

# Expert report on the accreditation procedure for the doctoral programme in 'Comparative Gender Studies', the two-years master programme 'Critical Gender Studies' and the one-year master programme 'Gender Studies' conducted in Vienna by the Central European University Private University

pursuant to § 7 of the Accreditation Regulation for Private Universities 2019 (PU-AkkVO)

Vienna, 08/04/2020

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# 1 Basic principles for the procedure

## **The Austrian higher education system**

To date, the Austrian higher education system comprises:

- 21 public universities;
- 16 private universities, run by nationally accredited private entities;
- 21 universities of applied sciences, run by state-subsidised entities organised under private law or by nationally accredited public entities;
- the university colleges of teacher education, run by nationally accredited public or private entities;
- the philosophical-theological higher education institutions, run by the Catholic Church;
- the Danube University Krems, a public university for post-graduate continuing education whose structure largely corresponds to public universities;
- the Institute of Science and Technology – Austria, which focusses its tasks on the advancement and appreciation of new fields of research and a post-graduate training in the form of PhD and postdoc programmes.

In the winter semester of 2018/2019, 293,644 students were enrolled at public universities (incl. the Danube University Krems). Furthermore, 53,401 students were enrolled at universities of applied sciences and 14,446 students at private universities.<sup>1</sup>

## **External quality assurance**

Pursuant to the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (HS-QSG), public universities shall perform an audit procedure for the certification of their internal quality management system every seven years. There are no legal or financial consequences linked to the decision on certification.

Private universities require institutional accreditation conducted by AQ Austria every six years. After twelve years of uninterrupted accreditation, the accreditation may also be awarded for twelve years. Interim degree programmes and certificate university programmes for further education leading to a degree programme also require accreditation.

Following the six-year period of institutional initial accreditation, universities of applied sciences must be re-accredited. After that, they pass on to the audit system. However, the accreditation is linked to a positive decision on certification in the audit procedure. Before degree programmes may be offered, they must be accredited once.

## **Accreditation of private universities and their degree programmes**

In order to be active as a higher education institution in Austria, private universities require institutional accreditation which must be renewed on a regular basis. In addition to institutional accreditation, newly established degree programmes must be accredited once before they may be offered by the private university. The Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (AQ Austria) is responsible for carrying out accreditation procedures.

<sup>1</sup>As at May 2019, data source: Statistics Austria/unidata. Contrary to the data of the public universities, the student numbers of the universities of applied sciences do not include non-degree seeking students. 278,039 degree students were enrolled at the public universities in the winter semester 2018/19.

The accreditation procedures are carried out in accordance with AQ Austria's Accreditation Regulation for Private Universities 2019 (PU-AkkVO). Furthermore, the agency has based its procedures on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.<sup>2</sup>

The AQ Austria appoints experts for reviewing accreditation applications. On the basis of the application documents and a site visit at the applicant institution, the experts draw up a joint written expert report. The Board of the AQ Austria then makes a decision on accreditation which is based on the expert report and takes into consideration the higher education institution's comment on the expert report. If the statutory prerequisites for accreditation are met and the required qualitative requirements are fulfilled, the degree programmes shall be accredited by official notification.

Before its entry into force, the official notification of the Board shall be subject to approval by the competent Federal Minister. After the procedure has been completed, a report on the outcome of the accreditation procedure as well as the expert report shall be published on the websites of AQ Austria and the applicant institution. Personal data and those parts of the report that disclose funding sources as well as business and operational secrets shall be exempt from publication.

The Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (HS-QSG) and the Private Universities Act (PUG) form the legal basis for the accreditation of degree programmes at private universities.

## 2 Short information on the accreditation procedure

Information on the applicant institution	
Applicant institution	Central European University Private University (CEU PU)
Legal nature	GmbH
Initial accreditation	16/07/2019
Last extension of accreditation	-
Site	Vienna
Number of students	ca. 1800 planned
Information on the accreditation application – Cluster Gender Studies	
Name of the degree programme	<b>Comparative Gender Studies</b>
Type of the degree programme	Doctoral programme
ECTS credits	240
Normal period of studies	4 academic years, 12 terms
Number of study places	6 per year per cohort
Academic degree	Doctor of Philosophy, short 'PhD'
Organisational form	Full-time

<sup>2</sup> Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)

Language used	English
Site at which the degree programme is offered	Vienna
Tuition fees	Fully funded with scholarship
Information on the accreditation application – Cluster Gender Studies	
Name of the degree programme	<b>Critical Gender Studies</b>
Type of the degree programme	Master programme
ECTS credits	120
Normal period of studies	2 academic years (6 terms)
Number of study places	15 students per year per cohort
Academic degree	Master of Arts, short M.A.
Organisational form	Full-time
Language used	English
Site at which the degree programme is offered	Vienna
Tuition fees	€ 12.000
Information on the accreditation application – Cluster Gender Studies	
Name of the degree programme	<b>Gender Studies</b>
Type of the degree programme	Master programme
ECTS credits	60
Normal period of studies	1 academic year, 3 terms
Number of study places	10 students per year per cohort
Academic degree	Master of Arts, short MA
Organisational form	Full-time
Language/s used	English
Site at which the degree programme is offered	Vienna
Tuition fees	€ 12.000

The Central European University Private University submitted the application for accreditation on 11/11/2019. In its decision on 02/01/2020, the Board of AQ Austria appointed the following experts for the review of the accreditation application:

Name	Function/Institution	Role of the expert
Prof. Dr. Chia Longman	Associate Professor in Gender Studies, Director Centre for Research on Culture and Gender, Director Inter University Master Programme in Gender and Diversity, Ghent University	Expert from academia, chair of the expert panel
Dr. Dirk Schulz	Managing Director of GeStiK - Gender Studies in Cologne, Center at the University of Cologne	Expert from academia with professional practice
Prof. Dr. Paula-Irene Villa Braslavsky	Chair of Sociology and Gender Studies, Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich	Expert from academia
Alice Wickström, MSc	Doctoral Candidate, Business School - Department of Management Studies, Aalto University	Doctoral Student
Prof. Dr. Gökce Yurdakul	Managing Director of the Institute of Social Sciences, Chair of the Department of Diversity and Social Conflict, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin	Expert from academia

On 10/03/2020 – 11/03/2020 the expert panel and representatives of the AQ Austria conducted a site visit at the facilities of the site at which the doctoral programme 'Comparative Gender Studies', the two year master programme 'Critical Gender Studies' and the one year master programme 'Gender Studies' of the Central European University Private University shall be offered.

### 3 Preliminary notes of the experts

In general the expert panel wants to point out, that the Department of Gender Studies at CEU PU, unlike many gender studies programmes that rely on affiliated faculty based in other departments, has its own interdisciplinary faculty and curriculum.

The Department offers one-year and two-year MA degrees in Gender Studies and a PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies. Apart from this the Department participates in two European-wide international MA programmes that include mobility to other universities in each consortium: GEMMA, an Erasmus Mundus MA in Women's Studies and Gender studies, and MATILDA, an European MA in Women's History. The following report of the expert panel will deal with the two MA degrees and the PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies. GEMMA was already accredited in the institutional accreditation of the CEU PU. MATILDA will be evaluated within another cluster.

According to the application documents the current Department of Gender Studies at CEU PU started in 1994 as the Programme in Gender and Culture, with the launching of the one-year MA programme in Gender Studies in 1995/96. This MA was accredited in the United States in 1997 for the Budapest campus. The Department of Gender Studies has developed more

programmes over the years and has been involved in setting up several international MA consortia, but within that changed context the one-year MA programme in Gender Studies remains an important programme for those who already have substantial background or an MA in another discipline to quickly enhance their knowledge of gender studies. These are typically students who aim to go on to do a PhD.

The PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies was initially registered and accredited in 2001, then reaccredited in 2012 by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York (US) for and on behalf of the State Education Department for the Budapest campus of the University. Since its initial accreditation, the programme has undergone changes in governance, curriculum and procedures.

The two-year MA degree in Critical Gender Studies was initially accredited in the United States in 2012 for the Budapest campus, in order to provide a Master's programme in Gender Studies which would have the flexibility to offer not only longer-term, more in-depth study for students with less academic background and extended study for students with a previous background in gender who wish to pursue longer and more focused training, but also to provide space for students to develop their own paths towards distinct tracks in either Gender Research or Applied practice in professional domains of Gender policy, politics, and activism.

The success of the gender studies programmes of the CEU PU was already known to the expert panel before the site visit as was the university's forced move from Budapest to Vienna. As colleagues in an often challenged academic field there surely was a felt sense of solidarity even before the expert panel read the documents and before talking to the staff, the administration and the students.

The expert panel additionally was faced with the peculiar but highly rewarding task of a possible "new" accreditation for an already existing but revised program to meet the demands and standards of Austrian universities. The documents from the Department of Gender Studies already presented an impressive history in both research and teaching and the programmes in question looked thoughtful, sophisticated and convincing. During the site visit it became even more apparent that the interdisciplinary, intersectional and globally international approach of the Department of Gender Studies is not only popular among the students but sincerely appreciated and supported by the head of CEU PU's management. Indeed it can be said to not only be in accordance with but having played a major role in shaping and widening the university's overall approach and subject culture.

It was an immense pleasure to converse with the different groups and representatives of the CEU PU in the respective sessions. The expert panel was deeply impressed by the dedication of each person involved on all levels. The panel can only wish the CEU PU and, particularly, the Department of Gender Studies and its programmes the best of luck and continued support and success in its new environment.

## Doctoral programme in 'Comparative Gender Studies'

### 4 Review and assessment based on the assessment criteria stipulated in the PU-AkkVO – Doctoral programme in 'Comparative Gender Studies'

#### 4.1 Assessment criterion § 18 (1) 1 to 2: Development and quality assurance of the doctoral programme

##### Development and quality assurance of the degree programme

*1. The degree programme was developed using a predefined procedure for the development and establishment of degree programmes and involving the relevant stakeholder groups.*

According to the application documents, and as presented during the site visit, the PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies was conceptualised and set up in 2001, and reaccredited in 2012. It has since been further developed in regard to curriculum and some specific procedures, paying special attention to more flexibility and simplification of the Comprehensive Exam at the end of the first year. As the university representatives described in detail, the programme is continuously developed and monitored by the responsible bodies of CEU PU and departmental routines. Based on documentation and presentation, these include self-assessment of the programme's and the individual faculty members' performance as anonymous student evaluation of courses and supervision. Town-hall meetings are part of regular routines at CEU PU and at the Department of Gender Studies, these also contribute to the ongoing development of the programme. The PhD students' feedback is a core element in this process, and is taken very seriously by faculty and administration. The discussion during the site visit made very clear how serious and important shared collaborative development is to the Department. According to faculty and students, it has been agreed that the workload in the 1st year of PhD programme was too heavy; a re-structuration process in the future may make reasonable cut-downs on the course load. The expert panel encourages the programme to do so.

The PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies is a highly competitive programme, and the admission process is very carefully designed in order to guarantee an excellent and diverse body of students. As faculty and the head of the admission committee reported during the site visit, and as the documentation presented during the visit clearly shows, the admission process evaluates academic quality and relevance of the project proposal, the viability of the research design, gender studies background, recommendation letters, and the overall academic education of each applicant. During the admission evaluation, if applicants are otherwise convincing, but do not have enough training, an important share of applicants is re-directed towards the 1 year MA Gender Studies programme.

The transition to Austria suggests the PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies to focus on its ongoing and future involvement with relevant stakeholder groups. As faculty members convincingly reported during the site visit, these are mainly global/transnational and regional social movements (e.g. feminist and anti-austerity movements in global and regional perspective, ecological movements, social justice and democratisation movements in Eastern

Europe, anti-authoritarian mobilisations etc.), paying now and in future special attention to the new regional context when transitioning to Vienna - but without losing sight of CEU' PUs orientation towards Central and Eastern European constellations. For the expert panel it is evident that the PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies has shaped much of Higher Education and Public Policy in the Central Eastern European region. The Department of Gender Studies of CEU PU has already close institutional ties to NGOs and to academia in Austria.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### **Recommendation:**

The expert panel recommends that the CEU PU should seek to deepen the existing cooperations, e.g. with the University of Vienna. Such cooperations would further enrich the PhD programme, adding to the comparative dimension.

#### Development and quality assurance of the degree programme

*2. Following its accreditation, the degree programme is incorporated into the private university's quality management system. The quality assurance measures also comprise adequate structures and procedures to ensure that the rules of good scientific practice are adhered to.*

Since the PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies for long has been a prominent part of the CEU PU's profile, it has already been incorporated into the PU's quality management system. Quality assurance processes follow the CEU PU's general rules. These include self-assessment on the programme's performance in the Department of Gender Studies' annual report, individual faculty members' academic activity reports, anonymous student evaluations on courses and supervision, as well as town-hall style meetings with students, at least once per term.

According to the Institutional Assessment and Quality Assurance (IAQA) of the CEU PU, all programmes of the Department of Gender Studies undergo regular short and long-term reviews to critically assess the programmes and the performance of the faculty, and to map the changing interests of the students. Students are made aware of the importance of feedback when they enter CEU PU, during the departmental and programme-level orientation sessions of the Zero Week. The PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies, along with the Department of Gender Studies, is also assessed regularly by external expert reviewers.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

## 4.2 Assessment criterion § 18 (2) 1 to 6: Research environment

#### Research environment

*1. The private university has developed a research concept which incorporates the doctoral degree programme and a development plan which comprises enhancement measures for the degree programme.*

The PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies at the CEU PU is an interdisciplinary programme with theoretically and methodologically comprehensive teaching and hands-on research agenda. The programme has existed in Budapest before it moves to Vienna, so it has

a track record of a successful research programme, which brings relevant groups of students, professors, visiting professors and invited experts together. The PhD programme covers a range of intellectually stimulating and socially important research topics, such as activism, social movements and policy, anti-gender mobilisation and attacks on freedom, cultural studies, feminist knowledge production, gendered and sexualised borders among others. The PhD students can bring their own ideas to the curriculum and request changes in the syllabi according to their specific research interests. Assistant professors can introduce new content through consultation with other colleagues in one-to-one or faculty meetings. In general, the PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies is a vibrant and inclusive environment, open to innovative ideas and critical discussions.

The PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies supports researchers through research-support office for grant applications and administration. With the assistance of research-support office, Gender Studies scholars successfully received external research grants in the past, the most recent one is the prestigious and highly competitive European Research Council (ERC) advanced grant and an ERC Synergy grant<sup>3</sup>. In addition to individual grants such as the ERC, the faculty members collaborate in international research networks. The two of these research networks were just completed in 2019: GRACE - Gender and Cultures of Equality, funded by the EU Horizon 2020- Marie Curie actions /Innovative Training Networks, and STINT - New Tools for Transnational Analysis in Postgraduate Intersectional Gender Research is funded by the Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education.

The faculty members have been regularly receiving prestigious grants from the European Union resources (such as the European Cooperation in Science and Technology - COST action<sup>4</sup>), and actively playing role in the management of these grants through research cooperations. The international character of the PhD programme also shows in the prestigious invitations and positions in internationally well-known universities and research institutes, editorial board members positions and research association.

