Higher Education Institution's Response

(Departmental)

- **Higher Education Institution: University of Nicosia**
- **Town: Nicosia**
- **School/Faculty: Humanities and Social Sciences**
- **Department: Languages and Literature**
- **Programme(s) of study under evaluation Name (Duration, ECTS, Cycle)**

Programme 1

In Greek:
Αγγλική Γλώσσα και Λογοτεχνία (4 έτη, 240 ECTS, Πτυχίο)

In English:

English Language and Literature (4 years, 240 ECTS, Bachelor)

Programme 2

In Greek:
Διδασκαλία της Αγγλικής ως Ξένης Γλώσσας (18 μήνες, 90 ECTS, Μάστερ)

In English:

TESOL (18 months, 90 ECTS, Master of Arts)

Programme 3

In Greek:

Διδασκαλία της Αγγλικής ως Ξένης Γλώσσας (18 μήνες, 90 ECTS, Μάστερ, Εξ αποστάσεως)

In English:

MA in TESOL (18 months, 90 ECTS, Master of Arts, e-learning)

- **Department's Status: Currently Operating**

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.300.3.1) must justify whether actions have been taken in improving the quality of the department 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 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. 300.3.1).*

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

1. Department's academic profile and orientation

Sub-areas

- 1.1 **Mission and strategic planning**
- 1.2 **Connecting with society**
- 1.3 **Development processes**

The Department of Languages and Literature was found to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section. Out of the 15 sub-sections, the EEC awarded the Department 5/5 for 12 and 4/5 for 3.

The EEC commended the Department's clearly formulated mission, which is to provide high quality research and teaching in its areas of specialization. It further praised the Department's strategic planning with regard to online teaching.

The EEC noted the continuity between programmes, for example how the linguistics courses on the BA in English Language and Literature prepare students who wish to undertake the MA in TESOL.

The EEC received the Department's efforts to contribute to society positively, and mentioned specifically the Department's active involvement with cultural events that are open to the general public.

It was found that the Department has the right processes in place to ensure that teaching staff continue to develop their skills. The EEC also found that the Department strives for continuous improvement of academic processes. The EEC felt that the Department's programmes will continue to grow.

Overall, the EEC found the Department to be a "well-run, cohesive academic unit" with particular strengths in the following areas:

- good leadership team
- good academic support for students
- caring and supportive staff
- clear and well-documented procedures
- the MA in TGSOL as an innovative solution building on the expertise of the TESOL team

Recommendations

The EEC suggested that the literature component might be more integrated into the MA in TESOL. The Department agrees that this possibility is worth investigating. The Programme Coordinator and the programme faculty of the MA in TESOL have started to look into developing an elective course in Literature in TESOL.

The EEC commended the offering of guaranteed sabbaticals for staff in order to carve time for the development of skills and for research. The Department notes that the new internal regulations, which were approved by the Senate recently and are now awaiting for the Council's approval, have a number of improved and favourable provisions for faculty regarding sabbaticals.

2. Quality Assurance

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **2.1   System and quality assurance strategy**
> **2.2   Quality assurance for the programmes of study**

The Department of Languages and Literature was found to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section. The Department was awarded 5/5 in all applicable subsections of the Quality Assurance section.

Overall, the EEC found the mechanisms for quality assurance to be rigorous and of high standard.

In particular, the EEC listed the following strengths:

- effective system of academic monitoring
- good collaboration between academic and administrative staff
- clear guidance for students
- ability to act on student feedback
- good system in place for student appeals
- excellent availability of data for student employment after graduation
- excellent handbooks and thesis guidance booklets
- excellent library facilities and support

The EEC made no further recommendations in this section as they found no areas of concern.

3. Administration

The Department of Languages and Literature was found to be fully compliant in all criteria for Administration and was awarded 5/5 in all the subsections of this section.

In particular, the EEC expressed satisfaction with the administrative quality assurance processes of the Department. Two areas were listed as particular strengths:

- effective, clear and well-documented administrative quality assurance procedures
- assignment of clear roles and responsibilities across all levels of the Department

The EEC made no further recommendations in this section as they found no areas of concern.

