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DECLARATION OF 2017 AS “YEAR OF QUALITY TEACHING” AT UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS
Charter of Quality Assurance in Teaching Signed

In recognition of the importance of quality assurance in teaching, the University of Cyprus (UCY), following the Senate’s decision, has declared 2017 as *Year of Quality Teaching*, during a press conference, which took place on Monday, January 30th, 2017 in the Senate Conference Room at UCY. After the declaration, the Rector and the Chairmen of all academic departments signed the UCY Charter of Quality Assurance in Teaching establishing this way a university policy for promoting and ensuring quality teaching at UCY.

In attendance were: Rector, Prof. Dr. Constantinos Christofides, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, Prof. Dr. Athanasios Gagatsis, Vice-Rector for International Affairs, Finance and Administration, Prof. Dr. Constantinos Constantinou, Director of Administration and Finance, Dr. George Lambrianou, Chairmen of Academic Departments, and members of the press. The Charter has been developed within the Institution’s quality assurance directive, encompassing the framework that underpins quality teaching at UCY. A number of stakeholders, including the UCY Centre for Teaching and Learning and the UCY Academic Affairs and Student Welfare Services as well as the Rectorate, contributed significantly to the development of the UCY Charter of Quality Assurance in Teaching.

In addressing the press conference, the Rector stated: *“We have a huge responsibility to our 7.000 students. We must keep on becoming better and better.”*

As written in the Charter:

UCY seeks to enhance, promote and ensure quality of teaching. Ensuring quality of teaching will:

1. Contribute to the realization of the Institution’s vision to establish itself as a leading university of cultural enterprise, a prominent social contributor to society, and a reference point for the global scientific community.
2. Take place in close conjunction with the advancement of research, internalization, learning, entrepreneurship, and the relations with the alumni.

According to *UCY Strategic Plan 2016-2025*, excellence in teaching and learning constitutes a major operational objective and a strategic goal aiming at strengthening competitiveness, and the international recognition of UCY as one of the top universities in the world. Analytically, excellence in learning and teaching aims at:

1. Strengthening the mechanism of internal evaluation and improvement of quality teaching.
2. Improving the faculty to student ratio.
3. Creating opportunities for real-world work experience in the context of pursuing academic curricula.
4. Developing the infrastructure, mechanisms, and programs of study for open and distance learning.
5. Promoting critical thinking and student participation in university life.

Charter’s aim

The Charter purposes to recognize excellence in academic teaching and promote the continuous improvement of the quality of teaching at UCY. It seeks to establish mechanisms for monitoring quality in teaching, originating efforts for professional development initiatives, and providing faculty members, students, and other stakeholders with guidance and information about the University’s policies and regulations concerning the assurance of teaching quality at the Institution. The Charter is subject to change as university policies are revised with the Senate’s authority.

Charter’s objectives

The Charter’s objectives include:

1. The improvement of the quality of teaching.
2. The evolution of a culture for accomplishing quality teaching.

3. The monitoring and assurance of quality teaching for the purposes of self-assessment and self-improvement.
4. The alignment of UCY's policy on quality teaching with European and international standards and directives.

Actions

The initiatives that are proposed to be undertaken within the time span of the next three years follow a methodological approach around three areas of action:

Action 1 - Recognition and dissemination of good teaching practices and self-assessment.

1. Identification, documentation, and dissemination of good teaching practices at UCY.
2. Self-assessment tools for personal and professional development in teaching.
3. Establishment of the Quality Teaching award.

Action 2 - Initial training, ongoing faculty professional development, and networking.

1. Design, development, and implementation of a training program for supporting new faculty members and teaching staff in developing teaching skills and competencies. The program will be under the supervision and coordination of the Centre for Teaching and Learning at UCY.
2. Continuous professional development for the faculty and teaching staff.
3. Networking with other University Centers for Teaching and Learning.

Action 3 - Mechanisms for support and continuous improvement.

1. Support the faculty members and teaching staff in the design, development and improvement of their courses.
2. Establish support mechanisms for improving the quality of students' learning and studying at UCY.
3. Increase the duration of the spring semester from 13 to 14 weeks.
4. Provide ongoing support to academic departments.