The researchers, both faculty members and the PhD students in the PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies can receive internal funding from the university in order to advance their research, and they regularly collaborate with other departments within the university. In short, this is a very research active, internationally connected and intellectually vibrant PhD programme with clear foci on research topics and development. The prestigious grants that are awarded to the faculty members, intra-university collaborations and their extensive international networks are proofs of this vibrant research environment.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

<sup>3</sup> ERC grants are awarded through open competition to projects headed by starting and established researchers, irrespective of their origins, who are working or moving to work in Europe. The sole criterion for selection is scientific excellence. The aim here is to recognise the best ideas, and confer status and visibility on the best brains in Europe, while also attracting talent from abroad, source <https://erc.europa.eu/about-erc/mission>, visited 6/4/20

<sup>4</sup> COST provides networking opportunities for researchers and innovators in order to strengthen Europe's capacity to address scientific, technological and societal challenges. The three strategic priorities are promoting and spreading excellence, fostering interdisciplinary research for breakthrough science and empowering and retaining young researchers and innovators. COST implements its mission by funding bottom-up, excellence-driven, open and inclusive networks for peaceful purposes in all areas of science and technology. Source <https://www.cost.eu/who-we-are/mission-vision-and-values/>, visited 6/4/20

#### Research environment

*2. The private university has defined a research focus for the degree programme which covers the broadness of the respective discipline as regards content and methods. The focus of the research performance corresponds to the university's approach as well as to the respective subject culture and guarantees international visibility.*

The PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies supports CEU PU's mission to provide education of academic freedom, critical thinking skills and supporting social research in solving global problems. The cutting-edge research and teaching areas of the PhD programme are such as activism, social movements and policy, anti-gender mobilisation and attacks on freedom, cultural studies, feminist knowledge production, gendered and sexualised borders among others. The faculty members are internationally visible in the broader Gender Studies academic context through their international and peer-reviewed publications, which are listed in the CVs in the accreditation application. The PhD students are strongly encouraged to contribute to the research projects, work in the research projects of faculty members as junior researchers and are supported to co-author research related publications with some of the faculty members.

The PhD students can choose their own elective courses that are relevant to their PhD research from a variety of elective courses. Quantitative and qualitative research methods are parts of the PhD curriculum. Although the main emphasis of the PhD programme lies in the qualitative research methods, if need be, the PhD students can take methods courses on quantitative methods, too.

There is non-competitive funding for presenting at the conferences. The research related travel is funded for the students as well as attendance to exchange programmes and summer schools. All these academic and financial support to PhD students increase their international visibility at an early stage in their career, and help them to build their international networks already during their PhD years.

In the accreditation application and during the site visit, the expert committee was assured that the programme has suitable didactic, technical, organisational and financial conditions for research and teaching at their new location in Vienna.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Research environment

*3. The private university has employed professors qualified in primary occupation in the discipline relevant for the degree programme who cover the broad range of the discipline's content and methods. Primary occupation here means working at least 50% of one's total working hours in salaried employment at the private university.*

In the PhD programme, there are six full and associate professors, four assistant professors and one university professor, who are employed full time, eleven full time professors in total. The PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies has provided copies of preliminary contracts with four members of academic staff who will teach major courses in the PhD programme. These contracts cover 100% of their working hours in salaried employment in the PhD programme. According to the academic staff handbook, a full time employed professor has

a workload of 40 hours per week. These professors cover the broad range of Comparative Gender Studies' core courses. In addition to 24 ECTS hours of classroom teaching, they provide consultation and supervision to the PhD students, conduct research and involve in the administrative tasks of the PhD programme. The teaching load is specified as lower for Department Heads and for Assistant Professors and for one University Professor in the academic staff handbook. The preliminary contracts that the expert panel has reviewed are currently limited to 4 years. However, during the expert site visit, the President/ Rector of the CEU PU assured all experts and faculty members that there would be no changes to the earlier employment contracts that had been already valid in Budapest during the transition to Vienna. The final contracts are currently expected to be drawn up until the end of March 2020.

In addition to the full time faculty members in the PhD programme, through collaboration with other universities and research institutes in Hungary, visiting professors and academic instructors have been contributing to the programme in terms of advancing the writing skills of the PhD students, and offering programme courses in variety of research methods and theory. There are two visiting faculty members (one is recurrent) and three academic writing instructors. During the site visit the faculty members stated that they are planning to establish relations with Austrian universities for collaboration for visiting positions.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Research environment

*4. The private university maintains institutionally anchored co-operation projects in research and development or the development and appreciation of the arts which are relevant for the degree programme and adequate for the respective subject culture.*

The PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies maintains its cooperation in research and development through international and national research and teaching cooperations. Three main ways to anchor these cooperation projects are:

1) Academic networks to facilitate scholarly exchange and build innovative research cooperations, for example through international and national grants that foster academic networking. GRACE (Gender and Cultures of Equality); STINT (New Tools for Transnational Analysis in Postgraduate Intersectional Gender Research) and ZARAH (Women's Labour Activism in Eastern Europe and transnationally, from the age of empires to the late 20th century) are all funded by various EU research grants which are highly competitive and prestigious to receive. Some of these grants are ERC Advanced and Synergy Grants, EU Horizon2020, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, COST action of the EU and Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education among others. Through these grants, the faculty members and the PhD students who work as researchers in their projects have regular access to international academic communities and have possibilities of exchange and long-term collaboration.

2) Visiting professorships, scholarships and invitations to prestigious universities and research institutes as well as through editorship or professional membership in scholarly associations, international journal boards. The PhD programme is extremely well-connected through these meso-level and macro-level networks which facilitate exchange to broader academic communities. Some of these positions include Julien and Virginia Cornell Visiting Professorship in Swarthmore College, which is one of the top liberal arts colleges in the US; or Membership

of the Horizon2020 Advisory Group and the Presidential Committee on Female Researchers' Life Course and editorial board membership in the European Journal of Women's Studies, which is one of the most well-known women studies journal in this area. The department is also a member of international networks, such as the European Association for Gender Research, Education and Documentation among others. It is not possible to list of these cooperations, networks and positions in this expert report, but they are fully listed in their PhD programme website, the departmental documents that are available to the expert panel and in the CVs of the faculty members.

3) The cooperation projects that are relevant for the PhD programme are maintained through hosting international conferences that attract hundreds of scholars and graduate students to CEU and summer schools. In addition, visiting research and teaching scholars in the PhD programme are contributing to increase the research cooperations beyond the current PhD programme.

GEMMA, a Joint MA degree in Women and Gender Studies, funded by the Erasmus+ Key Action 1 Mundus Programme of the European Union, must be mentioned here. CEU PU is part of the consortium offering this programme in collaboration with other universities. In the application this Joint Degree Programme was mentioned as source for cooperation projects for the PhD and the MA programmes.

The expert panel provided with an overview of the external funding that the Department of Gender Studies received over the past decade. According to this overview, the projects directly related to Gender Studies have brought in significant amount of research funding, mainly from European sources. These are the funded research projects that are predominantly focusing on gender studies. The report also emphasises that there are additional externally funded projects in the CEU PU, which had a gender dimension but were focused predominantly on other areas. In the application documents the experts were informed that there are current funding applications under review.

The PhD programme has been actively collaborating with other universities and research institutes in Hungary. While maintaining these earlier networks, the faculty members stated that they would be ready for new collaborations in the Austrian academic context.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Research environment

*5. The private university promotes research and development activities by providing for appropriate organisational or structural framework conditions.*

The PhD programme's research development plan fits with the development plan of the CEU PU. The PhD programme strengthen its research profile in close connection with its educational activities of the CEU PU. The doctoral supervision tailored to each student's research project through a supervisor and members of the doctoral committee guide PhD students' projects in the programme. The limited number of PhD student per supervisor increase the quality of supervision in the Gender Studies Programme. The PhD students are fully paid and they can fully concentrate on their research projects. The PhD candidates have the opportunity to visit partner universities with non-competitive stipends from the CEU. In addition, they are offered stipends in order to conduct their field research in other countries or to attend conferences and

workshops for the purpose of presenting their papers. The PhD students in the programme received prestigious external grants which support their international networks and visibility. Access to the ethical committee of the university as well as individual consultation with the faculty members on research ethics help PhD students to conduct research according to research ethics. The students have influence who will come to the public lectures, which develop their expertise on their specific fields further. An academic coordinator acts as immediate contact between university administration and PhD students to enable efficient solving of possible administrative problems.

The research services of the university are primarily oriented towards faculty members. The PhD programme hosts a prestigious ERC advanced grant (Women's labour activism in Eastern Europe and transnationally, from the age of empires to the late 20th century).

The faculty members can take sabbaticals that promote their research activities. The organisational and structural framework is readily available for PhD students and faculty members.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Research environment

*6. The private university's research infrastructure as well as its facilities and equipment are adequate on a quantitative and a qualitative basis for operating the degree programme. In the case that the private university draws on external resources, their authorisation to use them has been contractually secured.*

The digital infrastructure and technical support of the PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies is provided by the CEU PU on an adequate level. During the site visit, the experts visited the library of the university, which has all the technologically advanced book search software, international media database, interlibrary loan programme, scanning and photocopying available to the university's students and faculty members. The interlibrary loan system is authorised by the university in short periods of time. There is immediate technical support available for new students who want to acquaint themselves with the library's resources. The books in the library are being transported from Budapest to Vienna, therefore only a limited number of books on Gender Studies were available on the book shelves of the library. There is a university cloud available to save research data. Open access publication of articles and books are endorsed by the PhD programme in accordance to the CEU PU.

There are a variety of small and large seminar rooms, an auditorium with soundproof windows, multiple co-working spaces for students and various recreational space available for the students and faculty members. All teaching spaces are designed according to teaching and learning efficiency with new technological equipment which also enable online teaching when necessary.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

### 4.3 Assessment criterion § 18 (3) 1 to 3: Supervision and counselling services

#### Supervision and counselling services

*1. The private university shall conclude agreements with the doctoral students which govern the respective rights and duties of the private university, the doctoral students and their supervisors.*

According to presented documentation, and as further detailed during the site visit, the agreements between the Department of Gender Studies at CEU PU and the PhD students are very thorough: They contain specifications of all dimensions of the PhD process, thus clarifying and sustainably according on a wide range of aspects regarding the respective rights and duties of the private university, the doctoral students and their supervisors. It is fully clear, that PhD students and their supervisors agree on all relevant issues concerning the PhD process.

CEU PU offers support and optative training for supervisors through its Center for Teaching & Learning. During the site visit, faculty stressed the very strong, pragmatic, and effective informal departmental support. It seems clear, that such informal support works very well and is much appreciated by faculty. In discussions during the site visit, it became clear that the PhD committee is a crucial site of academic and administrative debate in the best sense. Supervision and PhD progress is monitored closely by this body. Faculty expresses different experiences and stances on further professionalising supervision (e.g. through mandatory courses for faculty, etc.). The expert panel encourages the faculty members of the PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies to pursue further professionalised supervision.

During the site visit, the differences between and specificities of mentoring, supervision, and counselling were addressed. Faculty and administrative staff made clear that supervision equals mentoring by supervisor/other professors in the academic realm, and that counselling includes topics such as career advice, but also psychological matters. There are specific routines and professionals for mental health or other psychological matters. Faculty and experts agree that these should be further developed and strengthened.

During the site visit, the PhD students clearly confirmed the overall excellent supervision and counselling situation at the Department of Gender Studies. Students feel they are very well informed, that information on all relevant issues are transparent and available, and - especially - that their supervisors are extremely dedicated, engaged, and accessible. They also stress that CEU PU and the Department of Gender Studies are clearly committed to making supervision and counselling as best as possible.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Supervision and counselling services

*2. The private university shall enable the doctoral students to engage in an intensive dialogue with scientists or artists, respectively, by collaborating with higher education institutions and, if applicable, partners outside the higher education area in Austria and abroad and promote the participation of doctoral students in national and international symposia.*

In the application, as well as during the site visit, it became clear that the PhD students of the Department of Gender Studies are encouraged to engage in an active dialogue and exchange with leading scholars and institutions in the broader field of Gender Studies. They are, for example, provided with the opportunity to apply for various forms of stipends that allow them to arrange research visits. They are also highly encouraged to present their work in national and international conferences and symposia throughout the PhD process. During discussions with the faculty, it also became clear that the faculty actively try to invite guest lectures (to present in the 'Public Lecture Series') that are working within in fields that are of interests for the students, PhD students in particular, to stimulate exchange.

The experts thereby consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Supervision and counselling services

*3. The private university shall provide the doctoral students with adequate counselling services which are tailored to the specific degree programme.*

According to the application documents, the PhD students receive supervision from their supervisors in terms of coursework, comprehensive exam, dissertation writing and defence, advice and feedback, progress on their research as well as general mentoring. The Director of Doctoral Studies and a Doctoral Committee provide advice with regards to choice of supervisor, and the Doctoral Programme Committee approves the choice of supervisor which is then forwarded to the University Doctoral Committee for approval. The expert panel appreciates the limits set upon the number of PhD students (5) per member of faculty, which allows for close supervision and guidance.

The application documents also include a sample Doctoral Supervision Agreement, specific doctoral regulations for the Department of Gender Studies and general CEU PU Doctoral Regulations. This show that the PhD process is organised in a way which allows for counselling and support throughout the programme.

During the site visit, it was, however, noted that the earlier stages of the PhD programme were considered quite intense and that further counselling services may be needed. This as the PhD students, at the moment, are expected to finalise all of their course work while also preparing for the comprehensive exam during their first year. During discussions with the faculty, many of them members of the Doctoral Programme Committee, it did, however, become clear that the situation is currently being evaluated. The faculty members are now looking into the possibility of making changes in the structure of the programme to make the first year less intense. Given that they were aware of this, the members of the faculty also expressed that they attempt to make sure that the PhD students feel adequately supported during the process. This was later affirmed by student representatives.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### 4.4 Assessment criterion § 18 (4) 1 to 8: Degree programme and degree programme management

##### Degree programme and degree programme management

*1. The profile and the intended learning outcomes of the degree programme have been clearly defined. They include scientific as well as artistic competences, personal skills, and social competences and are in accordance with level 8 of the National Qualification Framework.*

According to the application documents, and as presented during the site visit, the profile of the PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies is very clear, and well structured. The outcomes are defined in a transparent and clear manner, they are absolutely in accordance with level 8 of the National Qualification Framework and in tune with international academic standards. The programme is a hybrid of the US American and European model of PhD training, combining the best elements of both, i.e. a structured, course-based foundation with a more free structured, individual research and writing period towards the end.

The PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies is an interdisciplinary degree programme that emphasises comparative and integrative perspectives on Gender Studies through a variety of research approaches. The goal of the programme is to offer doctoral-level education at the highest international standards for prospective scholars and teachers who seek to specialise in Gender Studies as a subject field in its own right. The PhD programme promotes original and critical thinking as part of academic excellence. The curriculum and the research undertaken in the programme stress critical approaches towards gender as fundamental element of society, culture, policy, and economy. The programme prepares graduate students for careers in academic institutions, policy-making institutions and NGOs at national and international levels. As part of one of the strongest Gender Studies departments in Europe, the PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies stands out as a rare example of truly interdisciplinary doctoral training in Gender Studies with equal emphasis on both the humanities and social sciences.

The PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies seeks to contribute to the mission of CEU PU through research excellence and grounded critique of gendered inequalities and structures of dominance. Since the establishment, the programme has supported research projects on Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the former Soviet Union (fSU) regions, as well as beyond these regions; the programme promotes theoretical rigor and comparative inquiry that foreground CEE/fSU as an important part of the world (both as object of study and as a source of new insights) while also maintaining global perspectives. The programme is also in line with CEU PU's major effort in interdisciplinary research and teaching, bringing together various fields, theories, and methods of study in the humanities and the social sciences.

The Department of Gender Studies and CEU PU in general have established detailed, transparent and accessible regulations for the PhD programme. The courses as well as the examinations are perfectly suitable for assessing the outcomes while allowing for certain academic freedom and choices for the PhD students regarding topics and methods.

As discussed during the site visit, faculty and students alike stressed the absence of problems regarding the multi- or interdisciplinary mixture in the PhD cohorts.

Rather, the courses in the first year help to generate a 'coherent cohort' through epistemological reflexivity and generate a space to broaden their interdisciplinary knowledge.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*2. The name of the degree programme and the academic degree correspond to the degree programme's profile.*

According to the documentation and as explained during the site visit, the name of the PhD programme in 'Comparative Gender Studies' is realised in the degree's profile and contents.

The academic degree for the doctoral programme is 'Doctor of Philosophy' (PhD). In certain cases the doctoral committee can make a proposal for awarding the student (3<sup>rd</sup> year and above) an academic degree 'MPhil.', if they have successfully completed the comprehensive as well as the complex exam, but are not continuing with writing their dissertation. Both academic degrees are in line with international standards and considered adequate by the experts.