4. Learning and Teaching

> **Sub-areas**
>
> **4.1 Planning the programmes of study**
> **4.2 Organisation of teaching**

The Department of Languages and Literature was found to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section. Out of 13 subsections it has been evaluated with 5/5 in 12 and with 4/5 in 1.

The EEC commended the Department's professionalism and organisation. They were also impressed with the levels of satisfaction with learning and teaching among the students.

The EEC further noted 3 particular strengths:

- good documentation for all courses
- clearly formulated aims and objectives of courses
- clear grading criteria

The EEC also recommended that students on the BA in English Language and Literature and the MA in TESOL write a compulsory thesis.

The Department notes the recommendation of the EEC.

For the BA in English Language and Literature: The Department concurs with the EEC's recommendation and notes that we will proceed with a change in the existing pathway which is already discussed and voted on by the Departmental Council, and will be taken to the School Council and the Senate for ratification. We will propose an adjustment to the existing block "Thesis/Practicum" on the pathway which currently is for 0-6 credits to become 6-12 ECTS credits. This change will give an opportunity to the students to choose both options, Thesis and Practicum, in the fourth year of their studies (**see Appendix I**).

For the MA in TESOL: it should be noted that the current University policy across Cyprus (set by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance in Higher Education) is that the thesis is not mandatory in Master-level programmes. The MA in TESOL has abided by this policy in order to offer flexibility that responds to the needs of the local market.

Nonetheless we recognise the value of the thesis element. Therefore, we have put the following policies/practices in place to encourage students to take up the thesis, including:

- continuous mentoring of students by faculty from semester 1 to help them shape a research topic
- strengthening of the research components of courses by either explicitly covering research methods that are relevant to their content, and/or by having students link more explicitly/systematically theory with practice/collection and analysis of primary data as part of their long assignments
- a new section has been added to the student Handbook that explicitly states the advantages of the thesis option (**see Appendix II**).

5. Teaching Staff

The Department of Languages and Literature was found to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section, being awarded 5/5 in all applicable subsections of this category.

The EEC confirmed that the teaching staff are highly qualified and internationally educated members, who are regularly engaged in professional training and development. They also commented on the enthusiasm and dedication of staff. They confirmed that the faculty's expertise is built into the programmes of study.

The EEC also noted the understaffing at the level of administrative support and the possible adverse impact on faculty research activity and morale. The Department agrees that meaningful administrative support will strengthen research activity and boost staff morale. The Department will continue to put in requests for the hiring of trained administrators through the School Council and the Senate.

6. Research

The Department of Languages and Literature was found to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section. Out of 9 subsections, the Department was awarded 5/5 in 5, 4/5 in 3 and 3/5 in 1.

In general, the EEC found that the Department has formulated a research policy in line with its mission, and that it consistently delivers high-quality publications in international journals and other academic publications. It was also noted that research is integrated into teaching as the Department implements a policy of transferring knowledge.

The EEC recommended that the Department establishes a mentoring scheme where younger members of staff or those who are not publishing as regularly as others are guided by more experienced colleagues. The Department actively encourages faculty members to participate in the central initiatives offered by the wider community of the University of Nicosia, such as the seminars organised by the Research Office, which are designed to foster a general culture of research and collaboration. In addition, the Department has taken the following steps:

1. We actively participate in the School's Research Committee which aims to foster collaboration among staff from different Departments and disciplines.
2. We put a proposal to the Senate for the creation of a departmental research group which will monitor progress in research among staff and discuss possible collaborations between faculty members.

7. Resources

The Department of Languages and Literature was found to be fully compliant in all criteria of this section. Out of 7 subsections, it received 5/5 in 6 and 4/5 in 1.

The EEC confirmed that the Department is managed efficiently as it assesses risk and looks into the sustainability of programmes. The EEC also noted that there is an appropriate auditing culture.

The EEC further recommends that the university ensures that there is adequate funding for the Department were it is needed. The Department will continue to put in requests through the university's annual budgeting system. For any additional needs, the Department will apply for extra funds through the official bodies.

B. Conclusions and final remarks

The Department of Languages and Literature would like to thank the EEC for their virtual visit, for the constructive discussions on the day and for their excellent feedback in their report.

We note that the Department scored mostly 5/5 in all sections with an average score of 4.86 out of 5 for all applicable sections.

