' provided by the University of Cyprus with an elective module provided by the same University, which would add considerably to the psychological / social nature of the course. The recruits would be able to choose one elective from the following:

ΨΥΧ 100 Introduction to Psychology I

ΨΥΧ 103 Clinical Psychology I: Personality psychology

ΨΥΧ 123 Motivation Psychology

ΨΥΧ 208 Health Psychology

ΔΕΔ 231 Organisational Behaviour

ΔΕΔ 431 Gender, Work and Organisations

(ANNEX III)

Discussions with students and teaching staff highlighted a desire for a larger proportion of practical learning opportunities to help embed the theory. This is often a difficult balance to achieve effectively and it is unlikely that all stakeholders will be totally happy all the time – however where possible, consideration should be given to how a greater proportion of active learning could be achieved.

It should be noted that to achieve the learning outcomes, the CPA promotes active learning that is student centered, through a combination of teaching methods as noted in the CPA Quality Guide 2019 (<http://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/All/280469106DDE413DC22585220051C6D6?OpenDocument>). The fact that this is so, is also stressed by the percentage of the practical training included in the program as opposed to theoretical training. Specifically, the four semesters of the training programme for Fire Service Recruits offered at the CPA, include 39% Theory and 61% Practical Training, while for the period of 49 weeks, each Fire Service Recruit undergoes practical training at Fire Stations.

The CPA promotes practical training through exercises, workshops, role play etc., even within the framework of theoretical modules as well, and for this purpose it has created areas for group work, workshops and simulation to be used by trainers. Taking into consideration the recommendations of the Committee, the CPA has begun the procedure for enriching the theoretical modules with more practical training. A Training Plan Sample is attached as ANNEX IV.

Furthermore, to promote active learning, the Training the Trainers programme includes a number of teaching periods on training adult learners, experiential learning, the development of critical thinking etc. (ANNEX V). The same applies for the Refresher Training Programme for Trainers which includes one-week refresher training on educational subjects and one week training on operational subjects. The Training the Trainers programme has been planned for 22 June - 24 July 2020 (ANNEX Vγ), and the Refresher Training Programme for Trainers has been planned for 10-19 June 2020 (ANNEX Vα)

Taking into consideration the recommendations of the Committee, the CPA has included a presentation of the CPA Quality Guide within the Refresher Training Programme for Trainers, to further enhance the effort for quality in training. A sample of a Refresher Course for Trainers is attached as ANNEX Vβ.

Additionally, a procedure has begun for the preparation of 'Notes for Fire Service Recruits' by CPA trainers which will be made available to students together with the (under review) Notes on Firefighting and Technical Bulletins. Their aim is to further assist students with understanding, implementing, analysing and evaluating the subject matter of their training course. A sample of 'Notes for Fire Service Recruits' is attached as ANNEX VI.

Deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)

1.8.1 There are certain courses where there is not a clear cut distinction of the content that is taught. There should be a more accurate description of the content. E.g. Fire Inspection II & III, where it was explained that whilst the learning outcomes and descriptors are the same, the principles are applied to different types of premises. This should be made explicit in the course descriptor,

Regarding the exceptions as noted above, a total of six modules have been revised according to the recommendations of the Committee. In particular, the modules "Fire Safety Inspections I", "Fire Safety Inspections II" and "Fire Safety Inspections III" have been revised, regarding both the content and the learning outcomes. In addition, the title of "Fire Service Legislation and Regulations I" and "Fire Service Legislation and Regulations II" have also been modified. At the same time, the carrying out of a research project has also been included in the course description of "Natural & environmental disasters". Amended modules are attached as ANNEX I.

1.8.3 There are opportunities to broaden assessment methodologies both from inside (the Academy) and external stakeholders. The panel felt that whilst examination is a valid methodology, it is worth considering other assessment methods to ensure students are not disadvantaged.

The CPA has taken into consideration the recommendations of the Committee regarding the use of more contemporary methods of assessment, besides written examinations.

For this purpose, CPA Director's Order 3/12 (ANNEX II) which addresses the evaluation of Fire Recruits has been modified as follows:

- a. The percentage of marks allocated to practical examinations, as opposed to theoretical examinations, has increased from 22.6% to 24% of the overall score for each semester (modules on firefighting)
- b. The percentage of marks allocated to Discipline, has increased from 1% to 2% for each semester, so that soft skills are evaluated, such as the ability to cooperate well with others, effective classroom participation, being positive and taking initiative. These skills will be evaluated throughout the duration of semesters by trainers, as well as by the Officer in Charge of Discipline, who are in contact with students on a daily basis.
- c. The evaluation for the 'Natural and Environmental Disasters' module in Semester E has changed; it will be assessed through the completion of a research assignment.

In addition, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Committee, the CPA has added to the practical examination, the evaluation of skills such as group work - cooperation - communication skills, problem solving, the management of emotions, task management etc. (ANNEX IIα).

It should be noted that the practical examination in the training of Fire Service Recruits (according to point (a) above) is carried out on the basis of specific incidents / scenarios which test the application of knowledge within specific time limits. Besides, during the practical examination, recruits evaluate and apply knowledge, since they have to assess the conditions and the facts of the incident and state the actions that they would carry out, how, when, the equipment that they would use and who they would cooperate with, to bring the management of the incident to an end. At the end of the examination, a briefing session is carried out and recruits are able to make suggestions regarding other possible new practices. During the practical examination recruits are evaluated by a three-member committee made up of members of the CPA and/or the Fire Service (a basic precondition is that the trainer teaching the specific subject is not a member of the committee).

Also, it is noted that, during the Practical Training with a portfolio, which is completed and assessed, recruits are required to keep a diary for recording anything regarding their practical training, encouraging reflection and professional development which is based, to a large extent, on the active involvement of students in their own learning. Upon the completion of the practical training, recruits are required to write a 500-word self assessment report, guided by specific questions (What have I learned? What would I do differently if I had the opportunity? What else do I have to learn in relation to Firefighting duties? What would make the handling of such duties better / easier / more effective? Other).

Additionally, the CPA has noted the recommendations of the committee and has begun the process of modifying the type of tasks used in examinations, so that they include the application, analysis and evaluation of the knowledge of recruits through the use of scenarios, assignments, case studies, court decisions etc. An example of a revised examination paper is attached as ANNEX IIβ.

As far as evaluation by external examiners is concerned, the CPA notes that, in addition to the CPA examiners, the program includes evaluation by the Mentors (during the practical experience with a portfolio) who are members of the Fire Service, and serve at Fire Stations. At the same time, during the training that takes place in other locations such as the Disaster Response Special Unit for instance, the recruits are assessed by the trainers on location. Apart from these, the recruits are assessed at the University of Cyprus during their studies at the University, and their grades are made known to the CPA.

1.8.4 The books the panel saw need to be updated – this is expanded on in subsequent sections below. The panel did not observe examples of teacher generated specific course material and as a general principle, the panel notes that teachers should provide students with their notes where appropriate. The panel acknowledges that this may happen – but no evidence was seen to this effect.