The comparative dimension is realised through thorough academic research in its theoretical, conceptual, and empirical dimensions. As presented in detail through faculty during the meetings onsite, the comparative dimension of the PhD programme might relate either to regional/national, theoretical, historical, or otherwise empirical dimensions (e.g. age cohorts, milieus, class, gender etc.) of specific research questions. Further, the 'comparative' dimension is itself a core element of academic inquiry, i.e. the PhD programme generates research-based academic reflexivity through the analysis and development of that 'comparative' itself means.

As presented and discussed during the site visit, the 'comparative' focus includes a variety of aspects, according to the specific research projects: theoretical, in regard to genres, regions, historical moments, conceptual approaches, social groups, etc. It was convincingly presented that comparative is not a 'flat' or simple buzzword, but well elaborated as a shared criterion of academic rigor.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*3. The minimum duration of studies stipulated in the curriculum is three years. The contents and structure of the curriculum ensure that the intended learning outcomes are achieved, while combining research (research and development and/or advancement and appreciation of the arts) and teaching.*

The PhD programme takes four years which is equivalent to 240 ECTS credits. As stated under point 1, the curriculum offers a very well structured, clear, and flexible structure of four years. In its first year, the programme lays a broad and solid fundament through excellent specific courses, including the PhD preparation seminar. In latter course, PhD students should be able to develop their PhD project including methodological and other basic aspects. The second year consists mainly of doing the own research, under regular and very close supervision. Starting with the third year, teaching experience is required through activities as 'teaching assistant', again intensively supported by the Department and the supervisor. In the fourth year the students should write up their thesis and finish their PhD.

The course-work during the first year lays a broad methodological and multidisciplinary fundament, already preparing students for their own research. The second year is dedicated to working on the specific PhD research projects, either in archives, libraries, or doing field-work, partly abroad. The student must hand in regular reports regarding their work, and have intensive regular communication with their supervisors. All groups involved stressed the availability, the commitment and seriousness of the supervision offered by the faculty of the Department of Gender Studies. Thus, the programme ensures academic and teaching skills are combined and the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*4. The workload related to the individual modules ensures that the intended learning outcomes, especially writing the doctoral thesis, can be achieved within the stipulated duration of studies. The ECTS is applied correctly; in any case to the curricular parts (courses) of the degree programme.*

The workload for all four years was meticulously explained in the application documents, and further detailed during the site visit. In general, the workload related to the individual modules ensures that the intended learning outcomes can be achieved. The first year is very intense, it blends the development of a research project with broader course work in a relatively short period. This intense workload has been an issue of reflection with all groups involved, especially the PhD students, and the programme management is very much aware of the situation. While the workload during the first year is indeed heavy, it clearly is feasible and accords to usual ECTS standards.

The expert panel was convinced by the serious manner faculty treated the issue of workload in the first year. The expert panel supports the ongoing efforts to reduce the workload while keeping up the outstanding quality of the programme, and is fully convinced that the committees of CEU PU and of the department of Gender studies will find a sustainable solution.

The experts consider the criterion to **be fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*5. Regulations for doctoral programmes have been established. The examination methods are suitable to assess whether and to what extent the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.*

Course syllabi evaluation and examination methods are detailed along and in accordance with learning outcomes and teaching methods, including the assessment of class attendance, participation, discussion leading, presentations, reflection and final papers. Examination methods are varied among and within the different modules and individual courses, allowing to test and evaluate different competences of each individual student. The PhD projects are monitored closely, offering important guidance, but also allowing for independent work by the PhD students.

Examination methods and regulations are in accordance with the university wide policies.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

6. A "Diploma Supplement" that complies with the requirements laid down in Annex 1 to § 6 of the University and Higher Education Statistics and Education Documentation Decree (Universitäts- und Hochschulstatistik- und Bildungsdokumentationsverordnung, UHSBV), original version: F. L. G. II no. 216/2019, will be issued.

The diploma supplement has been provided to the expert panel. It complies with the requirements laid down in Annex 1 to § 6 of the University and Higher Education Statistics and Education Documentation Decree (Universitäts- und Hochschulstatistik- und Bildungsdokumentationsverordnung, UHSBV), original version: F. L. G. II no. 216/2019.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

7. The admission requirements have been clearly defined. In terms of the qualification level, they correspond at least to the provisions provided by the Universities Act (UG).

As stated in the application documents, and further detailed through documents presented during the site visit, the admission procedures have been clearly defined and ensure a fair and transparent selection of the applicants according to the admission requirements and the required competences.

Successful applicants must hold an MA degree in Gender Studies or a related social science or humanities discipline, preferably one that supports the proposed dissertation project. A research interest that complements those of the Gender Studies faculty is preferred but not required; the department will not consider topics that fall outside the areas of faculty supervisory competence. In addition, all applications are evaluated based upon the significance and viability of the proposed dissertation project, the applicant's sufficient background and oral, written and linguistic competency to carry out the proposed project, and her/his records of academic performance (such as grades).

Language requirements: Applicants must meet the general CEU PU requirements for doctoral programmes with minimum test scores in one of the following, TOEFL (computer based): 250; TOEFL (paper version): 600; IELTS: 7; Cambridge Proficiency Examination: C; Cambridge Advanced English Test: A. There are certain exceptions to these requirements, when students e.g. are native speakers or current CEU PU students.

In addition to meeting general requirements, applicants to the doctoral programme in Comparative Gender Studies must submit:

- PhD proposal of up to 1000 words
- 3 recommendation letters
- Relevant transcripts and diplomas
- Applicants selected for an interview will be invited to send a writing sample (published or unpublished) of at least 3500 words written in, or translated to, English.

In the first round, each application is evaluated in writing by two faculty members with expertise related to the proposed dissertation project. At the end of the first round, a list is compiled of applicants recommended to proceed to the second round, in which each applicant is interviewed

in person or via video call by two faculty members who have not written letters of recommendation for the applicant (March-April). The interviewers evaluate the applicant based on the submitted written materials and her/his performance at the interview. The first and second round evaluations, alongside the applications, are then made available to the whole teaching faculty, which participates in a final selection meeting (early May). At this meeting, two ranked lists are produced: one with applicants to be invited to the programme and a second as a waiting list (the rest are rejected). Applicants who are currently completing the MA in Gender Studies at CEU PU can only be accepted conditionally on the outcome of their MA thesis defence, which is held in mid-June. In case an applicant declines or is not invited into the programme on the ground of a disappointing MA thesis, his/her place is offered to the next candidate on the waiting list.

The admission requirements have been clearly defined. In terms of the qualification level, they correspond at least to the provisions provided by the Universities Act (UG).

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*8. The admission procedure has been clearly defined and ensures a fair and transparent selection of the applicants according to the admission requirements and the required competences.*

The faculty takes great care and is highly professional when choosing new PhD students, focusing on the intrinsic quality of applications, the matching with supervisors, and further capacities. In considering the applications, the Department of Gender Studies closely monitors the presented materials as well as the applicants' graduate grades their proposals, and overall achievements. All applications are read and evaluated by two faculty members, and in the next round a number of applicants is interviewed via skype, after which a group of faculty members makes a merit list. Further material was presented during the site visit, exemplifying concrete admission procedures.

The admission procedure is clear to all involved and ensures a fair selection by addressing equally general skills and capacities and specific experiences and backgrounds. During the site visit it was confirmed that potential grade differences among institutions per country, and between disciplines were taken into account; and all elements within in an application file carefully acknowledged and evaluated sensibly. The representatives of CEU PU emphasised how the student body has increasingly globalised. Of the 64 students in all MA gender studies programmes and 6 first year PhD students, 37 are from non-European countries, including Asia, Latin America, US.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*9. The recognition procedures for higher education competences in terms of crediting towards examinations or parts of a degree programme have been clearly and transparently defined. When recognising or crediting higher education competences, the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention) shall be considered.*

CEU PU has a credit recognition policy, which is outlined in the 'Student Rights, Rules, and Academic Regulations' and does not contradict the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Credit

transfers are possible, but do not play an important role. If students want to include another course credit, they need to inform the department ahead of time and the department decides on a case-by-case basis whether to accept the transfer.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### 4.5 Assessment criterion § 18 (5) 1 to 5: Staff

##### Staff

*1. The private university has sufficient scientific and/or artistic staff as well as sufficient non-academic staff for operating the degree programme.*

In the application documents, as well as during the site visit, it became clear that the CEU PU provides sufficient academic and non-academic staff for operating the PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies.

At the moment, the faculty of the Department of Gender Studies consists of 12 full-time faculty members, 6 part-time faculty members and 3 full-time non-academic staff. The latter will, however, change due to a university-wide initiative to centralise standardised administrative tasks. During the site visit, the experts were ensured that this will not affect the non-academic staff negatively, as those who stay with the department now will focus solely on their key tasks. During the site visit, it also became clear that the department had been given permission to look into the possibility to hire new faculty to assist teaching and to provide expertise that they themselves considered to be missing.

The PhD programme is administered by the appointed Director of Doctoral Studies, though the operation of the PhD programme is further supported by the Doctoral Committee (DC) consisting of faculty members of the PhD programme. One student representative is also included in the DC. The student representative is elected by PhD students of the programme. The DC supports the Director of Doctoral Studies in questions pertaining to policy, procedure and review.

The experts thereby consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

##### Staff

*2. The scientific staff or the artistic staff, respectively, is qualified according to the requirements of the activities provided for in the degree programme. The scientific and/or artistic staff envisaged for the supervision of thesis projects is authorised to teach (venia docendi) or has an equivalent qualification for the scientific or artistic subject, respectively. It is involved in the research and development or the advancement and appreciation of the arts of the respective subject and performs research and development activities which are in accordance with the university's approach and the respective subject culture. The majority of the scientific and/or artistic staff assigned to the supervision of theses has experience in this field.*

In the provided application documents, as well as in the discussions during the site visit, it was clear that the employed faculty is qualified to support and develop the activities necessary for operating the PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies. The faculty's background,

experience and expertise cover a broad array of subject matters related to gender, as well as various methodological specialisations, which support the interdisciplinary and comparative-integrative approach of the PhD programme.

The faculty is not only highly involved in research and development in the field of gender studies, but also in a manner that aligns with CEU PU's broader mission of promoting 'socially and morally responsible intellectual inquiry' as described in the application documents. It is thus clear the department holds the possibility to continue on cultivating 'scholars in gender studies who combine the competence in traditional disciplinary skills in the social sciences and humanities with the ability to formulate new questions arising from hitherto marginalised perspectives and areas of study'.

The experts thereby consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

**Staff**

*3. The benchmark for an adequate tutoring ratio for the supervision of doctoral theses is eight doctoral students per supervisor (full-time equivalent).*

In the programme proposal, the tutoring ratio for the supervision of doctoral theses is listed to be six doctoral students per supervisor. During the site visit the expert panel was informed that, following the new CEU PU policy, the tutoring ratio is now five doctoral students per supervisor, which is far better than the benchmark.

The experts thereby consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

**Staff**

*4. The prioritisation of the teaching, research, and administrative activities of the scientific and/or artistic staff in primary occupation at the private university ensures that there is sufficient time for research and development or the advancement and appreciation of the arts as well as the supervision of doctoral students.*

During the site visit, the faculty expressed no concerns with regards to the possibility to prioritise and balance between teaching, research, and administrative activities. A clear supervision consultation schedule has also been developed by the department to ensure an appropriate balance between various tasks and that the supervision of doctoral students is allocated sufficient time. The students of the department also expressed that they were well supported by the faculty, both when planning and executing their research and when writing up their dissertation.

The experts thereby consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

**Staff**

*5. The private university provides for personnel development measures aimed at the supervision of doctoral students*

During the site visit, the support for the faculty with regards to supervision of PhD students was discussed at length. Though room for improvement was mentioned it became clear that the

faculty considered themselves to have both informal (within the Department of Gender Studies) and formal (from the Center for Teaching & Learning) support during the supervision process. The improvements primarily discussed was with regards to the possibility of streamlining the quality of/support for supervision. This as the faculty members currently are coming from different countries and universities and that they before arriving at CEU PU thus have gotten varied institutional support for developing appropriate means of support.

In the provided application material, the possibilities for co-supervision is also clearly outlined. This was further discussed during the site visit and the faculty expressed that they currently are looking into the possibilities of developing their co-supervision practices. Especially with regards to supporting PhD students working in interdisciplinary fields.

The experts thereby consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### **Recommendations:**

Though faculty members expressed that they consider themselves to have support for supervising PhD students, the experts recommend that the institutional support provided by CEU PU is further developed. This to ease some of the burden now placed on informal structures of support, but also to further streamline and promote the professionalization of the supervision process across various departments at the CEU PU.

The experts would also like to express their support for further developing the co-supervision practices at the department. This as it could facilitate the work of both supervisors and doctoral students while also strengthening the doctoral programme's comparative-integrative approach.

## 4.6 Assessment criterion § 18 (6): Funding

### Funding

*The degree programme's funding is secured. Provisions have also been made to fund expiring degree programmes.*

Application documents include an institutional financial projections summary for accrediting all programmes, and letters confirming grants, endowments and assets.

Documents also include the planned expenses and revenues of the Department of Gender Studies for Academic Year 2020/21.

During the site visit the system of funding, tuition wavers and stipends was elucidated. The panel was impressed with the capacity of the institution to provide a large amount of financial support to students across the programmes.

In the application documents a number of sample preliminary contracts with faculty members are provided. From the discussion during the site visit it was explained that definitive contracts would be drawn up. It was emphasised that there would be continuity with previous arrangements in Hungary, guarantees in terms of job security, and adaptations in salary scales according to the cost of living in Vienna. The financing of the move and financial and practical support for relocation of staff, faculty and students was also explained.

The funding for the PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies is secured as well provisions have been made to fund expiring degree programmes.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

**Recommendation:**

The panel recommends that the system of student funding is continued and financial space is provided for additional faculty and, if necessary, supportive staff seeing the projected rising needs of the programme due to higher student-teacher ratio compared to other programmes, and the introduction of additional courses and teaching hours in gender studies in the new BA programmes of CEU PU, the BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics or the BA in Culture, Politics and Society, which will start the upcoming winter term.

## 5 Summary and final evaluation

The expert panel reviewed the PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies through examining its application documents for accreditation, visiting its premises in Vienna for two days and meeting with its faculty members, selected PhD students and members of the administration and the Presidential office. The PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies was established in 2001, and reaccredited in 2012. Since its foundation, this programme has been one of the leading programmes in the area of Gender Studies, and provides an internationally visible and nationally critical academic hub for gender studies scholars and students.

The **development and quality assurance** of the doctoral programme is continuously developed and monitored by the responsible bodies of CEU PU and departmental routines, such as self-assessment of the programme's and the individual faculty members performance as anonymous student evaluation of courses and supervision. Town-hall meetings are part of regular routines at CEU PU and at the Department of Gender Studies, which contribute to the ongoing development of the programme. The PhD students' feedback is a core element in this process, and is taken very seriously by faculty and administration.

There is an active **research environment**. With the assistance of research-support office, Gender Studies scholars successfully received prestigious external research grants. Their research projects are proofs of an internationally connected and intellectually vibrant programme with clear foci on research topics and development.

During the site visit of the expert panel, the PhD students clearly confirmed the overall excellent **supervision and counselling situation** at the programme. The expert panel observed that the PhD students are very well informed, that information on all relevant issues are transparent and available to the students. The general impression of the expert panel is that the faculty members are clearly committed to providing the best supervision and counselling to the students in the Comparative Gender Studies PhD programme.

The **degree programme** is carefully designed and **managed**. The PhD admission process is highly selective in order to guarantee an excellent and diverse body of students to be admitted into the programme. The PhD programme offers a hybrid of the US American and European

model of PhD training, combining the best elements of both models, i.e. a structured, course-based foundation followed by an individual research and writing period.

In the application documents, and during the site visit, it became clear that the CEU PU provides sufficient academic and non-academic **staff** for operating the PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies.

In the budget documents that the expert panel reviewed, it is clear that the **funding** for the PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies is secured. The expert panel was impressed with the capacity of the institution to provide a large amount of financial support to students in the PhD programme.

