

Summary of the National Survey CYPRUS

Higher education in Cyprus adopts the three cycles system. At present, there are three public universities: The University of Cyprus, The Open University of Cyprus, The Cyprus University of Technology, and four private universities: European University- Cyprus, Frederick University- Cyprus, University of Nicosia- Cyprus, and Neapolis University Paphos.

Public and Private Universities in Cyprus offer courses in undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate level. The average length of studies for a first Degree (*Ptychio*) is four years, for a Master's Degree is one to two years and for a PhD is three to eight years.

All universities have their own admission requirements but they have as common prerequisite the school leaving certificate from a six-year secondary institution or its equivalent. In addition, the selection of candidates for the University of Cyprus and the Cyprus University of Technology is based on the applicants' success in the Entrance Examinations set by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus. For overseas students, who wish to study at the Public Universities, usually G.C.E. or G.C.S.E. credentials are taken into consideration along with any other qualifications that are set as prerequisite. Entrance criteria (in case of international students who want to apply) may also be set by each department. Public Universities may also set special examinations for overseas students.

Higher education in Cyprus is also provided by a number of Public Higher Education Institutions (HEI's), and an even greater number of Private HEI's, none of which has university status.

The laws governing the operation of universities in Cyprus secure and recognize the right of the universities to offer joint degrees.

As quality assurance is of major interest in order to further develop higher education, Cyprus has been actively implementing changes in its education system in order to align with the Bologna Process principles. The competent national body for quality assurance and accreditation of the programmes offered by Private Institutions of Higher Education is the Council for Educational Evaluation-Accreditation, whereas the Evaluation Committee of Private Universities (ECPU) is the competent authority for the evaluation of applications submitted for the establishment of Private Universities.

The establishment of a Quality Assurance Agency has been approved by the council of Ministers of the Republic of Cyprus. The aim of this Agency is to promote quality assurance in both the public and the private institutions of higher education, through various measures which include external accreditation and development of internal quality culture.

KYSATS is the national authority in Cyprus for academic recognition and it also acts as the information provision centre regarding national and foreign qualifications. Thus, KYSATS is the National Contact Point for matters of recognition.

In line with the Bologna Principles, public and private universities in Cyprus follow the three cycles education system and use the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), and also issue the Diploma Supplement.

Public and private universities in Cyprus have established international co-operations and certain bilateral agreements, joint degrees and joint study programs and they seek to enrich their programs with further co-operations

Public and private universities, in general, do not have sufficient participation in Erasmus Mundus joint degree programs but they are in the process of establishing collaborations with other EU institutions. The University of Cyprus was a partner along with the University of London, in a proposal submitted by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens for an Erasmus Mundus Master Course, Action 1 in 2007 with the title: “Master Course in Education, Human Rights and Social Discrimination”.

In order to gain the necessary expertise to form consortia and submit joint degree applications, two consortia formed by Cyprus participated in two seminars organised within the framework of EMAP project, in Prague and Larnaca, respectively: 1. University of Cyprus, Queens University Belfast and University of Vilnius and 2. Cyprus University of Technology, University D’ Orleans-France and Brunel University – U.K.

As universities in Cyprus do not have a long term operation (University of Cyprus: established 1989, Open University Cyprus: established 2006, Cyprus Technological University, Frederick University, European University and Nicosia University: established 2007, Neapolis University Paphos: established 2010), they lack the level of collaborations and exchange mechanisms, usually observed among universities with long established history. The University of Cyprus, as the oldest university in the Republic of Cyprus, is in better position concerning collaborations and joint programs with other universities. The other universities even though they do not have considerable collaborations, at present, they have potentials to do so, as they have high expectations, while they are in the process of either developing joint degrees with long established consortia or they are in the process of evaluating and examining potential collaborations.

The fact that the official language of the public universities is Greek, is inhibiting, to some extent, the development of joint programmes. However, the Ministry of Education and Culture, in collaboration with the public universities, is in the process of changing the legislation so that the public universities will be able to offer programmes of study in other EU languages.

It is important to note that, following the Erasmus Mundus Active Participation Seminars which took place in Prague and Larnaca in 2010, and taking advantage of the expertise gained, two consortia applications have been submitted for EMJD: 1. PhD in Mundus Science and Technology for the Conservation of Cultural Heritage and 2. PhD in Sanitary Environmental Engineering.