In particular, we are pleased that the EEC noted several major strengths of the Department, particularly in our academic profile, quality assurance processes, organization of teaching and research. The EEC commented positively on the Department's leadership, ability to find innovative solutions, the systems in place for student support, our clearly formulated courses and programmes and our good presence in research in our areas of expertise. Overall, the EEC found plenty of evidence of the Department's professionalism and a clear commitment to improve the quality of the deliverables in our areas of teaching, learning and research.

We welcome the EEC's feedback for improvement. We addressed each recommendation separately in the appropriate sections above. As evident in our responses, the Department is committed to taking active steps to incorporate the EEC's suggestions into our short-term and long-term strategic planning.

We would like to thank the EEC once more for their excellent feedback. Their positive evaluation and high score across the board gives us confidence to continue our work and to strive for excellence.

C. Higher Education Institution academic representatives

Name		Signature
	Click to enter Position	
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Date: 25.02.2021

APPENDIX I

DEGREE PATHWAY

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS (150 credits)

CODE	TITLE	ECTS
LALI 120	Introduction to Fiction	6
LALI 130	Introduction to Drama	6
LALI 140	The Science of Linguistics	6
LALI 135	Literature and Criticism	6
LAL I 141	General Linguistics	6
LALI 148	Teaching English as a Foreign Language I	6
LALI 150	Introduction to Poetry	6
LALI 155	Shakespeare	6
LALI 160	Pedagogical Grammar	6
LALI 200	Modern and Contemporary American Literature	6
LALI 240	Applied Linguistics	6
LALI 261	English Morphology and Syntax	6
LALI 272	Gender in Literature	6
LALI 280	English Phonetics and Phonology	6
LALI 295	Research Methods in Linguistics and EFL	6
LALI 362	Semantics and Pragmatics	6
LALI 350	The English Poem	6
LALI 370	Sociolinguistics	6
LALI 385	Literary Theory and Criticism	6
LALI 303	Modernism /Postmodernism	6
LALI 320	The Victorian Novel	6
LALI 310	World Literature in English	6
LALI 400	Contemporary Literature	6
LALI 460	Translation	6
LALI 490	Psycholinguistics	6

PROJECT/PRACTICUM ELECTIVE (0-6 Credits) <mark>Suggested change: 6-12</mark>

LALI 495	Research Project	6
LALI 498	Practicum	6

ELECTIVES: LINGUISTICS & TEFL (18-36)

CODE	TITLE	ECTS
LALI 372	Language and Identity (R)	6
LALI 274	Computer Aided Language Learning (R)	6
LALI 491	Historical Linguistics (R)	6
LALI 175	Intercultural Communication	6
LALI 322	Course Design and Evaluation in TEFL	6
LALI 375	Bi/Multilingual Education (CLIL)	6
LALI 377	Teacher Development in TEFL I	6
LALI 486	Teacher Development in TEFL II	6
LALI 461	Translation II	6
LALI 248	Teaching English as a Foreign Language II	6
LALI 483	Discourse Analysis and Conversation	6

ELECTIVES: LITERATURE (18-36)

LALI 335	Children's Literature (R)	6
LALI 442	Literature in Teaching (R)	6
LALI 482	Authors in Context (R)	6
LALI 302	America in Literature and Film	6
LALI 235	Romantic and Victorian Poetry	6
LALI 330	Modern Drama	6
LALI 471	Memoir and Life-Writing	6

ΔΙΠΑΕ
CYQAA

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

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LALI 380	Intertextuality and Literary Relations	6
LALI 382	Case Studies in Literature	6
LALI 480	Creative Writing	6

FOREIGN LANGUAGES ELECTIVES (12-18 credits)

Code Title		ECTS
FREN 101	French Language and Culture I	6
FREN 102	French Language and Culture II	6
FREN 201	French Language and Culture III	6
GERM 101	German Language and Culture I	6
GERM 102	German Language and Culture II	6
GERM 201	German Language and Culture III	6
GREK 101	Greek Language and Culture I	6
GREK 102	Greek Language and Culture II	6
ITAL 101	Italian Language and Culture I	6
ITAL 102	Italian Language and Culture II	6
ITAL 201	Italian Language and Culture III	6
RUS 101	Russian Language and Culture I	6
RUS 102	Russian Language and Culture II	6
RUS 201	Russian Language and Culture III	6