The general impression of all the expert panel members is that the Department of Gender Studies is an excellent faculty in the field of women's and gender studies in terms of its teaching, research and administrative areas. The strengths of the all three programmes reviewed are in their international visibility, commitment to critical and socially relevant teaching and research and high stakes in learning and research outcomes. The PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies in the CEU PU meets all the criteria necessary for accreditation of the PhD programme.

The experts **recommend the Board of the AQ Austria to accredit the PhD programme in Comparative Gender Studies.**

The expert panel members have the following **recommendations to CEU PU**:

- 1) The expert panel recommends that the CEU PU should seek to deepen the existing cooperations, e.g. with the University of Vienna. Such cooperations would further enrich the PhD programme, adding to the comparative dimension.
- 2) Though faculty members expressed that they consider themselves to have support for supervising PhD students, the experts recommend that the institutional support provided by CEU PU is further developed. This to ease some of the burden now placed on informal structures of support, but also to further streamline and promote the professionalization of the supervision process across various departments at the CEU PU.
- 3) The experts would also like to express their support for further developing the co-supervision practices at the department. This as it could facilitate the work of both supervisors and doctoral students while also strengthening the doctoral programme's comparative-integrative approach.
- 4) The expert panel members recommend that the system of student funding is continued and financial space is provided for additional faculty and, if necessary, supportive staff seeing the projected rising needs of the programme due to higher student-teacher ratio compared to other programmes, and the introduction of additional courses and teaching hours in gender studies in the new BA programmes of CEU PU, the BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics or the BA in Culture, Politics and Society

## 6 Documents reviewed

- Application of the Central European University Private University from 11.11.2019 in the version of 10.02.2020 for the accreditation of the PhD programme in "Comparative Gender Studies", to be offered in Vienna.
- Submission of further information from 10.03.2020 during to the site visit:
  - Overview of Externally funded research\_Mar9\_Gender
  - Figures concerning the Gender Studies department (GENS dashboard)

## 2-years master programme in 'Critical Gender Studies'

### 7 Review and assessment based on the assessment criteria stipulated in the PU-AkkVO – 2-years master programme in 'Critical Gender Studies'

#### 7.1 Assessment criterion § 17 (1) 1 to 2: Development and quality assurance of the degree programme

##### Development and quality assurance of the degree programme

*1. The degree programme was developed using a predefined procedure for the development and establishment of degree programmes and involving the relevant stakeholder groups.*

The Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies was initially accredited in the United States in 2012 for the Budapest campus, in order to provide a programme which would have the flexibility to offer a longer-term – (cp. Master programme in Gender Studies) –, more in-depth study for students with less academic background and extended study for students with a previous background in gender who wish to pursue longer and more focused training, but also to provide space for students to develop their own paths towards distinct tracks in either Gender Research or Applied practice in professional domains of gender policy, politics, and activism. It has been running successfully since its inception with a growing number of student applications.

The programme's firm establishment and successful development were confirmed during the site visit. Despite the transition from Budapest to Vienna, all relevant stakeholders - students, policy makers, political officials, social activists, NGOs - continue to be involved or, rather expand. It is expected that the whole staff as well as most of the current body of students will be moving with the CEU PU and existing co-operations remain untroubled by the moving. As the expert panel also was assured - particularly through the conversation with the students - the programme is continually evaluated with the students having a fair say in and influence on the programme's development and continuous updating.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

##### Development and quality assurance of the degree programme

*2. Following its accreditation, the degree programme is incorporated into the private university's quality management system.*

Since the programme's already been running and a prominent part of the CEU PU's profile, it has long been incorporated into the PU's quality management system. Quality assurance processes follow the CEU PU's general rules. These include self-assessment on the programme's performance in the Department of Gender Studies' annual report, individual faculty members' academic activity reports, anonymous student evaluations on courses and thesis supervision, as well as town-hall style meetings with students, at least once per term.

According to the Institutional Assessment and Quality Assurance (IAQA) of the CEU PU, all programmes of the Department of Gender Studies undergo regular short and long-term reviews to critically assess the programmes and the performance of the faculty, and to map the changing interests of the students. Students are made aware of the importance of feedback when they enter CEU PU, during the departmental and programme-level orientation sessions of the Zero Week.

The students even initiated another means of quality management, namely the “Mid-Term Evaluation”, which helps to identify issues that may be added, intensified or changed. The programme, along with the Department as a whole, is also assessed regularly by external expert reviewers aligning with CEU PU's general quality management.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

## 7.2 Assessment criterion § 17 (2) 1 to 11: Degree programme and degree programme management

### Degree programme and degree programme management

*1. The degree programme is oriented towards the profile and the objectives of the private university and is clearly in line with the development plan.*

As explained in the application documents, and substantiated during the site visit, the Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies is well-aligned with the core mission and central values of CEU PU, including the development of critical knowledge and scholarship that promotes an open society and is committed to freedom, democracy and equality. Both the one-year and two-year programmes are also aligned with the general profile of CEU PU grounded in American educational and research traditions, corroborated by active learning, discussion-oriented seminars, small classes and critical and reflective thinking. As stressed during the site visit, the field of gender studies has never been marginal, but integral to CEU PU's vision, teaching mission and history.

Based on selective admission procedures (see below), both programmes are geared to drawing in and educating talented pools of BA graduates from the field of humanities, social sciences or law in gender analysis. Students master competences and skills towards the understanding, analysis and challenging of systems of inequality, oppression and intolerance in which gender, as an ordering principle of society and symbolic system, plays a central role.

The Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies, in line with CEU PU admission policy, provides students with minimally a three years BA diploma a solid programme in in-depth gender studies, combined with the option of either a research track or a more applied track. This allows for students to specialise themselves as researchers, but also to enhance professional training via an internship in a policy or professional organisation.

The programme is also in line with the university's mission to study societies in transition, and serve various stakeholders within the Central European community, including other universities, administrations and international organisations. The discipline of gender studies is central to this mission, attracting students from various backgrounds and training them to serve stakeholders in other institutions, policies, NGO's and the civil sphere. Although the current

transition to Vienna opens up enormous opportunities for co-operations with new stakeholders throughout the region for the university as a whole, the first priority according to explanations in the site visit is to maintain the programme without major adjustments. Seeing the direct ideological attack on the field of gender studies and department in Hungary, the university holds a strong commitment to maintain the current programmes, include gender studies in 2 newly established BA programmes (Bachelor of Arts in "Culture, Politics and Society", Bachelor of Arts in "Philosophy, Politics and Economics"); while maintaining gender studies in Budapest with the establishment of a Democracy Institute (including an open society archive, library), that puts equity and gender at the center of the debate how to defend and renew democracy.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*2. The profile and the intended learning outcomes of the degree programme have been clearly defined. They include scientific as well as artistic, personal, and social competences, they meet the professional requirements and are in accordance with the respective level of the National Qualification Framework. As regards regulated professions, the private university shall describe, if and under which preconditions access to those professions can be ensured.*

According to the application documents the profile of the Master programme in Critical Gender Studies comprises several modules covering theories of gender (1); different empirical fields (2) and interdisciplinary research (3). The learning outcomes are clearly defined; graduates will all have mastered the following skills and fields of knowledge and demonstrated the ability to:

- knowledgeably discuss the major fields and themes of contemporary interdisciplinary gender studies, their historical and geographic origins, and their main points of founding and ongoing debate;
- grasp and apply the methodological, theoretical, analytical, and written and oral presentation techniques necessary for contemporary academic research, while also being able to communicate their arguments and conclusions to audiences not specialised in gender studies;
- engage in critical analysis of the significance of gender to social and cultural theories, cultural phenomena, and concrete social and political practices, focusing in particular on the local, global, and hybrid connections between material and symbolic gender relations and structures of power and inequality;
- grasp and be able to present the main threads of past and present scholarly debate on how gender categories and inequalities intersect with other social categories such as race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, disability, etc.
- translate interest in a particular social or cultural phenomenon into a manageable research project, develop pertinent research questions, and identify and use appropriate research methods to answer these questions;
- reflect critically on and denaturalise their own social, cultural, and political belonging, and be aware of the situated nature and limitations of their own knowledge.

Students have the choice of a specialisation in either Research or Applied Gender Studies. Both Specialisation Tracks have additional learning outcomes. The Specialisation in Research emphasises scholarly research methods/work, with the following learning outcomes including knowledge acquisition of:

- advanced problem-solving techniques necessary in academic and analytical work;
- the differentiated cognition of the epistemology and theories of gender studies;
- in-depth knowledge of concepts and theories in gender studies, and their critique;
- the ability to offer theoretical analysis on their research subjects, and to articulate the relationship between theory and research.

The Specialisation in Applied Gender Studies (including an internship) focuses on the critical understanding of how policy institutions, discourses, and practices are influenced by and themselves influence gender norms and relations. Learning Outcomes include having knowledge about:

- the adaptation of gender inequality as a social problem into the global framework of policy conceptualisation and practice;
- the social and political efforts made in different historical and social contexts to solve or create gender inequalities, and the methods and organisations through which these efforts have been put into concrete practice;
- the critical analysis of organisations, institutions, and states working on or affecting the problem of gender inequalities;
- developing more complex and critically informed approaches to understanding and influencing policy-making practices in the field of gender equality.

From the experts' point of view the learning outcomes are clearly defined, meet the professional requirements and are in accordance with level 7 of the National Qualification Framework.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*3. The name of the degree programme and the academic degree correspond to the degree programme's profile.*

The name of the degree programme "Critical Gender Studies" and the academic degree "Master of Arts" correspond to the degree programme's profile. The adjective 'critical' in distinction with the one-year master was emphasised as important in a discussion at the site visitation, not only for matters of distinction, but also to emphasise the character of the programme opposed to more conservative and problematic appropriations of the notion of 'gender' in emerging programmes such as family studies, etc.

The experts thus consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*4. The contents and structure of the curriculum ensure that the intended learning outcomes are achieved, while combining research (research and development and/or advancement and appreciation of the arts) and teaching.*

The Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies is clearly structured according to several modules, including three core modules (history-theory-methods), an elective courses module, a choice between two specialisation tracks (research or applied-oriented), and then builds towards the final module of thesis research.

Students enjoy a shared basis but with many electives (elective module) according to their interests. The one-year and two-year Master programmes cover the same core modules and students from both one year and two year programmes sit together, with the exception of the module of the two additional tracks and required word count for the thesis.

The two academic years of 120 ECTS credits are divided into six terms, each year covering approximately 60 ECTS credits (depending on count and spread of the chosen electives and specialisation track), with a research thesis module of 32 ECTS credits.

The three core modules include: (1) Feminist History; (2) Feminist Theory; (3) Feminist Methodology. The Elective courses module covers three large areas in the field of gender studies from which students can choose freely: (1) gender, body and politics; (2) problems of gender in/and social realities; (3) theory and cultural production. The module also covers a variety of disciplinary and methodological approaches, both in the Social Sciences and the Humanities. Students are also free to take additional courses from the various core modules if those line up with their interests better than the courses offered in the Elective Courses Module. For the Master's thesis module students are expected to write a 20,000 to 28,000 words long master's thesis. This research project must provide a new insight into the subject, be clearly formulated, and be supported by a theoretical framework and valid conclusions confronted with former theories.

The Research Track Specialisation Module provides students with a thorough knowledge of: (1) advanced problem-solving techniques necessary in academic and analytical work; (2), the differentiated cognition of the epistemology and theories of gender studies; (3) in-depth knowledge of concepts and theories in gender studies, and their critiques.

The Applied Track Specialisation Module provides students with critical, hands-on knowledge of: (1) how policy institutions, discourses, and practices are critically influenced by and influence gender norms and relations; (2) the everyday discourses and practices of how organisations, institutions, and states, and their key actors, engage materially with problems of gender and other inequalities.

The Applied Track offers students the opportunity to take up a non-paid, closely supervised internship in a governmental, international, or non-governmental organisation. According to the application documents this allows for a blend of academic analysis and practice enabling students to pursue a range of goals and career options and allow them to become more effective scholarly researchers and gender theorists by giving them intensive experience of the everyday production of concrete policy practices and their effects. The internship lasts for at least 40 hours/week for 3 months, or 20 hours/week for 6 months. The internship experience, including any formal research conducted as part of the internship, also serves as a primary element of the research data grounding the student's thesis, whether conceptually or empirically.

According to the site visit the first track is foremost geared to enhancing research skills; the applied track is also often approached as an ethnographic site for reflection and research analysis. At the site visit it was also communicated that there is the possibility of developing a third track in Gender and Policy Making, in negotiation and co-organised with the Department for Policy Research. The expert panel applauds this initiative as it will expand broaden and diversify the scope of options within the programme between those who are more research, versus more applied and policy oriented. It will prepare graduates for an occupation in a world in which gender expertise for policy-making is direly needed. The experts suggest this could

also be an opportunity to reflect on involving potential internship sites and/or societal and policy actors and organisations as more active 'stakeholders' within the programme.

In general, the experts are impressed with the scope and variation in of possible courses on offer and the flexibility that is offered to the students. From the students during the site visit the experts also learned that lecturers are always open to suggestions from students to adapting their courses and introducing new topics and fields as they emerge in the dynamic field of gender studies internationally.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*5. The didactic conception of the degree programme's modules shall ensure that the intended learning outcomes can be achieved and promotes the students' active contribution in the learning process.*

Teaching methods, thanks to the small size of the admitted student cohorts and class size, small groups of students, involve lectures, but also many opportunities for seminars and discussion. Students are also intensively individually supervised, for assignments, internships and thesis research. The site visit emphasised that students are independent and autonomous in the choice and development of their research projects, but can count on flexibility and close supervision. The variety and specificity of these methods ensures the various competences – ranging from critical, reflexive, analytical, research, writing, presenting, social and practical skills (see internship) are achieved.

The experts thus consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*6. The workload related to the individual modules ensures that the intended learning outcomes can be achieved within the stipulated duration of studies, and in case of part-time degree programmes takes into account any professional activity. The ECTS is applied correctly.*

As mentioned before the two academic years of 120 ECTS credits are divided into six terms, each year covering approximately 60 ECTS credits (depending on count and spread of the chosen electives and specialisation track), with a research thesis module of 32 ECTS credits. 1 ECTS credit equals 30 hours of learning activities, of which 5 hours are classroom time, and 25 hours are for out of class work, in line with the University's credit hour assignment policy. Credits are also awarded to the Internship: 28 ECTS credits in total for the whole Internship module.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*7. The private university has adopted examination rules. The examination methods are suitable to assess whether and to what extent the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.*

In course syllabi evaluation and examination methods are detailed along and in accordance with learning outcomes and teaching methods, including the assessment of class attendance, participation, discussion leading, presentations, reflection and final papers. Examination methods are varied among and within the different modules and individual courses, allowing to test and evaluate different competences of each individual student.

Examination methods and regulations are in accordance with the university wide policies.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

8. A "Diploma Supplement" that complies with the requirements laid down in Annex 1 to § 6 of the University and Higher Education Statistics and Education Documentation Decree (Universitäts- und Hochschulstatistik- und Bildungsdokumentationsverordnung, UHSBV), original version: F. L. G. II no. 216/2019, will be issued.<sup>5</sup>

An example of the diploma supplement is provided in the application documents and complies with the requirements laid down in Annex 1 to § 6 of the University and Higher Education Statistics and Education Documentation Decree (Universitäts- und Hochschulstatistik- und Bildungsdokumentationsverordnung, UHSBV), original version: F. L. G. II no. 216/2019.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

9. The admission requirements have been clearly defined. In terms of the qualification level, they correspond at least to the provisions provided by the Universities Act (UG).

Applicants must have earned a first (BA) degree from a recognised university or institution of higher education, or provide documentation indicating that they will earn their first degree from such an institution by the time of enrolling in the Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies. Unconditionally accepted first (basic) degrees are:

- Students with a three-year first degree from any discipline in Humanities, Social Sciences, Economics or Law.
- Students with a four- or five-year first degree from any discipline in Humanities, Social Sciences, Economics or Law.