The CPA has noted the recommendations of the Committee, and since 17th March 2020, a trainer of the Fire Service has been transferred to the Fire Service School to coordinate the revision and updating of the "Notes on Firefighting" and "Technical Bulletins", under the supervision of the Officer in Charge of the Fire Service School. For the best and more accurate revision of the "Notes on Firefighting", a number of fire fighting officers have been assigned to review and update them, according to their expertise. Their revision, inspection and reissuing is expected to be completed until the end of April 2021 (ANNEX VII).

Additionally, a procedure has begun for the preparation of 'Notes for Fire Service Recruits' by CPA trainers which will be made available to students together with the (under review) "Notes on Firefighting" and "Technical Bulletins". Their aim is to further assist students with understanding, implementing, analysing and evaluating the subject matter of their training course. A sample of 'Notes for Fire Service Recruits' is attached as ANNEX VI.

1.8.5 The Fire Academy occasionally needs to “borrow” operational vehicles to supplement its’ teaching resources. Ideally it needs to have its own equipment that is permanently held there. Borrowing operational vehicles introduces a higher level of risk to teaching continuity.

Due to the high cost for purchasing such vehicles, a list of vehicles and equipment (kind and quantity) necessary for the training of fire service recruits in each semester, has been prepared and sent by the CPA to the Fire Service. The Fire Service will make available such vehicles and equipment to the CPA, at least one week prior to the beginning of the training. The vehicles and equipment will be kept at the Fire Service School and will be used according to the needs of the training (ANNEX VIII).

Serious consideration should be given to the purchase simulation software for the better training of the students and cost effectiveness. An example would be XVR which is customizable and highly flexible. This would reduce the impact of the cost of, and maximise the value of time spent on practical activities away from the CPA.

The CPA recognises the importance of the use of technology in education. However, due to the cost of such simulators, these will not be purchased, for the time being, for the training of the fire service recruits. The Fire Service maintains (physical) simulators (chamber, fire house, demo (back draught) box, collapsed structure, petrochemical and industrial fires), which are used for the training of the Fire fighters including the fire service recruits in real incident conditions.

The issue of the use of technology in education for the specific issue, will be examined and assessed at a later stage, provided that the finances of the Service will allow it.

1.11 The Academy should be connected with the latest technological resources and training developments across the curriculum – this is expanded on in the resource section below.

The Fire Service keeps up to date with the developments in technology and focuses on the creation of «Operational Practices» and amends / upgrades Documents or Notes on Firefighting, such as, the training regarding hybrid vehicles, tall buildings, photovoltaic power generating systems, windfarms, etc. In addition, members of the Fire Service who are assigned as trainers in the Training of Fire Service Recruits, are themselves trained abroad in such matters, so that their knowledge remains current and relevant. Within the training of fire service recruits, such training is carried out either by members of the fire service that attended relevant training abroad, or by local experts.

In addition, and noting the recommendations of the Committee, a search was carried out for electronic resources which will be available to all members of the Fire Service, including the trainers that update relevant training material. For this purpose, it has been decided by the Fire Service, that such an electronic publication is purchased, and specifically, the Fire Safety Journal: an international journal devoted to research on fire safety science and engineering, in 2021, since funds for 2020, have been frozen due to the pandemic (ANNEX IX).

Also, access has been given to trainers and School Commanders of the CPA, to "My Athens" database (the CPA has a number of access points within the cooperation with the OUCy), over and above the access granted within the Library of the CPA, so that there is a wider access to electronic resources relating to firefighting, for training purposes.

Apart from the above, the CPA library is in the process of purchasing 18 books (total worth of 1537,50 euro) relating to firefighting, for use by the members of the Fire Service, including the trainers and the fire service recruits. The books are expected to be purchased in 2020 (ANNEX IXα).

At the same time, the Fire Service School has planned to purchase a number of books relating to firefighting, in 2021 (since the funds for 2020 have been frozen due to the pandemic). For this purpose, a book search has begun by the Officer in charge of the Fire Service School in collaboration with the CPA (ANNEX IXβ).

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

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

The Academy is moving in the right direction to the areas of teaching, learning and student assessment, however it needs to focus attention in certain areas to achieve things more speedily.

Strengths

Having a mentor is one of the strengths of the program and probably some other European Academies should copy that. In addition, the close cooperation with the European University and the University of Cyprus is also unique and a positive development.

The transparency and openness to challenge of the CPA in its desire to improve its delivery is a key strength.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Since new societal and technological threats are added to natural disasters that fire personnel have to deal with, the students of Fire Academy should improve their research skills during their last year of studies in order to meet these challenges.

Taking into consideration the recommendations of the Committee, the CPA has noted the need for the improvement of the research skills of students and has decided that the evaluation of Fire Service Recruits for the 'Natural and Environmental Disasters' module (Semester E) will be based on a relevant research assignment / essay, which will be assessed by the teaching staff of the module. For this purpose, modifications have been made to CPA Director's Order 3/12 on the training of Fire Service Recruits, with the evaluation for the specific module changed, to be now based on the preparation and submission of a research assignment (ANNEX I). At a later stage, following a re-evaluation of the Training Programme for Fire Service Recruits, the possibility of the inclusion of a module exclusively dealing with conducting research and the writing of research assignments will be examined.

It is recognized that the CPA does not yet take full advantage of teaching opportunities using technology.

The CPA has noted the recommendations of the Committee and is exploring four specific ways to work on the creation of an electronic platform for the purposes of electronic support of learning.

In a meeting that took place in February 2020 at the CPA between the Administration of the CPA and representatives of the Cyprus Technological University, there was a discussion on the basis of an existing Memorandum of Understanding and the beginning of contacts for designing the platform on the part of the CTU as well as the

support they will be providing. On the 1st of June 2020, an email was received from CTU with a specific proposal and a list of issues to be discussed. The Officer in charge of the Scientific Research and Professional Development Centre of the CPA has been assigned to work on the issue (ANNEX X). At the same time, a request was sent to the Ministry of Education in relation to the possibility of using its platform. The possibility of borrowing space on the platform of the European Police Academy Cepol, as well as the possibility of outsourcing, in the event that the previous options do not have a positive outcome, have also been considered, in which case this will be planned for 2021 since funds for 2020 have been frozen due to the pandemic.

It is important to stress that the platform will support learning, and will not replace the current way of delivering recruit training.

It is noted that, beside the above mentioned procedure for the creation of the platform, the CPA utilises the fire service portal and the police portal where the Notes on Firefighting and the Legal Notes are posted and where the recruits can look up for information. The portals are accessible in every instruction room of the CPA, and every Police and Fire Service Station.

In addition, via the library, there is access to eight subscription periodicals (greek and english), access to the automated catalogue of the library (OPAC Online Public Access Catalog), and open access in ebooks (www.jstor.org). The library has also access in electronic periodicals.