LANGUAGE EXPRESSION (12-24 credits)

Code Title		ECTS
BADM 332	Technical Writing and Research	6
COMM 200	Business and Professional Communication	6
COMM 300	Group Discussion and Communication	6
ENGL 101	English Composition	6

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES ELECTIVES (0-18 credits)

Code Title		ECTS
ANTH 105	Cultural Anthropology	6
ANTH 135	Experiencing the Other	6
COMM 441	Media and Cultural Theory	6
HIST 202	World History Since 1500	6
HIST 203	Modern Europe	6
PHIL 101	Introduction to Philosophy	6
PHIL 120	Ethics	6
PSY 110	General Psychology I	6
PSY 111	General Psychology II	6
PSY 210	Social Psychology	6
SOC 101	Principles of Sociology	6

COMPUTER AND MATHEMATICS ELECTIVES (12-24 credits) Suggested change: 6-18

Code Title		ECTS
COMP 150	Microcomputer Applications	6
COMP 151	Fundamental Concepts of Information & Computer Technologies	6
MATH 221	Statistics I	6
MULT 160	Introduction to Multimedia	6

NOTE: The student must complete 240 ECTS credits and all programme requirements. A minimum cumulative grade point average (CPA) of 2.0 is required. Thus, although a 'D-' is a PASS grade, in order to achieve a CPA of 2.0 an average grade of 'C' is required.

Appendix II

ADVANTAGES OF WRITING A THESIS (TESL-595DL)

Even though TESL595DL is not a required course but an optional elective, there are significant immediate and long-term benefits associated with competing a Masters-level dissertation, especially if you wish to pursue further studies at the PhD level.

Research and Employability: A thesis gives you the valuable opportunity to delve into interesting research for greater depth of learning in your career area. Employers often prefer students with a thesis paper in their portfolio, because it showcases their gained writing skills, authoritative awareness of the field, and ambition to learn. If you plan to continue study within your discipline, the secondary or original research you conduct for your MA thesis will not only prepare you for the next level of research practice within your education, but it can also give you a head start on your future dissertation or research-based coursework if you choose to pursue your thesis topic further.

Transferable skills: In addition, successfully completing a Master's thesis testifies to the fact that you have the necessary research, academic writing, time-management and planning skills for your career or for further research. Choosing a manageable topic and figuring out how to approach it prepares you for project management in the workplace. Learning how to consolidate differing opinions into a report while asserting your own ideas and opinions will be useful in report and review writing. Thesis writing teaches you to develop flexibility when an original argument or potential data source falls flat, and it certainly forces you to manage your time and organize your thinking more than shorter essays and reports do. Perhaps most importantly, thesis writing pushes you to express yourself authoritatively and fluently in writing. The communication skills you hone through thesis writing will transfer to any career path you choose.

*Faculty Partnership: The*re are few opportunities to work with a faculty member during university that are as meaningful or useful as the thesis writing experience. Faculty advisers meet with students one-on-one to discuss the student's ideas, comment on her outline or writing and offer challenges or pieces of advice for the next stage of writing. This level of intensive mentoring is rare, and it tends to push students to new levels with their thinking and their writing. Plus, faculty thesis advisers usually make suitable references for future jobs, internships and graduate school applications.

Publishing: Whether or not you choose to enter an academic career, publishing your thesis can be beneficial both to you personally (a recognition you can add to your resume) and to your field. Original research and astute criticism keep the academic disciplines vibrant, and most disciplines have several journals where accomplished thesis writers can potentially publish their work. If this is something you are interested in, ask your thesis supervisor whether your work is publishable, and if so, where. Then query journals with a short abstract about your thesis and see if any of them are interested.

[source: Thesis Writing Benefits (synonym.com)]

We advise you to start thinking about a research area/topic you are passionate about early on in your MA. Aim to discuss your ideas with the most relevant faculty member before you get to the third semester so that you are more prepared to choose your topic and embark on writing your thesis when the time comes. **Please also make sure you read carefully the information found further down in the 'Thesis Guide' to familiarize yourself with what this option entails.**

(from pp. 18-19, *MA in TESOL Student Handbook*)