In case of applicants with the above degrees 180 ECTS credits earned with the first degree are automatically accepted. Students may be expected to take additional subjects equivalent to a maximum of 12 ECTS credits in case of insufficient basic knowledge in the fields of social sciences or humanities. The institution will determine whether the student's background knowledge is appropriate and acceptable or not (e.g. in the case of insufficient knowledge of basic concepts of social structure or epistemology, lack of knowledge in literary interpretation or historical context). These credits may be acquired by individual study and reporting or through additional course work.

<sup>5</sup> The PU Accreditation Regulation 2019 refers to Annex 2 of the UniSTEV 2004. This ordinance was amended and therefore the text of the assessment criterion in the expert report was adapted accordingly.

Conditionally accepted first (basic) degrees and credit requirements are:

The applicant can be admitted if she/he has earned any other three-year degree, or a four- or five-year degree. In this case only 150 ECTS credits can be accepted from the first degree, provided that at least 30 ECTS credits can be accepted within the fields of humanities or social sciences, enabling the applicant to conduct independent research. The rest of the credits required for admission can be acquired by supplementary examination or lectures.

As part of their application package, applicants must submit the following materials in addition to their completed online application form:

- Curriculum Vitae;
- Proof of relevant English-language competency;
- Two confidential letters of recommendation;
- Official copies (and translations) of relevant undergraduate and graduate transcripts and diplomas;
- a short 500-word typewritten statement of purpose, outlining their interest in the field of gender studies, and in one of the tracks of this programme, the relevance of their academic/professional background to further studies at CEU PU, as well as their interests or ideas about the potential research (topics, themes) they would like to undertake; and
- samples of previous writings in English and/or a list of scholarly publications and relevant research experience in English (as applicable)

All MA students must demonstrate that their level of English language proficiency meets CEU PU's minimum entry requirements since all instruction is in English. The Language Requirements are defined as follows: Language TOEFL (internet version): 88, TOEFL (paper version): 570, IELTS: 6.5, Cambridge Proficiency Examination: C or Cambridge Advanced English Test: B.

The admission requirements have been clearly defined. In terms of the qualification level, they correspond at least to the provisions provided by the Universities Act (UG).

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*10. The admission procedure has been clearly defined and ensures a fair and transparent selection of the applicants according to the admission requirements and the required competences.*

In considering the applications, the Department of Gender Studies closely monitors these materials as well as the applicants' undergraduate grades. All applications are read and evaluated by two faculty members, and in the next round a number of applicants is interviewed via skype, after which a group of faculty members makes a merit list.

During the site visit it was confirmed that potential grade differences among institutions per country, and between disciplines were taken into account; and all elements within in an application file were taken into account and evaluated in a balanced way. The representatives of the CEU PU emphasised how the student body has shifted beyond the region and since 2005 is a truly global. Of the 64 students in all MA gender studies programmes and 6 first year PhD students, 37 are from non-European countries, including Asia, Latin America, US.

During the site visit it was also confirmed that in view of CEU PU 2025, admission and selection criteria might shift to needs rather than merit based.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### **Recommendation:**

Seeing the rise in applications and far larger interest than available places, the expert panel suggests the department continuously evaluates and is self-reflexive about the selection procedure, while it depends on certain subjective elements: student competences may reflect faculty those of the faculty. The expert panel also suggests that the selection takes into account more gender diversity (M/F/X) among the student body.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*11. The recognition procedures for higher education competences and, if applicable, competences acquired outside higher education in terms of crediting towards examinations or parts of a degree programme have been clearly and transparently defined. When recognising or crediting higher education competences, the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention) shall be considered.*

CEU PU has a credit recognition policy, which is outlined in the 'Student Rights, Rules, and Academic Regulations' and does not contradict the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Credit transfers are possible, but do not play an important role. If students want to include another course credit, they need to inform the department ahead of time and the department decides on a case-by-case basis whether to accept the transfer. The site visit confirmed that in rare cases the transfer in credit from outside EU is also possible.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

### 7.3 Assessment criterion § 17 (3) 1 to 5: Staff

#### Staff

*1. The private university shall provide for sufficient scientific and/or artistic staff as well as sufficient non-academic staff for operating the degree programme.*

In the provided application documents, as well as during the site visit, it became clear that the CEU PU provides sufficient academic and non-academic staff for operating the Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies. At the moment, the faculty of the Department of Gender Studies consists of 12 full-time faculty members, 6 part-time faculty members and 3 full-time non-academic staff. The latter will, however, change due to a university-wide initiative to centralise standardised administrative tasks. During the site visit, the experts were ensured that this will not affect the non-academic staff negatively, as those who stay with the department now will focus solely on their key tasks.

During the site visit, it also became clear that the department had been given permission to look into the possibility to hire new faculty to assist teaching and to provide the expertise that they themselves considered to be missing.

The experts thereby consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### **Recommendations:**

Given the special circumstances related to the relocation of CEU PU, the experts would highly recommend evaluating the plan, and the efficiency of, the centralisation of administrative tasks, and the following reduction of non-academic staff at the department. This in order to ensure that an appropriate workload of the latter is secured also in the future.

The experts would also like to recommend that the workload of the faculty is evaluated further on given the introduction of the new BA programmes of CEU PU, the BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics or the BA in Culture, Politics and Society, and the considered second-year specialisation track on 'Gender and Policy Making'. This to ensure that the CEU PU still provides sufficient staff for operating the Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies.

#### **Staff**

*2. The relation between scientific and/or artistic staff in primary occupation at the private university and students shall be in accordance with the profiles of the respective degree programmes. Primary occupation here means working at least 50% of one's total working hours in salaried employment at the private university.*

In the provided application documents, it is evident that the relationship between faculty and students is in accordance with the Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies. The majority of the department's employees is working full-time at CEU PU and the average student to full-time faculty ratio at the department is 7.02.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### **Staff**

*3. The subject-specific core competences of the degree programme are covered by professors in primary occupation at the private university*

In the provided application documents, it is clear that the subject-specific core competencies of critical, interdisciplinary gender studies are covered by professors in primary occupation at CEU PU. Out of the 18 faculty members, 12 are employed full-time at CEU PU.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### **Staff**

*4. The scientific staff or the artistic staff, respectively, is qualified according to the requirements of the activities provided for in the degree programme.*

In the provided application documents, as well as in the discussions during the site visit, it was clear that the employed faculty is highly qualified and requirements of the activities provided for the Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies. The faculty's background and expertise cover a broad array of subject matters related to gender, as well as various methodological specialisations, which support the interdisciplinary approach of the programme. This is further

reflected in the programme syllabuses, as the department currently is offering MA courses which an impressive width.

As noted, during the site visit, it also became clear that the Department of Gender Studies had been given permission to look into the possibility to hire and/or utilise new staff to assist teaching. For example, a member of the faculty noted that the professor who will be in charge of the considered new second-year specialisation track on 'Gender and Policy Making' also is to be considered an expert in questions pertaining to gender in the Asian context, an expertise that the faculty members themselves considered to be partially missing.

The experts thereby consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Staff

*5. The prioritisation of the teaching, research, and administrative activities of the scientific or artistic staff in primary occupation at the private university ensures adequate participation in teaching in degree programmes and leaves sufficient time for research and development or the advancement and appreciation of the arts.*

In the application documents, it is evident that the faculty in primary occupation at CEU PU follows a predetermined number of ECTS taught. This is supposed to guarantee that sufficient time is left for activities related to research and development. During the site visit, some concerns were, however, raised regarding the current workload and distribution of the faculty. Especially with regards to assisting the development, as well as covering the teaching for, the new BA programmes of CEU PU, the BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics or the BA in Culture, Politics and Society, and whether that would impact the resources currently allocated to the MA programmes.

Given the special circumstances related to the relocation of CEU PU, the experts also got the impression that the faculty at the moment felt the need to prioritise teaching and matters related to the relocation, which has had an influence on their possibilities of spending time on research and development. During discussions at the site visit, with both faculty and members of the CEU PU leadership, it did, however, become clear that this uneven distribution of time was seen as temporary and clearly linked to the relocation project. It was expressed that the possibility to prioritise and balance various task in an equal manner will be ensured after the move to Vienna.

The experts thereby consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### **Recommendations:**

The experts would like to express their support for the above-mentioned proposition of hiring additional faculty to assist teaching, especially in times of change and transition. This to ensure that the faculty (especially junior members) has enough time for research and development. Providing more time for the assistant professors to pursue their research and publications is thus recommended.

In addition to current measures, such as reduced teaching load and possibility to take 6-month sabbatical leave after 3.5 years, the experts would also like to recommend that the assistant professors are freed from major administrative duties.

The experts would also like to express that they hope that the possible strains related to the reallocation of CEU PU are taken into consideration when evaluating the performance of both faculty (especially junior members) and non-academic staff in the upcoming years. Also, given the expressed desire to attract more students to the second-year specialisation labelled 'The Applied Track' the experts would like to emphasise the possible need for further faculty assistance in the future. This given the degree of assistance required for helping students in both planning and undertaking the internship.

#### 7.4 Assessment criterion § 17 (4): Funding

##### Funding

*The degree programme's funding is secured. Provisions have also been made to fund expiring degree programmes.*

Application documents include an institutional financial projections summary for accrediting all programmes, and letters confirming grants, endowments and assets.

Documents also include the planned expenses and revenues of the Department of Gender Studies for Academic Year 2020/21.

During the site visit the system of funding, tuition wavers and stipends was elucidated. The panel was impressed with the capacity of the institution to provide a large amount of financial support to students in the programme.

In the application documents a number of sample preliminary contracts with faculty members are provided. From the discussion during the site visit it was explained that definitive contracts would be drawn up. It was emphasised that there would be continuity with previous arrangements in Hungary, guarantees in terms of job security, and adaptations in salary scales according to the cost of living in Vienna. The financing of the move and financial and practical support for relocation of staff, faculty and students was also explained.

The funding for the Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies is secured as well provisions have been made to fund expiring degree programmes.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

##### **Recommendation:**

The panel recommends that the system of student funding is continued and financial space is provided for additional faculty and, if necessary, supportive staff seeing the projected rising needs of the programme due to higher student-teacher ratio compared to other programmes, and the introduction of additional courses and teaching hours in gender studies in the new BA programmes of CEU PU, the BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics or the BA in Culture, Politics and Society, which will start the upcoming winter term.

## 7.5 Assessment criterion § 17 (5): Infrastructure

### Infrastructure

*Quantitatively and qualitatively adequate facilities and equipment are provided for the degree programme. In the case that the private university draws on external resources, their authorisation to use them has been contractually secured.*

CEU PU has just opened its new campus at Quellenstrasse in Vienna, with newly renovated buildings, IT network, and state of the art teaching facilities. CEU PU is leasing a 21,000 m<sup>2</sup> property for its Vienna Campus to provide an educational facility for its Austrian and US accredited programmes and research activities. The contracts for the lease were presented to the expert panel through the documents. Departmental students and faculty are supported by easy access to the CEU PU library on both Budapest and Vienna campuses with the largest collection of English-language materials in the fields of the social sciences and the humanities in Central and Eastern Europe. 15 students per year are expected to form a cohort allowing teaching and learning to take place primarily through small seminar discussions and one-on-one consultations with professors, as well as individual study. During regular consultation sessions, students receive individual assistance.

As particularly the campus tour during the site visit made obvious, the new CEU PU location provides adequate, state-of-the-art facilities for operating the Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies. Due to the relatively low number of students and consequent proximity between them and the teaching staff, the infrastructure thus appears to be very comfortable. Since the openness of CEU PU – in terms of interdisciplinary, polyvalent course offerings, teachers, and spaces - makes clear demarcations between the respective cohorts, study programmes and staff difficult, it is not easy to assess the requirements and satisfactions of individuals. However, the staff and students the expert panel was able to speak to during the site visit appeared to be very pleased with the facilities on offer.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

### **Recommendation:**

Regarding students, a room designed for those in gender studies programmes – if only once a week – might be helpful to collect and focus beyond the hours of courses and in an otherwise flexible and open space. Considering the teaching staff, although this environment offers all necessary resources, the openness of the place and teaching in many different programmes on campus may make it difficult to withdraw and work "focused and undistracted" for each programme. This is not only important for teaching preparations but even more so for research. The open door policy on all levels thus might need a slight revision with regular intermissions being allowed.

## 7.6 Assessment criterion § 17 (6) 1 to 2: Research and development and/or the advancement and appreciation of the arts

### Research and development and/or the advancement and appreciation of the arts

*1. The scientific and/or artistic staff in primary occupation at the private university assigned to the degree programme is involved in the private university's relevant research and development activities.*

The Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies has six full and associate professors, four assistant professors and one university professor, who work full time. In addition, they have three academic writing instructors. The expert panel has reviewed the preliminary employment contracts of four professors who teach major courses in the programme, course syllabi, and CVs of faculty members and an overview faculty table. These preliminary employment contracts cover 100% of their working hours of professors in salaried employment with the Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies. According to the academic staff handbook, a full time employed professor has a workload of 40 hours per week.

The expert panel can observe that teaching and research are strongly connected to each other in the Department of Gender Studies. Specifically in this programme, having two tracks ("Research Track" and "Applied Track") enables different kinds of research possibilities both for faculty members and for the students. The faculty members in the MA Programme conduct research on intellectually stimulating and socially important research topics, such as activism, social movements and policy, anti-gender mobilisation and attacks on freedom, cultural studies, feminist knowledge production, gendered and sexualised borders among others. The faculty members' approach to research are both theoretically rigorous but also socially relevant. This research approaches are also reflected in the two programme tracks.

GEMMA, a Joint MA degree in Women and Gender Studies, funded by the Erasmus+ Key Action 1 Mundus Programme of the European Union, must be mentioned here. CEU PU is part of the consortium offering this programme in collaboration with other universities. In the application this Joint Degree Programme was mentioned as source for cooperation projects for the PhD and the MA programmes.

In addition to full time faculty members in the programme, through collaboration with other universities and research institutes in Hungary. During the site visit, the faculty members said that they are planning to establish relations with Austrian universities for collaboration for visiting positions.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

Research and development and/or the advancement and appreciation of the arts

2. *The (planned) research performance of the scientific or artistic staff in primary occupation at the private university assigned to the degree programme are in accordance with the university's approach and the respective subject culture.*

The Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies supports CEU PU's mission to provide education of academic freedom, critical thinking skills and supporting social research in solving global problems. The cutting-edge research and teaching areas of the Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies are such as activism, social movements and policy, anti-gender mobilisation and attacks on freedom, cultural studies, feminist knowledge production, gendered and sexualised borders among others. The faculty members are internationally visible in the broader Gender Studies academic context through their international and peer-reviewed publications, which are listed in their CVs that were in the accreditation application. The faculty members are connected to the broader international and national academic contexts through many different research activities that they are involved in.

They have 1) academic networks to facilitate scholarly exchange and build innovative research cooperations, for example through international and national grants that foster academic networking. GRACE (Gender and Cultures of Equality); STINT (New Tools for Transnational Analysis in Postgraduate Intersectional Gender Research) and ZARAH (Women's Labour Activism in Eastern Europe and transnationally, from the age of empires to the late 20th century) are all funded by various EU research grants which are highly competitive and prestigious to receive. Some of these grants are ERC Advanced and Synergy Grants, EU Horizon2020, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, COST action of the EU and Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education among others.

2) visiting professorships, scholarships and invitations to prestigious universities and research institutes as well as through editorship or professional membership in scholarly associations, international journal boards. The faculty members are extremely well-connected through these meso-level and macro-level networks which facilitate exchange to broader academic communities. Some of these positions include Julien and Virginia Cornell Visiting Professorship in Swarthmore College, which is one of the top liberal arts colleges in the US; or Membership of the Horizon2020 Advisory Group and the Presidential Committee on Female Researchers' Life Course and editorial board membership in the European Journal of Women's Studies, which is one of the most well-known women studies journal in this area. The department is also a member of international networks, such as the European Association for Gender Research, Education and Documentation among others. It is not possible to list of these cooperations, networks and positions in this expert report, but they are fully listed in their departmental website and the departmental documents that are available to the expert panel and in the CVs of the faculty members.