For the purposes of improving the communication and support of learning, until the platform is created, online applications are used to create groups in which recruits and trainers participate.

Consideration should be given to how teaching staff are supported and developed to employ a wide range of teaching methods.

Trainers are supported on a regular basis by the Director of Studies, with group and individual meetings, during which they are supported on their approach to the modules (from a teaching methodology view). At the same time, the Commander of the School for Training Fire Recruits has daily meetings with the trainers, where issues are discussed in relation to their training duties (ANNEX XI).

For a further development of the trainers, since 2017 an annual Refresher Training Programme for Trainers has been created, which includes one week of education subjects and one week of operational subjects, aiming at the upgrading of knowledge and skills of the trainers, so that they are in a position to carry out efficient training activities, and to organise fit for purpose experiential activities. The Refresher Training Programme for Trainers has been scheduled for 10-19 June 2020. A draft program of the Refresher Training Programme for Trainers is attached as ANNEX Vβ.

On a general note, the continuous professional development of the trainers is important. This means that trainers attend webinars as well as seminars and conferences in Cyprus and abroad. There is also a cooperation with the Sovereign Base Areas Police School, where the CPA Inspector Officer in Charge and the Sergeant Officer in Charge of Practical Experience (Mentoring) attended a relevant training. CPA trainers attend the specialised Train the Trainers Programme organised by Cepol, while during 2019 CPA trainers attended a training program organised by the Human Resources Development Authority.

Discussions with students identified that whilst a content is useful some teachers need to adopt a less passive approach to delivery in some subjects.

The CPA promotes active learning, and for this purpose it has created areas for group work, workshops and simulation to be used by trainers even in theoretical classes, while the importance of active learning is stressed within group sessions as well as on an individual level by the Director of Studies.

Besides the above, the CPA ensures that educational material is provided for the trainers, so that they have a wider choice in teaching methods used in training.

It should be noted that to achieve the learning outcomes, the CPA promotes active learning that is student centered, through a combination of teaching methods as noted in the CPA Quality Guide 2019 (<http://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/All/280469106DDE413DC22585220051C6D6?OpenDocument>). The fact that this is so, is also stressed by percentage of practical training included in the program as opposed to theoretical training. Specifically, the four semesters of the training programme for Fire Service Recruits offered at the CPA, include 39% Theory and 61% Practical Training, while for the period of 49 weeks, each Fire Service Recruit undergoes practical training at Fire Stations.

Besides this, the CPA promotes practical training through exercises, workshops, role play etc., even within the framework of theoretical modules as well, and for this purpose it has created areas for group work, workshops and simulation to be used by trainers. Taking into consideration the recommendations of the Committee, the CPA has begun the procedure for enriching the theoretical modules with more practical training. A Training Plan Sample is attached as ANNEX IV.

Furthermore, to promote active learning, the Training the Trainers programme includes a number of teaching periods on training adult learners, experiential learning, the development of critical thinking etc. (ANNEX V). The same applies for the Refresher Training Programme for Trainers which includes one-week refresher training on educational subjects and one week training on operational subjects. The Training the Trainers programme following programme has been planned for the 22 June - 24 July 2020, and the Refresher Training Programme for Trainers has been planned for 10-19 June 2020 (ANNEX Vα).

Additionally, a procedure has begun for the preparation of 'Notes for Fire Service Recruits' by CPA trainers which will be made available to students together with the (under review) Notes on Firefighting and Technical Bulletins. Their aim is to further assist students with understanding, implementing, analysing and evaluating the subject matter of their training course. A sample of 'Notes for Fire Service Recruits' is attached as ANNEX VI.

Taking into consideration the recommendations of the Committee, the CPA has included a presentation of the CPA Quality Guide within the Refresher Training Programme for Trainers, to further enhance the effort for quality in training. A sample of a Refresher Course for Trainers is attached as ANNEX Vβ.

There are concerns that the assessments do not fully meet the requirements of students studying at Level 5. Examinations should be reviewed to ensure that questions are requiring thinking at higher orders than simply demonstrating knowledge or understanding.

Additionally, the CPA has noted the recommendations of the committee and has begun the process of modifying the type of tasks used in examinations, so that they include the application, analysis and evaluation of the knowledge of recruits through the use of scenarios, assignments, case studies, court decisions etc. An example of a revised examination paper is attached as ANNEX IIβ.

Deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)

2.5 Whilst there was an abundance of evidence relating to summative assessment, the panel saw no evidence of formative assessment. Discussion with students suggested there were no opportunities for tutorial activities, however the panel recognized that some formative assessment activity may be carried out by the mentor.

In order to ensure formative assessment of the recruits, taking into account the recommendations of the Committee, CPA Director's Order 3/12 regarding the Training of Fire Recruits has been amended (par 3(1)) as follows:

« (1) The Training Staff, must have regular one to one scheduled (and when deemed necessary, impromptu meetings with the Fire Recruits, for feedback on their progress, and evaluation of their test results, as well as in order to deal with issues that concern them. The recruits will be able to contact the training staff, at all times, observing all necessary procedures.» (ANNEX II).

Furthermore, it is noted that, during the Practical Training with a portfolio, which is completed and assessed, recruits are required to keep a diary to record anything regarding their practical training, encouraging reflection and professional development which are based, to a large extent, on the active involvement of students in their own learning. The Officer in Charge of the practical experience, visits each recruit on a regular basis (at least once a month), and discusses with him / her, his/her progress, any issues that arise etc. Upon the completion of the practical training, recruits are required to write a 500-word self assessment report, guided by specific questions (What have I learned? What would I do differently if I had the opportunity? What else do I have to learn in relation to Firefighting duties? What would make the handling of such duties better / easier / more effective? Other).

2.8 There was no evidence of a platform for an electronic support of learning and limited software. Both students and teaching staff recognized the current level of provision in this area was not where they would like it to be, and there are opportunities for improvement.

The CPA has noted the recommendations of the Committee and is exploring four specific ways to work on the creation of an electronic platform for the purposes of electronic support of learning.

In a meeting that took place in February 2020 at the CPA between the Administration of the CPA and representatives of the Cyprus Technological University, there was a discussion on the basis of an existing Memorandum of Understanding and the beginning of contacts for designing the platform on the part of the CTU as well as the support they will be providing. On the 1st of June 2020, an email was received from CTU with a specific proposal and a list of issues to be discussed. The Officer in Charge of the Centre for Research and Professional Development of the CPA has been assigned to work on the issue (ANNEX X). At the same time, a request was sent to the Ministry of Education in relation to the possibility of using its platform. The possibility of borrowing space on the platform of the European Police Academy Cepol, as well as the possibility of outsourcing, in the event that the previous options do not have a positive outcome, have also been considered, in which case this will be planned for 2021 since funds for 2020 have been frozen due to the pandemic.

It is important to stress that the platform will be supporting learning, and will not replace the current way of delivering recruit training.