3) the cooperation projects that are relevant for the MA programme are maintained through hosting international conferences that attract hundreds of scholars and graduate students to CEU PU and summer schools. In addition, visiting research and teaching scholars in the MA programme are contributing to increasing the research cooperations beyond the current MA programme.

The expert panel was provided with an overview of the external funding that the Department of Gender Studies received over the past decade. According to this overview, the projects directly related to Gender Studies have brought significant amount of research funding, mainly from European sources. These are the funded research projects that are predominantly focusing on gender studies. The report also emphasises that there are additional externally funded projects in the CEU PU, which had a gender dimension but were focused predominantly on other areas. In the application documents the expert panel members were informed that there are current funding applications under review. The research performance of the faculty members in the Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies is in accordance with the CEU PU, which predominantly generates research funding from the EU.

In their accreditation application and during the site visit, the expert panel was assured that the faculty members' research performance in the Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies are in accordance with the CEU PU's approach to theoretically rigorous, empirically founded and socially relevant research which also has international visibility in the academic context of Gender Studies.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

## 7.7 Assessment criterion § 17 (7): Co-operation

### Co-operation

*The private university has envisaged co-operation projects with higher education partners and, if applicable, partners outside the higher education area in Austria and abroad which match the degree programme's profile and furthermore promote the mobility of students and staff.*

In the provided application documents, it is clear that CEU PU has envisaged and established co-operation projects that match the degree programme's interdisciplinary profile and promote the mobility of students and staff. At the moment, several of the department's faculty members are involved in, for example, the EU Innovative Training Network GRACE (Gender and Cultures Equality) which seeks 'systematically investigate the cultural production of gender equalities within Europe'. The network consists of eight higher education partners and is funded by EU Horizon 2020.

During the site visit, it also became clear that the faculty is working towards establishing more co-operation projects with partners both in the Austrian and broader European context. This is also evident in the provided application documents, as a list of international and cross-disciplinary research projects currently under development was provided which all showed.

During their second year of studies, the students in the programme are provided with the opportunity to conduct an internship in, for example, a local or international NGO, a policy centre or an activist organisation. This opportunity promotes the further mobility of students while also allowing them to gain both a 'broad and interdisciplinary knowledge of gender studies' as well as 'critical, analytical skills' in an applied manner. The provided opportunity is thus well in line with the degree programme's profile.

In the provided application documents, it is further noted that the faculty of the Department of Gender Studies will be 'pursuing collaborative possibilities for students with other institutions in Vienna and throughout Austria, as well as possibilities to apply for Erasmus+ Study Mobility programs' which will further the possibilities for student mobility once the CEU PU has been fully established in Vienna.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

## 8 Summary and final evaluation

The expert panel reviewed the Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies through examining its application documents for accreditation, visiting its premises in Vienna for two days and meeting with its faculty members. Since its foundation, this Department of Gender Studies has been one of the leading programmes in the area of Gender Studies, and provides an internationally visible and nationally critical academic hub for gender studies scholars and students.

The Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies was initially accredited in the United States in 2012 for the Hungarian campus. The programme aims to attract students who pursue focused training in gender studies with two different tracks, the Research Track or the Applied Track

with practice in the professional domains of gender policy, politics, and activism. This programme has been running successfully since its inception and the number of student applications is growing each year, which is an indicator of the success of the programme.

The **development and quality assurance** of the MA programme is continuously developed and monitored by the responsible bodies of CEU PU and departmental routines, such as self-assessment of the programme's and the individual faculty members performance as anonymous student evaluation of courses and supervision. Town-hall meetings are part of regular routines at CEU PU and at the Department of Gender Studies, which contribute to the ongoing development of the programme. The student feedback is a core element in this process, and is taken very seriously by faculty and administration.

The **degree programme** is carefully designed and **managed**. The MA programme in Critical Gender Studies encourages active participation in learning and critical approach to teaching content. This approach to learning and teaching is possible through their discussion-oriented seminars with small number of students in classes. As stressed during the site visit, the field of gender studies has never been marginal, but integral to CEU PU's vision, teaching mission and history. The Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies, in line with CEU PU admission policy, provides students with minimally a three years BA diploma a solid programme in in-depth gender studies, combined with the option of either a research track or a more applied track. This allows for students to specialise themselves as researchers, but also to enhance professional training via an internship in a policy or professional organisation. Ten students per year are expected to form a cohort allowing teaching and learning to take place primarily through small seminar discussions and one-on-one consultations with faculty members and research projects and internships guided by their designated supervisors. During regular consultation sessions, students receive individual assistance.

In the application documents, and during the site visit, it became clear that the CEU PU provides sufficient academic and non-academic **staff** for operating the MA programme. In the budget documents that the expert panel reviewed, it is clear that the **funding** for the MA programme is secured. The expert panel was impressed with the capacity of the institution to provide a large amount of financial support to students in the MA programme.

There is a generous **infrastructure** for the MA programme. Departmental students and faculty are supported by easy access to the CEU PU library on both Budapest and Vienna campuses with the largest collection of English-language materials in the fields of the social sciences and the humanities in Central and Eastern Europe. As particularly the campus tour during the site visit made obvious, the new CEU PU location provides adequate, state-of-the-art facilities for operating the Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies. Due to the relatively low number of students and consequent proximity between them and the teaching staff, the infrastructure thus appears to be very comfortable.

The expert panel was able to observe that teaching and research are strongly connected to each other in the Department of Gender Studies. This enables extensive **research** and development facilities for the MA programme. Specifically in this programme, having two tracks ("Research Track" and "Applied Track") enables different kinds of research possibilities both for faculty members and for the students.

The faculty members are internationally visible in the broader Gender Studies academic context through their international and peer-reviewed publications, which are listed in their CVs that were in the accreditation application. The faculty members are connected to the broader

international and national academic contexts through many different research activities that they are involved in. In the provided application documents, it is clear that CEU PU has envisaged and established **co-operation** projects that match the degree programme's interdisciplinary profile and promote the mobility of students and staff.

At the moment, several of the department's faculty members are involved in, for example, the EU Innovative Training Network GRACE (Gender and Cultures Equality) which seeks 'systematically investigate the cultural production of gender equalities within Europe'. During the site visit, it also became clear that the faculty is working towards establishing more co-operation projects with partners both in the Austrian and broader European context.

The general impression of all the expert panel members is that the Department of Gender Studies is an excellent faculty in the field of women's and gender studies in terms of its teaching, research and administrative areas. The strengths of the all three programmes reviewed are in their international visibility, commitment to critical and socially relevant teaching and research and high stakes in learning and research outcomes. The MA programme "Critical Gender Studies" of the Central European University – Private University (Vienna) meets all the criteria necessary for accreditation.

The experts **recommend the Board of the AQ Austria to accredit the master programme in "Critical Gender Studies"**.

The expert panel **recommends the following to CEU PU:**

- 1) Seeing the rise in applications and far larger interest than available places, the expert panel suggests the department continuously evaluates and is self-reflexive about the selection procedure, while it depends on certain subjective elements: student competences may reflect faculty those of the faculty. The expert panel also suggests that the selection takes into account more gender diversity (M/F/X) among the student body.
- 2) Given the special circumstances related to the relocation of CEU PU, the experts would highly recommend evaluating the plan, and the efficiency of, the centralisation of administrative tasks, and the following reduction of non-academic staff at the department. This in order to ensure that an appropriate workload of the latter is secured also in the future.
- 3) The experts would also like to recommend that the workload of the faculty is evaluated further on given the introduction of the new BA programmes of CEU PU, the BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics or the BA in Culture, Politics and Society, and the considered second-year specialisation track on 'Gender and Policy Making'. This to ensure that the CEU PU still provides sufficient staff for operating the Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies.
- 4) The experts would like to express their support for the above-mentioned proposition of hiring additional faculty to assist teaching, especially in times of change and transition. This to ensure that the faculty (especially junior members) has enough time for research and development. Providing more time for the assistant professors to pursue their research and publications is thus recommended.

- 5) In addition to current measures, such as reduced teaching load and possibility to take 6-month sabbatical leave after 3.5 years, the experts would also like to recommend that the assistant professors are freed from major administrative duties. The experts would also like to express that they hope that the possible strains related to the reallocation of CEU PU are taken into consideration when evaluating the performance of both faculty (especially junior members) and non-academic staff in the upcoming years. Also, given the expressed desire to attract more students to the second-year specialisation labelled 'The Applied Track' the experts would like to emphasise the possible need for further faculty assistance in the future. This given the degree of assistance required for helping students in both planning and undertaking the internship.
- 6) The panel recommends that the system of student funding is continued and financial space is provided for additional faculty and, if necessary, supportive staff seeing the projected rising needs of the programme due to higher student-teacher ratio compared to other programmes, and the introduction of additional courses and teaching hours in gender studies in the new BA programmes of CEU PU, the BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics or the BA in Culture, Politics and Society, which will start the upcoming winter term.
- 7) Regarding students, a room designed for those in gender studies programmes – if only once a week – might be helpful to collect and focus beyond the hours of courses and in an otherwise flexible and open space. Considering the teaching staff, although this environment offers all necessary resources, the openness of the place and teaching in many different programmes on campus may make it difficult to withdraw and work "focused and undistracted" for each programme. This is not only important for teaching preparations but even more so for research. The open door policy on all levels thus might need a slight revision with regular intermissions being allowed.

## 9 Documents reviewed

- Application of the Central European University Private University from 11.11.2019 in the version of 10.02.2020 for the accreditation of the master programme "Critical Gender Studies", to be offered in Vienna.
- Submission of further information from 10.03.2020 during to the site visit:
  - Overview of Externally funded research\_Mar9\_Gender
  - Figures concerning the Gender Studies department (GENS dashboard)

## 1 year master programme in 'Gender Studies'

### 10 Review and assessment based on the assessment criteria stipulated in the PU-AkkVO – 1 year master programme in 'Gender Studies'

#### 10.1 Assessment criterion § 17 (1) 1 to 2: Development and quality assurance of the degree programme

##### Development and quality assurance of the degree programme

*1. The degree programme was developed using a predefined procedure for the development and establishment of degree programmes and involving the relevant stakeholder groups.*

According to the application documents the one-year Master's programme in Gender Studies was already accredited in the United States in 1997 for the Budapest campus of CEU. It since has been running very successfully bringing critical attention to gender in line with the initial broader mission at the university of educating emerging generations from post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe, and increasingly all parts of the world, who would become activists, political actors, and academics helping to shape future democratic, open societies. The one-year Master's programme in Gender Studies has become a dense offer of interdisciplinary enhancement for students already providing a substantial background in the field or an MA in another discipline.

As the programme's close interconnection with GEMMA (Erasmus Mundus Master's Degree in Women's and Gender Studies) and MATILDA (European Master in Women's and Gender History) as well as the conversations during the site visit - particularly with the president and the provost - clearly indicated, gender studies' popularity and central position for the university as a whole are unquestionable. As the more recent introduction of the two-year Master's programme in Critical Gender Studies furthermore demonstrates, the respective programmes are aligned with a continuous shaping, monitoring and updating by the according bodies of CEU PU as well as departmental routines to meet with the needs and considerations of the relevant and expanding stakeholder groups, primarily students, governments, political officials, activists, NGOs and the civic sphere.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

##### Development and quality assurance of the degree programme

*2. Following its accreditation, the degree programme is incorporated into the private university's quality management system.*

Running successfully since 1997, the Master's programme in Gender Studies has long and firmly been incorporated into the CEU PU's quality management system. These include self-assessment on the programme's performance in the Department of Gender Studies annual report, individual faculty members' annual academic activity reports, anonymous student

evaluations on courses and thesis supervision, as well as town-hall style meetings with students, at least once per term. According to the Institutional Assessment and Quality Assurance (IAQA) of the CEU PU, all programmes of the Department of Gender Studies undergo regular short and long-term reviews to critically assess the programmes and the performance of the faculty, and to map the changing interests of the students.

The conversations during the site visit confirmed the rootedness of the programme in the IAQA. The quality management system appears to allow for both, institutionalised, standardised procedures as well as individual development. The notable number of evaluations, meetings and reports has evidently proven to be helpful tools for managing the programme's quality, particularly in times of transition from Budapest to Vienna and an already changing, more global body of students. Overall, the close net of communication channels and abiding exchange and updating of information is impressive and should ensure the maintenance of the programme's high quality.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

## 10.2 Assessment criterion § 17 (2) 1 to 11: Degree programme and degree programme management

### Degree programme and degree programme management

*1. The degree programme is oriented towards the profile and the objectives of the private university and is clearly in line with the development plan.*

As explained in the application documents, and substantiated during the site visit, the Master's programme in Gender Studies is well-aligned with the core mission and central values of CEU PU, including the development of critical knowledge and scholarship that promotes an open society and is committed to freedom, democracy and equality. Both the one-year and two-year programmes are also aligned with the general profile of CEU PU grounded in American educational and research traditions, corroborated by active learning, discussion-oriented seminars, small classes and critical and reflective thinking. As stressed during the site visit, the field of gender studies has never been marginal, but integral to CEU PU's vision, teaching mission and history.

Based on selective admission procedures (see below), both programmes are geared to drawing in and educating talented pools of BA graduates from the field of humanities, social sciences or law in gender analysis. Students master competences and skills towards the understanding, analysis and challenging of systems of inequality, oppression and intolerance in which gender, as an ordering principle of society and symbolic system, plays a central role.

The one-year programme in Gender Studies is tailored to students who have a basic knowledge of gender studies, and/or have been acquainted with the field in their undergraduate studies, minimally 3 years, aligned with the general admission publicity at CEU PU for one-year MA programmes. According to the site visit, while sharing the same basic modules, yet excluding the additional research and or applied tracks, opposed to the two-year Master programme in Critical Gender Studies, the one-year programme offers a more intensive, condensed version of studies. According to the site visit, it also attracts students who prepare for the PhD programme.

The programme is also in line with the university's mission to study societies in transition, and serve various stakeholders within the Central European community, including other universities, administrations and international organisations. The discipline of gender studies is central to this mission, attracting students from various backgrounds and training them to serve stakeholders in other institutions, policies, NGO's and the civil sphere. Although the current transition to Vienna opens up enormous opportunities for co-operations with new stakeholders throughout the region for the university as a whole, the first priority according to explanations in the site visitation is to maintain the programme without major adjustments. Seeing the direct ideological attack on the field of gender studies and department in Hungary, the university holds a strong commitment to maintain the current programmes, include gender studies in 2 newly established BA programmes (Bachelor of Arts in "Culture, Politics and Society", Bachelor of Arts in "Philosophy, Politics and Economics"); while maintaining gender studies in Budapest with the establishment of a Democracy Institute (including an open society archive, library), that puts equity and gender at the center of the debate how to defend and renew democracy.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*2. The profile and the intended learning outcomes of the degree programme have been clearly defined. They include scientific as well as artistic, personal, and social competences, they meet the professional requirements and are in accordance with the respective level of the National Qualification Framework. As regards regulated professions, the private university shall describe, if and under which preconditions access to those professions can be ensured.*

According to the application documents the profile of the Master programme in Gender Studies comprises three different modules covering theories of gender (1); different empirical fields (2) and interdisciplinary research (3). The learning outcomes include the following competences:

- discuss and understand the major fields and themes of interdisciplinary gender studies, their historical and geographic origins, and the main points of debate that have arisen within this field
- grasp and apply the methodological, theoretical, and writing and oral presentation techniques necessary in academic research and critical analysis while also being able to convey their analyses to audiences not specialised in gender studies;
- engage in critical and creative reading and analysis of social and cultural theories, empirical research, and social and cultural phenomena from a gender perspective;
- reflect critically and in a complex manner on the entanglement between gender relations and gender inequality on the one hand, and other social and cultural differences on local and global levels on the other;
- grasp and critically understand the main threads of scholarly debate on how gender categories and inequalities intersect with other social categories such as race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, global inequality, age, disability, and the like;
- translate an interest in a certain social or cultural phenomenon into a manageable research project, develop pertinent research questions, and identify and use the appropriate research methods to answer these questions;
- reflect critically on and denaturalise their own social, cultural, and political belonging, being aware of the situated nature and limitations of their own knowledge.