2.10,2.11,2.12 The panel felt that the Academy pays limited attention to cultivating the research abilities of students and relies mostly on the research capabilities of teachers. Whilst it can be argued that there is limited opportunity or need at Firefighter level to utilize this skill, as this is a Higher Education programme, It would be beneficial to consider developing this area during the last year of studies in the Academy – and recognizing the benefit to the students of having this transferable skill.

Regarding the exceptions as noted above, a total of six modules have been revised according to the recommendations of the Committee. In particular, the modules "Fire Safety Inspections I", "Fire Safety Inspections II" and "Fire Safety Inspections III" have been revised, regarding both the content and the learning outcomes. In addition, the title of "Fire Service Legislation and Regulations I" and "Fire Service Legislation and Regulations II" have also been modified. At the same time, completing a research project has been included as a requirement in the course description of "Natural & environmental disasters". Amended modules are attached as ANNEX I.

3. Teaching Staff (ESG 1.5)

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

There is an excellent breadth of technical knowledge and experience across the whole teaching team. This is invaluable for both benefit of the students, and for providing credibility for the programme.

Strengths

The association with the two Universities has offered an added value to the entire process.

The overlap of experience and knowledge amongst permanent staff of CPA gives a high level of resilience to the programme.

The maximum class size of 16 allows for the optimum learning experience for students and creates efficiencies for the CPA.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Consideration should be given to how teaching staff are supported and developed to employ a wide range of teaching methods, and to explore and challenge existing approaches.

Trainers are supported on a regular basis by the Director of Studies, with group and individual meetings, during which they are supported on their approach to the modules (from a teaching methodology view). At the same time, the Commander of the School for Training Fire Recruits has daily meetings with the trainers, where issues are discussed in relation to their training duties (ANNEX XI).

On a general note, the continuous professional development of the trainers is important. This means that trainers attend webinars as well as seminars and conferences in Cyprus and abroad. There is also a cooperation with the Sovereign Base Areas Police School, where the CPA Inspector Officer in Charge and the Sergeant Officer in Charge of Practical Experience (Mentoring) attended a relevant training. CPA trainers attend the specialised Train the Trainers Programme organised by Cepol, while during 2019 CPA trainers attended a training program organised by the Human Resources Development Authority.

The Refresher Training Programme for Trainers includes one week of training in education matters and one week in operational topics, and aims to upgrade the knowledge and skills of the trainers, so that they are able to carry out effective training activities and to organise fit for purpose experiential activities. In the next Refresher Training Programme for Trainers a presentation will be scheduled for the Quality Guide of the CPA. The Train the Trainers Programme is scheduled to take place 22 June - 24 July 2020 and the Refresher Training Programme for Trainers is scheduled to take place 10-19 June 2020 (ANNEX Vα).

Taking the above into account, the CPA has included a presentation of the Quality Guide of the CPA in the Refresher Training Programme for Trainers. A draft programme for the next Refresher Training Programme for Trainers is attached as ANNEX Vβ.

In addition to the above, "the coordinator of training in cooperation with the officer in charge of support and the Director of Studies, ensures the budget necessary for training means including technological equipment and other modern learning aids" (CPA Quality Guide 2019 p 16).

Discussions with students identified that whilst a content is useful some teachers need to adopt a less passive approach to delivery in some subjects.

The CPA promotes active learning through exercises, workshops, role play etc., even within the framework of theoretical modules as well, and for this purpose it has created areas for group work, workshops and simulation to be used by trainers, while the importance of active learning is stressed on an ongoing basis by the Director of Studies, in group and individual meetings.

Also, the CPA ensures that visual and other teaching aids are acquired so that trainers have more options in the teaching methods they use.

The Refresher Training Programme for Trainers includes one week of training in education matters and one week in operational topics, and aims to upgrade the knowledge and skills of the trainers, so that they are able to carry out effective training activities and to organise fit for purpose experiential activities. The Refresher Training Programme for Trainers is scheduled to take place 10-19 June 2020 (ANNEX Vα).

Taking into consideration the recommendations of the Committee, Research Methodology will be included in the next Refresher Training Programme for Trainers programme, so that training staff will be in a position to engage in research in the context of the Scientific Research and Professional Development Centre of the CPA, as well as supervision of research work carried out by recruits, aiming at the development of their research skills and as a consequence, publications and participation in conferences. In the same programme a presentation of the CPA Quality Guide for further incorporation of such teaching methods and practices that contribute to quality in education will be included.

Αδυναμίες που καταγράφηκαν κάτω από τους ποιοτικούς δείκτες (κριτήρια)

3.2.3,3.10 The teachers from the two Universities meet the criteria of teaching in higher education. We were not able to see and judge the capabilities of the permanent personnel in higher education. The panel was not able to ascertain how the internal CPA teaching/training course prepared teachers for the delivery of Higher Education programmes, compared to more vocational lower level teaching and training.

For a member of the Police or the Fire Service to be transferred to the CPA as a trainer (permanent teaching staff) it is necessary for him/her to have successfully completed, prior to this, the 'Train the Trainers' programme and/or other training programmes for trainers on specialised subjects that are taught at the CPA, to have a high level of

knowledge and expertise in professional subjects and to have been deemed by the Academy as suitable to be trainers (ANNEXES Vγ and XI).

For someone to attend the 'Train the Trainers' programme, an announcement of the programme will have to be made prior to this in the Weekly Police Orders as well as the Police portal. The announcement sets out the prerequisites for the submission of an application, which include, having the rank of Sergeant of Inspector, a high level of theoretical and practical training in police / firefighting subjects, being disciplined and of an impeccable character, having at least three year experience in (operational) police / firefighting duties, experience at Departments such as the C.I.D., Road Traffic Accident Investigation Branches, Police / Fire Stations etc., after the completion of their probationary period. Having a degree and/or a postgraduate degree from a recognised University in the fields of Law, Police Studies, Social Sciences and Education, Firefighting, are regarded as additional qualifications.

Interested members who meet the criteria submit their applications and the candidates attend an interview before a Committee, made up by the Assistant Chief of Police (Education and Training), the CPA Director and the CPA Director of Studies. Upon being selected, suitable candidates are called upon to attend the training programme which is of a duration of five weeks. After successfully completing the programme, participants become eligible candidates to be posted at the CPA as trainers. The transfer of trainers to the CPA is decided by the Chief of Police, according to the operational needs of the Police and the Fire Service.

The Train the Trainers programme aims at the effective training and education of members of the Police and the Fire Service who are expected to serve as trainers at the CPA or at other Departments of the Police or the Fire Service. It includes five modules (Training in Police Subjects, Educational Theory, Organisation of Learning, Psychology of Learning, Evaluation of programmes and trainees) which are presented by Police staff and external lecturers. The evaluation of participants is based on three presentations (which account for 70% of their assessment) that they give before the rest of the class (ANNEX V).

Additionally, the Chief of Police may transfer a member of the Police or the Fire Service to the CPA to execute training duties, according to academic qualifications and or other specialised training for trainers (e.g. Fire Behaviour Instructor, Tactical Ventilation Instructor, etc.) and / or operational experience that they may have.

If a member of the Police / Fire Service is transferred to the CPA as a trainer without having previously attended the Training the Trainers programme at the CPA, then s/he completes this programme the next time it runs. In the mean time s/he attends the short courses that are organised at the CPA, from time to time, on teaching methodology and teaching adult learners.

3.11 The panel saw no evidence of continuing professional development opportunities for the permanent personnel in relation to teaching methods. This is a concern if it is not provided.

Out of the five members of the Fire Service that have been transferred to the CPA for the purposes of the Training of Fire Recruits programme, as permanent teaching staff, four of them have not attended the 5-week Train the Trainers programme offered at the CPA, and will do so the next time it runs. The Train the Trainers programme has been scheduled for 22 June - 24 July 2020 (ANNEX Vα). The Train the Trainers programme as it run in 2018 is attached as ANNEX Vβ.

The CPA notes that since 2017, the Refresher Training Programme for Trainers is organised on an annual basis. This training includes one week of training in education matters and one week in operational topics. A draft of the next Refresher Training Programme for Trainers scheduled to take place 10-19 June 2020 is attached (ANNEX Vα).

Research Methodology will be included in the next Refresher Training Programme for Trainers programme, so that training staff will be in a position to engage in research in the context of the Scientific Research and Professional Development Centre of the CPA, as well as supervision of research work carried out by recruits, aiming at the development of their research skills and as a consequence, publications and participation in conferences. In the same programme, a presentation of the CPA Quality Guide for further incorporation of such teaching methods and practices that contribute to quality in education will be included.

On a general note, the continuous professional development of the trainers is important. This means that trainers attend webinars as well as seminars and conferences in Cyprus as well as abroad. There is also a cooperation with the Sovereign Base Areas Police School, where the CPA Inspector Officer in Charge and the Sergeant Officer in Charge of Practical Experience (Mentoring) attended a relevant training. CPA trainers attend the specialised Train the Trainers Programme organised by Cepol, while during 2019 CPA trainers attended a training program organised by the Human Resources Development Authority.

4. Students

(ESG 1.4, 1.6, 1.7)

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

The panel witnessed a high quality of students entering the Fire Academy and desiring to contribute to that profession.

The students were highly motivated and recognised the value of the qualification as well as the contribution of course content to their career development in addition to the functional role skills.

Strengths

The mentoring mechanism adds clear value to the programme and is well managed.

The selection process ensures a supply of motivated learners, meaning that future cohorts should achieve high completion rates, and low drop off rates.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

CPA should take advantage of the mechanisms developed by fellow institutions relating to student welfare.

The CPA, taking into account the recommendations of the Committee, decided to set up an Academic Affairs and Student Welfare Service (ANNEX XII), to improve the services provided to recruits and adopt the policy of one contact point with the recruits, which will assess requests made by recruits and will forward them accordingly.

More specifically, a letter has been sent to various members and offices of the CPA for consultation on the matter and at the same time, an email has been sent to Police Academies of the other Member States of the EU, asking for information on their practices on the matter, while at the same time, provisions of other Universities were studied.

In May 2020 views and suggestions were received and the input is being processed aiming at the improvement of the services provided by the CPA to students. It is estimated that a proposal will be sent to the Chief of Police by the end of September 2020.

Consideration should be given to providing greater transparency in relation to acceptance (or not) of students with special needs and how they might be supported to create equality of opportunity.

As regards, the recruitment into the Police and Fire Service, the Police Law 73(I)2004 requires a candidate to be certified, following an examination by a government medical officer, of good health, sound in mind and body and

physically and mentally fit to perform his/her duties on recruitment. In addition, the candidate needs to have passed a written examination, (has achieved a total score of at least 50% on average, and a score of at least 40% in each of the subjects included in the examination. Also, the candidates needs to have passed the psychometric as well as physical fitness tests, and have negative result in a drug test.

When one is recruited into the Police / Fire Service, and is placed at the CPA for training, the support of recruits is achieved on a personal basis, and after an individual assessment takes place. The CPA, taking into account the recommendations of the Committee, has added a presentation within the Refresher Training Program for Trainers, on Learning disabilities, in order to brief the trainers on the matter so that they are enabled to deal with such cases more effectively.

Deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)

4.3 The panel recognizes the decision by the teaching team and programme co-ordinator to review the questions regarding the programme's evaluation mechanism.

The content and the structure of the program evaluation has been revised according to current bibliography, current practices in higher education programs, and the relevant European Guidelines (ANNEX XIII).

4.4 This area has not been developed before graduation and the panel hopes that consideration can be given to doing so in the near future, if clear benefits to student development can be identified.

The CPA has included in its Budget for the years 2021-2023, the need for participation in an Exchange Program, visits of one week duration in European and other countries, of the recruits that will achieve first and second place in each cohort at the end of Semester E (ANNEX XIV).

Similarly, the Fire Service, that has signed an MoU with the Fire Service of Greece, will promote training exchange according to the MoU, for the fire recruits who excel in their studies (ANNEX XV). A relevant letter has been sent to the Fire Service of Greece and a reply is pending.

4.5 The panel saw only the mentor as a substitute to welfare service to students. We believe that there are European standards that should be followed. Best practice allows for both the academic and pastoral welfare needs of the student.

The CPA, taking into account the recommendations of the Committee, decided to set up an Academic Affairs and Student Welfare Service (ANNEX XII), to improve the services provided to recruits and adopt the policy of one contact point with the recruits, which will assess requests made by recruits and will forward them accordingly.

More specifically, a letter has been sent to various members and offices of the CPA for consultation on the matter and at the same time, an email has been sent to Police Academies of the other Member States of the EU, asking for information on their practices on the matter, while at the same time, provisions of other Universities were studied.

In May 2020 views and suggestions were received and the input is being processed aiming at the improvement of the services provided by the CPA to students. It is estimated that a proposal will be sent to the Chief of Police by the end of September 2020.

4.6 There is a hierarchy inherited by the Police Academy that seems to be working well. However, an adaptation of new statutory mechanism should be one of the goals of Fire Service Academy.

During the development of the program for next semester, (a) each CPA trainer, on the completion of a specific number of teaching periods within a module (for each group), will set aside an extra teaching period for revision and clarifications on the material taught. At the same time, the Coordinator will plan meetings with each class once a week.

4.8 The panel saw no consideration for students with special needs (eg. Dyslexia). The entry requirements do not make it clear. We do not know if that is in accordance with the law in Cyprus because other European Countries are more flexible on that issue.

Regarding the recruitment into the Police and Fire Service, the Police Law 73(I)2004 requires a candidate to be certified, following an examination by a government medical officer, of good health, sound in mind and body and physically and mentally fit to perform his/her duties on recruitment. In addition, the candidate needs to have passed a written examination, (has achieved a total score of at least 50% on average, and a score of at least 40% in each of the subjects included in the examination. Also, the candidates needs to have passed the psychometric as well as physical fitness tests, and have negative result in a drug test.