From the experts' point of view the learning outcomes are clearly defined, meet the professional requirements and are in accordance with level 7 of the National Qualification Framework.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*3. The name of the degree programme and the academic degree correspond to the degree programme's profile.*

The name of the degree programme 'Gender Studies' and the academic degree, 'Master of Arts' correspond to the degree programme's profile.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*4. The contents and structure of the curriculum ensure that the intended learning outcomes are achieved, while combining research (research and development and/or advancement and appreciation of the arts) and teaching.*

The Master's programme in Gender Studies is clearly structured according to several modules, including three core modules (theory-methods-applications and domains) and builds towards the final module of thesis research. Students enjoy a shared basis but with many electives (elective module) according to their interests. The one-year and two-year Master programmes cover the same core modules and students from both programmes sit together, with the exception of the module of the two additional tracks and required word count for the thesis. However, the representatives of CEU PU explained that the one-year master could to some extent be understood as a more condensed version of the two-year master. The one-year programme is geared more to students (next to fulfilling the required admission criteria of 4 years BA), who possess more previous knowledge of gender studies.

According to the application documents, the programme is organised around three core modules, each coinciding with one term: (1) Foundational Module, (2) Methodology and (3) Academic Writing Module, and Elective Courses Module. In the Fall Term, the students have to earn 10 ECTS credits in the Foundational Module, 6 ECTS credits in the Methodology and Academic Writing Module, and 4 in the Elective Courses Module. In the Winter Term, the students have to earn 6 ECTS credits in the Foundational Module, 6 ECTS credits in the Methodology and Academic Writing Module, and 8 in the Elective Courses Module. In the Spring Term (20 ECTS credits), students take a compulsory MA Thesis Module which includes Thesis Writing Workshop (8 ECTS credits) and MA thesis preparation, submission, and defence (12 ECTS credits); the MA thesis will be defended at CEU PU.

Hence the academic year of 60 ECTS credits is divided into three terms, each covering approximately 20 ECTS credits (depending on the chosen electives from the electives module). The MA thesis module consists of 20 ECTS credits.

In general, the experts are impressed with the scope and variation in of possible courses on offer and the flexibility that is offered to the students.

From the students during the site visit the experts also learned that lecturers are always open to suggestions from students to adapting their courses and introducing new topics and fields as they emerge in the dynamic field of gender studies internationally.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*5. The didactic conception of the degree programme's modules shall ensure that the intended learning outcomes can be achieved and promotes the students' active contribution in the learning process.*

Teaching methods, thanks to the small size of the admitted student cohorts and class size, small groups of students, involve lectures, but also many opportunities for seminars and discussion. Students are also intensively individually supervised, for assignments, internships and thesis research. The site visit emphasised that students are independent and autonomous in the choice and development of their research projects, but can count on flexibility and close supervision. The variety and specificity of these methods ensures the various competences – ranging from critical, reflexive, analytical, research, writing, presenting, social and practical skills are achieved.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*6. The workload related to the individual modules ensures that the intended learning outcomes can be achieved within the stipulated duration of studies, and in case of part-time degree programmes takes into account any professional activity. The ECTS is applied correctly.*

As mentioned before the academic year of 60 ECTS credits is divided into three terms, each covering approximately 20 ECTS credits (depending on the chosen electives from the electives module). The MA thesis module consists of 20 ECTS credits. 1 ECTS credit equals 30 hours of learning activities, of which 5 hours are classroom time, and 25 hours are for out of class work, in line with the University's credit hour assignment policy.

Students in the site visit expressed that it was a full and challenging programme, yet feasible seeing expectations were fulfilled and formulated clearly.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*7. The private university has adopted examination rules. The examination methods are suitable to assess whether and to what extent the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.*

In course syllabi evaluation and examination methods are detailed along and in accordance with learning outcomes and teaching methods, including the assessment of class attendance, participation, discussion leading, presentations, reflection and final papers. Examination methods are varied among and within the different modules and individual courses, allowing to test and evaluate different competences of each individual student.

Examination methods and regulations are in accordance with the university wide policies.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

8. A "Diploma Supplement" that complies with the requirements laid down in Annex 1 to § 6 of the University and Higher Education Statistics and Education Documentation Decree (Universitäts- und Hochschulstatistik- und Bildungsdokumentationsverordnung, UHSBV), original version: F. L. G. II no. 216/2019, will be issued. <sup>6</sup>

An example of the diploma supplement is provided in the application documents and complies with the requirements laid down in Annex 1 to § 6 of the University and Higher Education Statistics and Education Documentation Decree (Universitäts- und Hochschulstatistik- und Bildungsdokumentationsverordnung, UHSBV), original version: F. L. G. II no. 216/2019.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

9. The admission requirements have been clearly defined. In terms of the qualification level, they correspond at least to the provisions provided by the Universities Act (UG).

The Master's programme in Gender Studies offers a condensed grounding in interdisciplinary gender studies for students with substantial previous background in gender studies or a related field (a minimum of a four-year BA is required), culminating in a master's thesis. Students are assumed to have a background, if uneven, in gender studies, feminist theory, or related fields of social sciences and humanities.

The 4-year first (BA) degree must be from a recognised university or institution of higher education, or applicants provide documentation indicating that they will earn their first degree from such an institution by the time of enrolling in the one-year Master's programme in Gender Studies.

As part of their application package, applicants must submit the following materials in addition to their completed online application form:

- Curriculum Vitae;
- Proof of relevant English-language competency;
- Two confidential letters of recommendation;
- Official copies (and translations) of relevant undergraduate and graduate transcripts and diplomas;
- a short (approximately 500 words) typewritten essay on the relevance of their academic/professional background to graduate study at CEU PU and to their future career goals; and
- samples of previous writings in English and/or a list of scholarly publications and relevant research experience in English (as applicable) All MA students must

<sup>6</sup> The PU Accreditation Regulation 2019 refers to Annex 2 of the UniSTEV 2004. This ordinance was amended and therefore the text of the assessment criterion in the expert report was adapted accordingly.

demonstrate that their level of English language proficiency meets CEU PU's minimum entry requirements since all instruction is in English. Language Requirements are defined as follows: TOEFL (internet version): 88, TOEFL (paper version): 570, IELTS: 6.5, Cambridge Proficiency Examination: C or Cambridge Advanced English Test: B .

The admission requirements have been clearly defined. In terms of the qualification level, they correspond at least to the provisions provided by the Universities Act (UG).

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*10. The admission procedure has been clearly defined and ensures a fair and transparent selection of the applicants according to the admission requirements and the required competences.*

In considering the applications, the Department of Gender Studies closely monitors these materials as well as the applicants' undergraduate grades. All applications are read and evaluated by two faculty members, and in the next round a number of applicants is interviewed via skype, after which a group of faculty members makes a merit list.

During the site visit it was confirmed that potential grade differences among institutions per country, and between disciplines were taken into account; and all elements within in an application file were taken into account and evaluated in a balanced way. The representatives of CEU PU emphasised how the student body has shifted beyond the region and since 2005 is a truly global. Of the 64 students in all MA gender studies programmes and 6 first year PhD students, 37 are from non-European countries, including Asia, Latin America, US.

During the site visit it was also confirmed that in view of CEU PU 2025, admission and selection criteria might shift to needs rather than merit based.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### **Recommendations:**

Seeing the rise in applications and far larger interest than available places, the expert panel suggests the department continuously evaluates and is self-reflexive about the selection procedure, while it depends on certain subjective elements: student competences may reflect faculty those of the faculty. The expert panel also suggests that the selection takes into account more gender diversity (M/F/X) among the student body.

#### Degree programme and degree programme management

*11. The recognition procedures for higher education competences and, if applicable, competences acquired outside higher education in terms of crediting towards examinations or parts of a degree programme have been clearly and transparently defined. When recognising or crediting higher education competences, the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention) shall be considered.*

CEU PU has a credit recognition policy, which is outlined in the 'Student Rights, Rules, and Academic Regulations' and does not contradict the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Credit transfers are possible, but do not play an important role. If students want to include another

course credit, they need to inform the department ahead of time and the department decides on a case-by-case basis whether to accept the transfer. The site visit confirmed that in care cases the transfer in credit from outside EU is also possible.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

### 10.3 Assessment criterion § 17 (3) 1 to 5: Staff

#### Staff

*1. The private university shall provide for sufficient scientific and/or artistic staff as well as sufficient non-academic staff for operating the degree programme.*

In the provided application documents, as well as during the site visit, it became clear that the CEU PU provides sufficient academic and non-academic staff for operating the Master's programme in Gender Studies. At the moment, the faculty of the Department of Gender Studies consists of 12 full-time faculty members, 6 part-time faculty members and 3 full-time non-academic staff. The latter will, however, change due to a university-wide initiative to centralise standardised administrative tasks. During the site visit, the experts were ensured that this will not affect the non-academic staff negatively, as those who stay with the department now will focus solely on their key tasks.

During the site visit, it also became clear that the department had been given permission to look into the possibility to hire new faculty to assist teaching and to provide expertise that they themselves considered to be missing.

GEMMA, a Joint MA degree in Women and Gender Studies, funded by the Erasmus+ Key Action 1 Mundus Programme of the European Union, must be mentioned here. CEU PU is part of the consortium offering this programme in collaboration with other universities. In the application this Joint Degree Programme was mentioned as source for cooperation projects for the PhD and the MA programmes.

The experts thereby consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### **Recommendations:**

Given the special circumstances related to the relocation of CEU PU, the experts would highly recommend evaluating the plan, and the efficiency of, the centralisation of administrative tasks, and the following reduction of non-academic staff at the department. This to ensure that an appropriate workload of the latter is secured also in the future. The experts would also like to recommend that the workload of the faculty is evaluated further on given the introduction of the new BA programmes of CEU PU, the BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics or the BA in Culture, Politics and Society. This to ensure that the CEU PU still provides sufficient staff for operating the Master's programme in Gender Studies.

#### Staff

*2. The relation between scientific and/or artistic staff in primary occupation at the private university and students shall be in accordance with the profiles of the respective degree programmes. Primary occupation*

*here means working at least 50% of one's total working hours in salaried employment at the private university.*

In the provided application documents, it is evident that the relationship between faculty and students is in accordance with the Master's programme in Gender Studies. The majority of the department's employees is working full-time at CEU PU and the average student to full-time faculty ratio at the department is 7.02.

The experts thereby consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

**Staff**

*3. The subject-specific core competences of the degree programme are covered by professors in primary occupation at the private university*

In the provided application documents, it is clear that the subject-specific core competencies of critical, interdisciplinary gender studies are covered by professors in primary occupation at CEU PU. Out of the 18 faculty members, 12 are employed full-time at CEU PU.

The experts thereby consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

**Staff**

*4. The scientific staff or the artistic staff, respectively, is qualified according to the requirements of the activities provided for in the degree programme.*

In the provided application documents, as well as in the discussions during the site visit, it was clear that the employed faculty is highly qualified and requirements of the activities provided for the Master's programme in Gender Studies. The faculty's background and expertise cover a broad array of subject matters related to gender, as well as various methodological specialisations, which support the interdisciplinary approach of the programme. This is further reflected in the programme syllabuses, as the Department of Gender Studies currently is offering MA courses which an impressive width.

The experts thereby consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

**Staff**

*5. The prioritisation of the teaching, research, and administrative activities of the scientific or artistic staff in primary occupation at the private university ensures adequate participation in teaching in degree programmes and leaves sufficient time for research and development or the advancement and appreciation of the arts.*

In the application documents provided, it is evident that the faculty in primary occupation at CEU PU follows a predetermined number of ECTS taught. This is supposed to guarantee that sufficient time is left for activities related to research and development. During the site visit, some concerns were, however, raised regarding the current workload and distribution of the faculty. Especially with regards to assisting the development, as well as covering the teaching for, the new BA programmes of CEU PU, the BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics or the BA

in Culture, Politics and Society, and whether that would impact the resources currently allocated to the MA programmes.

Given the special circumstances related to the relocation of CEU PU, the experts also got the impression that the faculty at the moment felt the need to prioritise teaching and matters related to the relocation, which has had an influence on their possibilities of spending time on research and development. During discussions at the site visit, with both faculty and members of the CEU PU leadership, it did, however, become clear that this uneven distribution of time was seen as temporary and clearly linked to the relocation project. It was expressed that the possibility to prioritise and balance various task in an equal manner will be ensured after the move to Vienna.

The experts thereby consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### **Recommendations:**

The experts would like to express their support for the above-mentioned proposition of hiring additional faculty to assist teaching, especially in times of change and transition. This to ensure that the faculty (especially junior members) has enough time for research and development. Providing more time for the assistant professors to pursue their research and publications is thus recommended.

In addition to current measures, such as reduced teaching load and possibility to take 6-month sabbatical leave after 3.5 years, the experts would also like to recommend that the assistant professors are freed from major administrative duties. The experts would also like to express that they hope that the possible strains related to the reallocation of CEU PU are taken into consideration when evaluating the performance of both faculty (especially junior members) and non-academic staff in the upcoming years. Also, given the expressed desire to attract more students to the second-year specialisation labelled 'The Applied Track' in the Master programme Critical Gender Studies the experts would like to emphasise the possible need for further faculty assistance in the future. This given the degree of assistance required for helping students in both planning and undertaking the internship.

## 10.4 Assessment criterion § 17 (4): Funding

### Funding

*The degree programme's funding is secured. Provisions have also been made to fund expiring degree programmes.*

Application documents include an institutional financial projections summary for accrediting all programmes, and letters confirming grants, endowments and assets.

Documents also include the planned expenses and revenues of the Department of Gender Studies for Academic Year 2020/21.

During the site visit the system of funding, tuition waivers and stipends was elucidated. The panel was impressed with the capacity of the institution to provide a large amount of financial support to students in the programme.

In the application documents a number of sample preliminary contracts with faculty members are provided. From the discussion during the site visit it was explained that definitive contracts would be drawn up. It was emphasised that there would be continuity with previous arrangements in Hungary, guarantees in terms of job security, and adaptations in salary scales according to the cost of living in Vienna. The financing of the move and financial and practical support for relocation of staff, faculty and students was also explained.

The funding is secured for the Master's programme in Gender Studies as well provisions have been made to fund expiring degree programmes.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

#### **Recommendation:**

The panel recommends that the system of student funding is continued and financial space is provided for additional faculty and, if necessary, supportive staff seeing the projected rising needs of the programme due to higher student-teacher ratio compared to other programmes, and the introduction of additional courses and teaching hours in gender studies in the new BA programmes of CEU PU, the BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics or the BA in Culture, Politics and Society, which will start the upcoming winter term.

## 10.5 Assessment criterion § 17 (5): Infrastructure

### Infrastructure

*Quantitatively and qualitatively adequate facilities and equipment are provided for the degree programme. In the case that the private university draws on external resources, their authorisation to use them has been contractually secured.*

CEU PU has just opened its new campus at Quellenstrasse in Vienna, with newly renovated buildings, IT network, and state of the art teaching facilities. CEU PU is leasing a 21,000 m<sup>2</sup> property for its Vienna Campus to provide an educational facility for its Austrian and US accredited programmes and research activities. The contracts for the lease were presented to the expert panel through the documents. Departmental students and faculty are supported by easy access to the CEU PU library on both Budapest and Vienna campuses with the largest collection of English-language materials in the fields of the social sciences and the humanities in Central and Eastern Europe. 10 students per year are expected to form a cohort allowing teaching and learning to take place primarily through small seminar discussions and one-on-one consultations with professors, as well as individual study. During regular consultation sessions, students receive individual assistance.