When one is recruited into the Police / Fire Service, and is placed at the CPA for training, the support of recruits is achieved on a personal basis, and after an individual assessment takes place. The CPA, taking into account the recommendations of the Committee, has added a presentation within the Refresher Training Program for Trainers, on Learning disabilities, in order to brief the trainers on the matter so that they are enabled to deal with such cases more effectively.

4.9 Through discussion with the students evidenced that they are largely satisfied with their learning experiences, there are still opportunities for improvement, particularly around the delivery of the more theoretical aspects of the programme.

The CPA promotes active learning through exercises, workshops, role play etc., even within the framework of theoretical modules as well, and for this purpose it has created areas for group work, workshops and simulation to be used by trainers, while the importance of active learning is stressed on an ongoing basis by the Director of Studies, in group and individual meetings.

Adding to this, the CPA ensures that visula and other teaching aids are acquired so that trainers have more options in the teaching methods they use.

The Refresher Training Programme for Trainers includes one week of training in education matters and one week in operational topics, and aims to upgrade the knowledge and skills of the trainers, so that they are able to carry out effective training activities and to organise fit for purpose experiential activities. The Refresher Training Programme for Trainers is scheduled to take place 10-19 June 2020 (ANNEX Vα).

Taking into consideration the recommendations of the Committee, Research Methodology will be included in the next Refresher Training Programme for Trainers programme, so that training staff will be in a position to engage in research in the context of the Scientific Research and Professional Development Centre of the CPA, as well as supervision of research work carried out by recruits, aiming at the development of their research skills and as a consequence, publications and participation in conferences. In the same programme a presentation of the CPA Quality Guide for further incorporation of such teaching methods and practices that contribute to quality in education will be included.

5. Resources (ESG 1.6)

Findings, strengths, areas of improvement and recommendations of the EEC

Findings

It should be clearly understood that the Fire Academy needs the resources both teaching and laboratory in order to advance itself to contemporary standards. Resources are the means to success. However the panel does recognise that the current level of resources allows for adequate function of the programme – so a lower overall score in this area is meant as a driver for action, and is NOT intended to convey a requirement to disapprove the continuation of the programme.

The CPA taking into consideration the recommendations of the Committee, carried out a search for electronic resources which will be available to all members of the Fire Service, including the trainers that update relevant training material. For this purpose, it has been decided by the Fire Service, the purchase of such an electronic publication, and specifically, the Fire Safety Journal: an international journal devoted to research on fire safety science and engineering, in 2021, since funds for 2020, have been frozen due to the pandemic (ANNEX IX).

Also, access has been given to trainers and School Commanders of the CPA, to "My Athens" database (the CPA has a number of access points within the cooperation with the OUCy), over and above the access granted within the Library of the CPA, so that there is a wider access to electronic resources relating to firefighting, for training purposes.

Apart from the above, the CPA library is in the process of purchasing 18 books (total worth of 1537,50 euro) relating to firefighting, for use by the members of the Fire Service, including the trainers and the fire service recruits. The books are expected to be purchased in 2020 (ANNEX IXα).

At the same time, the Fire Service School has planned to purchase a number of books relating to firefighting, in 2021 (since the funds for 2020 have been frozen due to the pandemic). For this purpose, a book search has begun by the Officer in charge of the Fire Service School in collaboration with the CPA.

Strengths

The practical facilities allow for effective learning and training and appreciated by both students and teaching staff.

The resources of the two Universities add significant valuable weight to the overall resources available to both teaching staff and students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

The panel felt that the CPA aspect of reference material is the weakest area of the programme. However, taking into consideration the strong willingness of both the Police Academy and the Fire Academy to follow the Panels recommendations we believe that they can reverse the entire process in a short period of time.

The CPA taking into consideration the recommendations of the Committee, carried out a search for electronic resources which will be available to all members of the Fire Service, including the trainers that update relevant training material. For this purpose, it has been decided by the Fire Service, the purchase of such an electronic

publication, and specifically, the Fire Safety Journal: an international journal devoted to research on fire safety science and engineering, in 2021, since funds for 2020, have been frozen due to the pandemic (ANNEX IX).

Moreover, access has been given to trainers and School Commanders of the CPA, to "My Athens" database (the CPA has a number of access points within the cooperation with the OUCy), over and above the access granted within the Library of the CPA, so that there is a wider access to electronic resources relating to firefighting, for training purposes.

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At the same time, the Fire Service School has planned to purchase a number of books relating to firefighting, in 2021 (since the funds for 2020 have been frozen due to the pandemic). For this purpose, a book search has begun by the Officer in charge of the Fire Service School in collaboration with the CPA.

Deficiencies noted under the quality indicators (criteria)

5.1 The wide scope of learning resources required to deliver this programme are mostly adequate and in some cases very good. However please refer to points below.

5.2,5.3,5.7,5.10 Due to the association of the CPA with the two Universities, students can have access to a wide variety of books and journals. However CPA should upgrade its library resources/reference materials with regards to the programme under review.

5.11 The library of CPA needs to upgrade and add to its resources in order to upgrade teaching and reference materials that relate to the programme. The score given does deliberately not include the materials that the Universities give access to in order that the importance of CPA core materials is not lost.

The CPA, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Committee (5.2,5.3,5.7,5.10 και 5.11) has carried out a search for electronic resources which will be available to all members of the Fire Service, including the trainers that update relevant training material. For this purpose, it has been decided by the Fire Service, the purchase of such an electronic publication, and specifically, the Fire Safety Journal: an international journal devoted to research on fire safety science and engineering, in 2021, since funds for 2020, have been frozen due to the pandemic (ANNEX IX).

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At the same time, the Fire Service School has planned to purchase a number of books relating to firefighting, in 2021 (since the funds for 2020 have been frozen due to the pandemic). For this purpose, a book search has begun by the Officer in charge of the Fire Service School in collaboration with the CPA.

6. Additional for distance learning programmes (ALL ESG)

Not applicable

7. Additional for doctoral programmes (ALL ESG)

Not applicable

8. Additional for joint programmes (ALL ESG)

Not applicable

B. Conclusions and final remarks

The overall programme is to be commended for its' vocational relevance and fitness for purpose.

The syllabus is well structured and covers appropriate content in discrete courses. The assessment requirements are clearly identified.

There is some question about the level of assessment. The examination papers that were seen were appropriate in terms of content, however the level of academic challenge used only the lower orders of Bloom's Cognitive Taxonomy, and a review is recommended to ensure that overall, the students are being assessed at the correct level for a higher education programme, particularly in relation to the application and synthesis of knowledge.

The CPA has noted the recommendations of the committee and has began the process of modifying the type of tasks used in examinations, so that they include the application, analysis and evaluation of the knowledge of recruits through the use of scenarios, assignments, case studies, court decisions etc. An example of a revised examination paper is attached as ANNEX IIβ.

There is a variety of teaching methodologies with a combination of both theoretical input supported by practical activities designed to equip the learner with both the knowledge and skills required of the modern firefighter.

The opportunity for a great employment of technological teaching support is recognized by the teaching faculty, and it is encouraging to see that there is a willingness to explore the appropriate application of both software and hardware so that the programme is enhanced.

The CPA has noted the recommendations of the Committee and is exploring four specific ways to work on the creation of an electronic platform for the purposes of electronic support of learning.

In a meeting that took place in February 2020 at the CPA between the Administration of the CPA and representatives of the Cyprus Technological University, there was a discussion on the basis of an existing Memorandum of Understanding and the beginning of contacts for designing the platform on the part of the CTU as well as the support they will be providing. On the 1st of June 2020, an email was received from CTU with a specific proposal and a list of issues to be discussed. The Officer in charge of the Scientific Research and Professional Development Centre of the CPA has been assigned to work on the issue (ANNEX X). At the same time, a request was sent to the Ministry of Education in relation to the possibility of using its platform. The possibility of borrowing space on the platform of the European Police Academy Cepol, as well as the possibility of outsourcing, in the event that the previous options do not have a positive outcome, have also been considered, in which case this will be planned for 2021 since funds for 2020 have been frozen due to the pandemic.

It is important to stress that the platform will support learning, and will not replace the current way of delivering recruit training.

It is noted that, beside the above mentioned procedure for the creation of the platform, the CPA utilises the fire service portal and the police portal where the Notes on Firefighting and the Legal Notes are posted and where the recruits can look up for information. The portals are accessible in every instruction room and every Police and Fire Service Station.

In addition, via the library, there is access to eight subscription periodicals (greek and english), access to the automated catalogue of the library (OPAC Online Public Access Catalog), and open access in ebooks (www.jstor.org). The library has also access in electronic periodicals.

For the purposes of improving the communication and support of learning, until the platform is created, online applications are used to create groups in which recruits and trainers participate.

A great strength of the programme is the impressive level of knowledge and experience exhibited by both CPA and University teaching staff, and also by the managers of the programme, so that as a whole, there is an expert level of provision. This is to be commended, although it is important to provide support to the teaching staff through CPD opportunities relating not just to sector specific technical knowledge, but also a broadening of understanding about different teaching and learning issues, and current thinking so that informed decisions can be made about improvements to the programme.

The CPA notes that since 2017, the Refresher Training Programme for Trainers is organised on an annual basis. This training includes one week of training in education matters and one week in operational topics. A draft of the next Refresher Training Programme for Trainers scheduled to take place 10-19 June 2020 is attached (ANNEX Va).

The Refresher Training Programme for Trainers includes one week of training in education matters and one week in operational topics, and aims to upgrade the knowledge and skills of the trainers, so that they are able to carry out effective training activities and to organise fit for purpose experiential activities.

Research Methodology will be included in the next Refresher Training Programme for Trainers programme, so that training staff will be in a position to engage in research in the context of the Scientific Research and Professional Development Centre of the CPA, as well as supervision of research work carried out by recruits, aiming at the development of their research skills and as a consequence, publications and participation in conferences. In the same programme, a presentation of the CPA Quality Guide for further incorporation of such teaching methods and practices that contribute to quality in education will be included.

On a general note, the continuous professional development of the trainers is important. This means that trainers attend webinars as well as seminars and conferences in Cyprus as well as abroad. There is also a cooperation with the Sovereign Base Areas Police School, where the CPA Inspector Officer in Charge and the Sergeant Officer in Charge of Practical Experience (Mentoring) attended a relevant training. CPA trainers attend the specialised Train the Trainers Programme organised by Cepol, while during 2019 CPA trainers attended a training program organised by the Human Resources Development Authority.

Key good practice identified:

- ☑ Highly skilled teachers.
- ☑ A good quality of students.
- ☑ Small classes.
- ☑ The mentor factor.
- ☑ Corporal unity between Police and Fire Academy personnel.
- ☑ Management and faculty staff that are open to change and further development.
- ☑ Good practical facilities.
- ☑ Collaboration with high ranking educational institutions.

Key areas for improvement:

- ☑ Additional teaching resources.

The CPA has noted the recommendations of the committee, and since 17th March 2020, a trainer of the Fire Service has been transferred to the Fire Service School to coordinate the revision and updating of the "Notes on Firefighting" and "Technical Bulletins", under the supervision of the Officer in Charge of the Fire Service School. For the best and more accurate revision of the "Notes on Firefighting", fire fighting officers have been assigned to review and update them, according to their expertise. Their revision, inspection and reissuing is expected to be completed until the end of April 2021 (ANNEX VII).

Additionally, a procedure has begun for the preparation of 'Notes for Fire Service Recruits' by CPA trainers which will be made available to students together with the (under review) "Notes on Firefighting" and "Technical Bulletins". Their aim is to further assist students with understanding, implementing, analysing and evaluating the subject matter of their training course. A sample of 'Notes for Fire Service Recruits' is attached as ANNEX VI.

The CPA taking into consideration the recommendations of the Committee, carried out a search for electronic resources which will be available to all members of the Fire Service, including the trainers that update relevant training material. For this purpose, it has been decided by the Fire Service, the purchase of such an electronic publication, and specifically, the Fire Safety Journal: an international journal devoted to research on fire safety science and engineering, in 2021, since funds for 2020, have been frozen due to the pandemic (ANNEX IX).

Also, access has been given to trainers and School Commanders of the CPA, to "My Athens" database (the CPA has a number of access points within the cooperation with the OUCy), over and above the access granted within the Library of the CPA, so that there is a wider access to electronic resources relating to firefighting, for training purposes.

Apart from the above, the CPA library is in the process of purchasing 18 books (total worth of 1537,50 euro) relating to firefighting, for use by the members of the Fire Service, including the trainers and the fire service recruits. The books are expected to be purchased in 2020 (ANNEX IXα).

At the same time, the Fire Service School has planned to purchase a number of books relating to firefighting, in 2021 (since the funds for 2020 have been frozen due to the pandemic). For this purpose, a book search has begun by the Officer in charge of the Fire Service School in collaboration with the CPA.

☒ Use of technology for teaching.

The CPA has noted the recommendations of the Committee and is exploring four specific ways to work on the creation of an electronic platform for the purposes of electronic support of learning.

In a meeting that took place in February 2020 at the CPA between the Administration of the CPA and representatives of the Cyprus Technological University, there was a discussion on the basis of an existing Memorandum of Understanding and the beginning of contacts for designing the platform on the part of the CTU as well as the support they will be providing. On the 1st of June 2020, an email was received from CTU with a specific proposal and a list of issues to be discussed. The Officer in charge of the Scientific Research and Professional Development Centre of the CPA has been assigned to work on the issue (ANNEX X). At the same time, a request was sent to the Ministry of Education in relation to the possibility of using its platform. The possibility of borrowing space on the platform of the European Police Academy Cepol, as well as the possibility of outsourcing, in the event that the previous options do not have a positive outcome, have also been considered, in which case this will be planned for 2021 since funds for 2020 have been frozen due to the pandemic.