As particularly the campus tour during the site visit made obvious, the new CEU PU location provides adequate, state-of-the-art facilities for the Master's programme in Gender Studies. Due to the relatively low number of students and consequent proximity between them and the teaching staff, the infrastructure thus appears to be very comfortable. Since the openness of CEU PU – in terms of interdisciplinary, polyvalent course offerings, teachers, and spaces - makes clear demarcations between the respective cohorts, study programmes and staff difficult, it is not easy to assess the requirements and satisfactions of individuals. However, the staff and students the expert panel was able to speak to during the site visit appeared to be very pleased with the facilities on offer.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

**Recommendation:**

Regarding students, a room designed for those in gender studies programmes – if only once a week – might be helpful to collect and focus beyond the hours of courses and in an otherwise flexible and open space. Considering the teaching staff, although this environment offers all necessary resources, the openness of the place and teaching in many different programmes on campus may make it difficult to withdraw and work “focused and undistracted” for each programme. This is not only important for teaching preparations but even more so for research. The open door policy on all levels thus might need a slight revision with regular intermissions being allowed.

## 10.6 Assessment criterion § 17 (6) 1 to 2: Research and development and/or the advancement and appreciation of the arts

### Research and development and/or the advancement and appreciation of the arts

*1. The scientific and/or artistic staff in primary occupation at the private university assigned to the degree programme is involved in the private university's relevant research and development activities.*

The Master's programme in Gender Studies has six full and associate professors, four assistant professors and one university professor, who work full time. In addition, they have three academic writing instructors. The expert panel has reviewed the preliminary employment contracts of four professors who teach major courses in the programme, course syllabi, and CVs of faculty members and an overview faculty table. These preliminary employment contracts cover 100% of their working hours of professors in salaried employment with the Master's programme in Gender Studies. According to the academic staff handbook, a full time employed professor has a workload of 40 hours per week.

The expert panel can observe that teaching and research are strongly connected to each other in the Department of Gender Studies. The faculty members in the one-year Master's programme in Gender Studies conduct research on intellectually stimulating and socially important research topics, such as activism, social movements and policy, anti-gender mobilisation and attacks on freedom, cultural studies, feminist knowledge production, gendered and sexualised borders among others. The faculty members' approach to research are both theoretically rigorous but also socially relevant.

GEMMA, a Joint MA degree in Women and Gender Studies, funded by the Erasmus+ Key Action 1 Mundus Programme of the European Union, must be mentioned here. CEU PU is part of the consortium offering this programme in collaboration with other universities. In the application this Joint Degree Programme was mentioned as source for cooperation projects for the PhD and the MA programmes.

In addition to full time faculty members in the Master's programme in Gender Studies, there is collaboration with other universities and research institutes in Hungary. During the site visit, the faculty members said that they are planning to establish relations with Austrian universities for collaboration for visiting positions.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

## Research and development and/or the advancement and appreciation of the arts

*2. The (planned) research performance of the scientific or artistic staff in primary occupation at the private university assigned to the degree programme are in accordance with the university's approach and the respective subject culture.*

The Master's programme in Gender Studies supports CEU PU's mission to provide education of academic freedom, critical thinking skills and supporting social research in solving global problems. The cutting-edge research and teaching areas of the Master's programme in Gender Studies are such as activism, social movements and policy, anti-gender mobilisation and attacks on freedom, cultural studies, feminist knowledge production, gendered and sexualised borders among others. The faculty members are internationally visible in the broader Gender Studies academic context through their international and peer-reviewed publications, which are listed in their CVs that were in the accreditation application.

The faculty members are connected to the broader international and national academic contexts through many different research activities that they are involved in.

They have 1) academic networks to facilitate scholarly exchange and build innovative research cooperations, for example through international and national grants that foster academic networking. GRACE (Gender and Cultures of Equality); STINT (New Tools for Transnational Analysis in Postgraduate Intersectional Gender Research) and ZARAH (Women's Labour Activism in Eastern Europe and transnationally, from the age of empires to the late 20th century) are all funded by various EU research grants which are highly competitive and prestigious to receive. Some of these grants are ERC Advanced and Synergy Grants, EU Horizon2020, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, COST action of the EU and Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education among others.

2) visiting professorships, scholarships and invitations to prestigious universities and research institutes as well as through editorship or professional membership in scholarly associations, international journal boards. The faculty members are extremely well-connected through these meso-level and macro-level networks which facilitate exchange to broader academic communities. Some of these positions include Julien and Virginia Cornell Visiting Professorship in Swarthmore College, which is one of the top liberal arts colleges in the US; or Membership of the Horizon2020 Advisory Group and the Presidential Committee on Female Researchers' Life Course and editorial board membership in the European Journal of Women's Studies, which is one of the most well-known women studies journal in this area. The department is also a member of international networks, such as the European Association for Gender Research, Education and Documentation among others. It is not possible to list all of these cooperations, networks and positions in this expert report, but they are fully listed in their departmental website and the departmental documents that are available to the expert panel and in the CVs of the faculty members.

3) the cooperation projects that are relevant for the MA programme are maintained through hosting international conferences that attract hundreds of scholars and graduate students to CEU PU and summer schools. In addition, visiting research and teaching scholars in the MA programme are contributing to increasing the research cooperations beyond the current MA programme.

The expert panel was provided with an overview of the external funding that the Department of Gender Studies received over the past decade. According to this overview, the projects directly related to Gender Studies have brought significant amount of research funding mainly from European sources. These are the funded research projects that are predominantly focusing on gender studies. The report also emphasises that there are additional externally funded projects in the CEU PU, which had a gender dimension but were focused predominantly on other areas. In sum, the faculty members in the Department of Gender Studies receive substantial research funding for their projects. In the application documents the expert panel members were informed that there are current funding applications under review. The research performance of the faculty members in the Master's programme in Gender Studies is in accordance with the CEU PU, which predominantly generates research funding from the EU.

In their accreditation application and during the site visit, the expert panel was assured that the faculty members' research performance in the Master's programme in Gender Studies are in accordance with the CEU PU's approach to theoretically rigorous, empirically founded and socially relevant research which also has international visibility in the academic context of Gender Studies.

The experts consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

## 10.7 Assessment criterion § 17 (7): Co-operation

### Co-operation

*The private university has envisaged co-operation projects with higher education partners and, if applicable, partners outside the higher education area in Austria and abroad which match the degree programme's profile and furthermore promote the mobility of students and staff.*

In the provided application documents, it is clear that CEU PU has envisaged and established co-operation projects that match the Master's programme in Gender Studies interdisciplinary profile and promote the mobility of students and staff. At the moment, several of the department's faculty members are involved in, for example, the EU Innovative Training Network GRACE (Gender and Cultures Equality) which seeks 'systematically investigate the cultural production of gender equalities within Europe'. The network consists of eight higher education partners and is funded by EU Horizon 2020.

During the site visit, it also became clear that the faculty is working towards establishing more co-operation projects with partners both in the Austrian and broader European context. This is also evident in the provided application documents, as a list of research projects currently under development was provided which all showed.

In the provided application documents, it is further noted that the department faculty will be 'pursuing collaborative possibilities for students with other institutions in Vienna and throughout Austria, as well as possibilities to apply for Erasmus+ Study Mobility programmes' which will further the possibilities for student mobility once the CEU PU has been fully established in Vienna.

The experts thereby consider the criterion to be **fulfilled**.

## 11 Summary and final evaluation

The expert panel reviewed the Master's programme in Gender Studies through examining its application documents for accreditation, visiting its premises in Vienna for two days and meeting with its faculty members. Since its foundation, this Department of Gender Studies has been one of the leading programmes in the area of Gender Studies, and provides an internationally visible and nationally critical academic hub for gender studies scholars and students.

The one-year Master's programme in Gender Studies is tailored to students who have a basic knowledge of gender studies, and/or have been acquainted with the field in their undergraduate studies, minimally 3 years, aligned with the general admission publicity at CEU PU for one-year MA programmes. While sharing the same basic modules, yet excluding the additional research and the applied track as opposed to the two-year Master programme in Critical Gender Studies, the one-year MA programme offers a more intensive, condensed version of studies. The programme attracts students who want to prepare for the Gender Studies PhD programmes.

According to the application documents the Master's programme in Gender Studies was already accredited in the United States in 1997 for the Budapest campus of CEU PU. It since has been running very successfully bringing critical attention to gender in line with the initial broader mission at the university of educating emerging generations from post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe, and increasingly all parts of the world, who would become activists, political actors, and academics helping to shape future democratic, open societies.

The one-year Master's programme in Gender Studies has become a dense offer of interdisciplinary enhancement for students already providing a substantial background in the field or a MA in another discipline. As the programme's close interconnection with GEMMA (Erasmus Mundus Master's Degree in Women's and Gender Studies) and MATILDA (European Master in Women's and Gender History) as well as the conversations during the site visit - particularly with the president and the provost - clearly indicate, gender studies' popularity and central position for the university as a whole are unquestionable.

The **development and quality assurance** of the programme is continuously developed and monitored by the responsible bodies of CEU PU and departmental routines, such as self-assessment of the programme's and the individual faculty members performance as anonymous student evaluation of courses and supervision. Town-hall meetings are part of regular routines at CEU PU and at the Department of Gender Studies, which contribute to the ongoing development of the programme. The student feedback is a core element in this process, and is taken very seriously by faculty and administration.

**Degree programme** is carefully designed and **managed**. The MA programme in Gender Studies encourages active participation in learning and critical approach to teaching content. This approach to learning and teaching is possible through their discussion-oriented seminars with small number of students in classes. As stressed during the site visit, the field of gender studies has never been marginal, but integral to CEU PU's vision, teaching mission and history. The Master's programme in Gender Studies, in line with CEU PU admission policy, provides students with minimally a three years BA diploma a solid programme in in-depth gender studies. Ten students per year are expected to form a cohort allowing teaching and learning to take place primarily through small seminar discussions and one-on-one consultations with faculty members. During regular consultation sessions, students receive individual assistance.

In the provided application documents and during the site visit, it became clear that the CEU PU provides sufficient academic and non-academic **staff** for operating the Master's programme in Gender Studies. The **funding** is secured for the Master's programme in Gender Studies. The expert panel members were impressed with the capacity of the institution to provide a large amount of financial support to students in the programme. Ten students per year are expected to form a cohort allowing teaching and learning to take place primarily through small seminar discussions and one-on-one consultations with professors, as well as individual study.

There is a generous **infrastructure** for the MA programme. Departmental students and faculty are supported by easy access to the CEU PU library on both Budapest and Vienna campuses with the largest collection of English-language materials in the fields of the social sciences and the humanities in Central and Eastern Europe. As particularly the campus tour during the site visit made obvious, the new CEU PU location provides adequate, state-of-the-art facilities for operating the Master's programme in Gender Studies. Due to the relatively low number of students and consequent proximity between them and the teaching staff, the infrastructure thus appears to be very comfortable.

The expert panel can observe that teaching and **research** are strongly connected to each other in the Department of Gender Studies. The faculty members in the one-year Master's programme in Gender Studies conduct research on intellectually stimulating and socially important research topics, such as activism, social movements and policy, anti-gender mobilisation and attacks on freedom, cultural studies, feminist knowledge production, gendered and sexualised borders among others. The faculty members are internationally visible in the broader Gender Studies academic context through their international and peer-reviewed publications, which are listed in their CVs that were in the accreditation application. The faculty members are connected to the broader international and national academic contexts through many different research activities that they are involved in.

In the provided application documents, it is clear that CEU PU has envisaged and established **co-operation** projects that match the Master's programme in Gender Studies interdisciplinary profile and promote the mobility of students and staff. At the moment, several of the department's faculty members are involved in, for example, the EU Innovative Training Network GRACE (Gender and Cultures Equality) which seeks 'systematically investigate the cultural production of gender equalities within Europe'. The network consists of eight higher education partners and is funded by EU Horizon 2020. During the site visit, it also became clear that the faculty is working towards establishing more co-operation projects with partners both in the Austrian and broader European context.

The general impression of all the expert panel members is that the Department of Gender Studies is an excellent faculty in the field of women's and gender studies in terms of its teaching, research and administrative areas. The strengths of the all three programmes reviewed are in their international visibility, commitment to critical and socially relevant teaching and research and high stakes in learning and research outcomes. The MA programme in Gender Studies of the Central European University – Private University (Vienna) meets all the criteria necessary for accreditation.

The experts **recommend the Board of the AQ Austria to accredit the master programme in Gender Studies.**

### **The expert panel recommends CEU PU:**

- 1) Seeing the rise in applications and far larger interest than available places, the expert panel suggests the department continuously evaluates and is self-reflexive about the selection procedure, while it depends on certain subjective elements: student competences may reflect faculty those of the faculty. The expert panel also suggests that the selection takes into account more gender diversity (M/F/X) among the student body.
- 2) Given the special circumstances related to the relocation of CEU PU, the experts would highly recommend evaluating the plan, and the efficiency of, the centralisation of administrative tasks, and the following reduction of non-academic staff at the department. This to ensure that an appropriate workload of the latter is secured also in the future. The experts would also like to recommend that the workload of the faculty is evaluated further on given the introduction of the new BA programmes of CEU PU, the BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics or the BA in Culture, Politics and Society. This to ensure that the CEU PU still provides sufficient staff for operating the Master's programme in Gender Studies.
- 3) The experts would like to express their support for the above-mentioned proposition of hiring additional faculty to assist teaching, especially in times of change and transition. This to ensure that the faculty (especially junior members) has enough time for research and development. Providing more time for the assistant professors to pursue their research and publications is thus recommended.
- 4) In addition to current measures, such as reduced teaching load and possibility to take 6-month sabbatical leave after 3.5 years, the experts would also like to recommend that the assistant professors are freed from major administrative duties. The experts would also like to express that they hope that the possible strains related to the reallocation of CEU PU are taken into consideration when evaluating the performance of both faculty (especially junior members) and non-academic staff in the upcoming years. Also, given the expressed desire to attract more students to the second-year specialisation labelled 'The Applied Track' in the Master programme in Critical Gender Studies the experts would like to emphasise the possible need for further faculty assistance in the future. This given the degree of assistance required for helping students in both planning and undertaking the internship.
- 5) The panel recommends that the system of student funding is continued and financial space is provided for additional faculty and, if necessary, supportive staff seeing the projected rising needs of the programme due to higher student-teacher ratio compared to other programmes, and the introduction of additional courses and teaching hours in gender studies in the new BA programmes of CEU PU, the BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics or the BA in Culture, Politics and Society, which will start the upcoming winter term.
- 6) Regarding students, a room designed for those in gender studies programmes – if only once a week – might be helpful to collect and focus beyond the hours of courses and in an otherwise flexible and open space. Considering the teaching staff, although this environment offers all necessary resources, the openness of the place and teaching in many different programmes on campus may make it difficult to withdraw and work "focused and undistracted" for each programme. This is not only important for teaching preparations but even more so for research. The open door policy on all levels thus might need a slight revision with regular intermissions being allowed.

## 12 Documents reviewed

- Application of the Central European University Private University from 11.11.2019 in the version of 10.02.2020 for the accreditation of the master programme "Critical Gender Studies", to be offered in Vienna.
- Submission of further information from 10.03.2020 during to the site visit:
  - Overview of Externally funded research\_Mar9\_Gender
  - Figures concerning the Gender Studies department (GENS dashboard)

## 13 Confirmation of the experts

Name	Prof. Dr. Chia Longman
Expert pursuant to § 5 (2) Accreditation Regulation for Private Universities:	Chairing expert with scientific qualification in a relevant discipline of the degree programme
Signature	
Name	Dr. Dirk Schulz
Expert pursuant to § 5 (2) Accreditation Regulation for Private Universities:	Expert with relevant work experience
Signature	
Name	Prof. Dr. Paula-Irene Villa Braslavsky
Expert pursuant to § 5 (2) Accreditation Regulation for Private Universities:	Expert with scientific qualification in a relevant discipline of the degree programme
Signature	
Name	Alice Wickström, MSc
Expert pursuant to § 5 (2) Accreditation Regulation for Private Universities:	Student expert
Signature	
Name	Prof. Dr. Gökce Yurdakul
Expert pursuant to § 5 (2) Accreditation Regulation for Private Universities:	Expert with scientific qualification in a relevant discipline of the degree programme
Signature	