It is important to stress that the platform will support learning, and will not replace the current way of delivering recruit training.

It is noted that, beside the above mentioned procedure for the creation of the platform, the CPA utilises the fire service portal and the police portal where the Notes on Firefighting and the Legal Notes are posted and where the recruits can look up for information. The portals are accessible in every instruction room and every Police and Fire Service Station.

In addition, via the library, there is access to eight subscription periodicals (greek and english), access to the automated catalogue of the library (OPAC Online Public Access Catalog), and open access in ebooks (www.jstor.org). The library has also access in electronic periodicals.

For the purposes of improving the communication and support of learning, until the platform is created, online applications are used to create groups in which recruits and trainers participate.

☒ Student welfare.

The CPA, taking into account the recommendations of the Committee, decided to set up an Academic Affairs and Student Welfare Service (ANNEX XII), to improve the services provided to recruits and adopt the policy of one contact point with the recruits, which will assess requests made by recruits and will forward them accordingly.

More specifically, a letter has been sent to various members and offices of the CPA for consultation on the matter and at the same time, an email has been sent to Police Academies in other European countries asking for information on their practices on the matter, while at the same time, provisions of other Universities were studied.

In May 2020 views and suggestions were received and the input is being processed aiming at the improvement of the services provided by the CPA to students. It is estimated that a proposal will be sent to the Chief of Police by the end of September 2020.

7 Assessment methods and practices.

The CPA has taken into consideration the recommendations of the Committee regarding the use of more contemporary methods of assessment, besides written examinations.

For this purpose, CPA Director's Order 3/12 (ANNEX II) which addresses the evaluation of students has been modified as follows:

- a. The percentage of marks allocated to practical examinations, as opposed to theoretical examinations, has increased from 22.6% to 24% of the overall score for each semester (modules on firefighting)
- b. The percentage of marks allocated to Discipline, has increased from 1% to 2% for each semester, so that soft skills are evaluated, such as the ability to cooperate well with others, effective classroom participation, being positive and taking initiative. These skills will be evaluated throughout the duration of semesters by trainers, as well as by the Officer in charge of Discipline, who are in contact with students on a daily basis.
- c. The evaluation for the 'Natural and Environmental Disasters' module in Semester E has changed; it will be assessed through the completion of a research assignment.

Additionally, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Committee, the CPA has added to the practical examination, the evaluation of skills such as group work - cooperation - communication skills, problem solving, the management of emotions, task management etc. (ANNEX IIα).

It should be noted that the practical examination in the training of Fire Service Recruits (according to point (a) above) is carried out on the basis of specific incidents / scenarios which test the application of knowledge within specific time limits. Besides, during the practical examination, recruits evaluate and apply knowledge, since they have to assess the conditions and the facts of the incident and state the actions that they would carry out, how, when, what equipment they would use and who they would cooperate with, to bring the management of the incident to an end. At the end of the examination, a briefing session is carried out and recruits are able to make suggestions regarding other possible new practices. During the practical examination recruits are evaluated by a three-member committee made up of members of the CPA and/or the Fire Service (a basic precondition is that the trainer teaching the subject is not a member of the committee). (ANNEX IIβ)

Additionally, it is noted that, during the Practical Training with a portfolio, which is completed and assessed, recruits are required to keep a diary to record anything regarding their practical training, encouraging reflection and professional development which are based, to a large extent, on the active involvement of students in their own learning. Upon the completion of the practical training, recruits are required to write a 500-word self assessment report, guided by specific questions (What have I learned? What would I do differently if I had the opportunity? What else do I have to learn in relation to Firefighting duties? What would make the handling of such duties better / easier / more effective? Other).

7 Assessment level.

The CPA has taken into consideration the recommendations of the Committee regarding the use of more contemporary methods of assessment, besides written examinations.

For this purpose, CPA Director's Order 3/12 (ANNEX II) which addresses the evaluation of students has been modified as follows:

- a. The percentage of marks allocated to practical examinations, as opposed to theoretical examinations, has increased from 22.6% to 24% of the overall score for each semester (modules on firefighting)
- b. The percentage of marks allocated to Discipline, has increased from 1% to 2% for each semester, so that soft skills are evaluated, such as the ability to cooperate well with others, effective classroom participation, being positive and taking initiative. These skills will be evaluated throughout the duration of semesters by trainers, as well as by the Officer in charge of Discipline, who are in contact with students on a daily basis.
- c. The evaluation for the 'Natural and Environmental Disasters' module in Semester E has changed; it will be assessed through the completion of a research assignment.

Additionally, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Committee, the CPA has added to the practical examination, the evaluation of skills such as group work - cooperation - communication skills, problem solving, the management of emotions, task management etc. (ANNEX IIα).

It should be noted that the practical examination in the training of Fire Service Recruits (according to point (a) above) is carried out on the basis of specific incidents / scenarios which test the application of knowledge within specific time limits. Besides, during the practical examination, recruits evaluate and apply knowledge, since they have to assess the conditions and the facts of the incident and state the actions that they would carry out, how, when, the equipment that they would use and who they would cooperate with, to bring the management of the incident to an end. At the end of the examination, a briefing session is carried out and recruits are able to make suggestions regarding other possible new practices. During the practical examination recruits are evaluated by a three-member committee made up of members of the CPA and/or the Fire Service (a basic precondition is that the trainer teaching the subject is not a member of the committee).

Additionally, it is noted that, during the Practical Training with a portfolio, which is completed and assessed, recruits are required to keep a diary in which they record anything regarding their practical training, encouraging reflection and professional development which are based, to a large extent, on the active involvement of students in their own learning. Upon the completion of the practical training, recruits are required to write a 500-word self assessment report, guided by specific questions (What have I learned? What would I do differently if I had the opportunity? What else do I have to learn in relation to Firefighting duties? What would make the handling of such duties better / easier / more effective? Other).

Additionally, the CPA has noted the recommendations of the committee and has began the process of modifying the type of tasks used in examinations, so that they include the application, analysis and evaluation of the knowledge of recruits through the use of scenarios, assignments, case studies, court decisions etc. An example of a revised examination paper is attached as ANNEX IIβ.

The panel approves the programme that was presented believing strongly in its potential both professionally and academically to students, teachers, the Academy and the society at large and looks forward to the implementation of some, if not of all, of its suggestions.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Superintendent A' dr Maria Xenophontos	Chair, Internal Quality Assurance Committee	
Superintendent B' dr Panayiotis Nicolaidis	Member, Internal Quality Assurance Committee	
Superintendent B' dr Markianos Kokkinos	Member, Internal Quality Assurance Committee	
Chief Inspector Yiannakis Loizou	Member, Internal Quality Assurance Committee	
Inspector Floris Nikandrou	Member, Internal Quality Assurance Committee	
Click to enter Name	Click to enter Position	

Date: 05 June 2020

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